

Guidance from Qur'aan



GUIDANCE FROM QUR'AN

BY:

MULLA HUSEIN A. RAHIM, M.B.E

AND:

AL-HAJ ALI MOHAMEDJAFFER SHERIFF

Published by:
Khoja Shia Ithna-asheri Supreme Council
P.O.Box 81085
Mombasa
Kenya

CONTENTS

Preface	i
Introduction	ii

PART ONE : ROOTS OF RELIGION (USUL-E-DEEN) THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

1. The Existence of Allah	2
2. The Unity of God (Tauhid)	4
3. The Positive and Negative Attributes of Allah	9
4. Sifate-Subutiyya - (Positive Attributes of Allah)	9
5. Sifate Salbiyyah - (Negative Attributes of Allah)	13
6. Adl (Justice of Allah)	17
7. Sufferings	23
8. Imtihan and Ibtala - Test, Trials and Afflictions	29
9. Prophethood (Nubuwwat)	35
10. Infallibility of the Prophets - (Ismate Anbiya)	37
11. The Prophethood of Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.)	38
12. Character of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.)	45
13. The Qur'an	47
14. Imamat (The Apostolical Succession)	50
15. Infallibility of the Imams (Ismate Aimma)	56
16. Imamat of Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)	57
17. The Twelfth Imam Al Mahdi (a.s.)	63
18. Resurrection - (Qiyamat)	71

PART TWO : ACTS OF WORSHIP (FURU-E-DEEN)

1. The Branches of the Religion i.e. Acts of Worship - Introduction . .	78
2. Prayers (Salaat)	84
3. "Dua" (Prayer or Supplication to Allah)	87
4. Saum (Fasting)	92
5. Hajj - Pilgrimage	94
6. Zakaat (Wealth-Tax)	96

7. Khums (One-Fifth)	97
8. Jihad	99
9. Amr Bil Maaruf and Nahy Anil Munkar	102
10. Tawalla	104
11. Tabarra - (Renunciation)	106

PART THREE : SOME ETHICAL GUIDANCE

1. Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness (Tauba and Istighfar) . . .	110
2. Acquisition of “Ilm” (Knowledge)	112
3. Truth - (As-Sidq)	117
4. Lie - Falsehood (Kidhb)	119
5. The Doctrine of Taqayya	121
6. Humility - (Inkisar)	123
7. Arrogance - (Takabbur)	124
8. Charity - (Khairat)	126
9. Extravagance - (Israaf)	128
10. Niggardliness - (Bukhl)	129
11. “Khiyanat”	132
12. Bribery - (Rushwat)	133
13. Liquor - Intoxicants (Khamr)	133
14. Fornication - (Zinaa)	136
15. Sodomy: Bestiality (Liwat)	137

PREFACE

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM AND THE WORSHIP OF ALLAH IN THE SHADE OF THE QUR'AN

These books briefly explain, with the help of the Quranic Verses, the fundamental beliefs of Islam, which are commonly known as USUL-E-DEEN (Roots of Religion), the Islamic Ibadaat (Acts of worship) commonly known as FURU-E-DEEN (Branches of Religion) and the Islamic Ethics.

Islam is not only a set of beliefs or of certain rituals; it is, in the first place, a complete way of life. Its only aim is to guide all aspects of the behaviour of a believer. Allah tells us in the Qur'an: "And I did not create man and 'jinn' but to worship Me". Worship or "Ibadat" in Islam is not only the practice of certain devotional rites; it includes every human thought and deed, provided it is done in the way of Allah. An ideal believer's acts are always guided by Islamic principles, so that all his life becomes an "Ibadat". A believer, lawfully earning money to support his family, studying to learn a lawful profession or striving for others welfare, is performing "Ibadat". The Principles underlying the "Ibadat" are summarised by our Imams as "Reverence to Allah's commandments and affection towards His creatures". Reverence demands strict compliance with the commandments and affection imposes a duty to deliver to Allah's creatures more than their rightful dues.

This is Islam in a nut-shell. There are no dogmas, no complications and no mysteries. The way to Allah is a straight path; we should strive to proceed on this path to reach near Him. "O man, you are striving unto your Lord laboriously, and thus you are meeting Him," (Ch.84, v.6).

It is hoped that the following pages will assist our brethren in appreciating the meaning and objects of various aspects of the religion; and thus enable them to follow the shariat in the true spirit of Islam.

INTRODUCTION

This is a period of great turmoil. Crimes of violence are on the increase and the earth is engulfed in the sins of mankind. Men have forgotten the path of righteousness and the duty they owe to their Creator. Permissive societies, coupled with indecent literature, encourage nudity in the garb of displaying natural beauty. Nudity is being practised by high ranking women in countries which are termed “civilised”. In London, which Sir Winston Churchill once described as “a city of refuge enshrining the title-deeds of human progress and of deep consequence to Christian civilisation”, ten completely naked girls called in the broad day-light at 10 Downing Street to present a petition to the Prime Minister. Homosexuality, the abhorrent vice which wrought ruination to Sodom, has been legalised by a Parliament consisting of “Lords Spiritual and Temporal”. Neither Christianity nor Judaism seems able to control this wave of violence and sin. Christianity is enfeebled to do anything by the statement of St. Paul: “Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression”. (Rom., 4:15)

Whilst Old Testament is not very much concerned with spiritual matters. Christianity, according to the explicit saying of Jesus, is not concerned with the material life of the world.

If we refer to the sacred books of Hinduism, and in particular the Vedas, we see that the religious teachings presented therein are almost exclusively of an ascetic nature and at the same time they are directed towards a minority of the religious followers, i.e., the Brahmins. Thus the majority of Hindus are excluded from deriving direct spiritual benefit from these sacred books. Buddhism, like Hinduism, displays the same ascetic outlook in its teachings.

Masses of ordinary men and women are sullenly looking for an Ideal religion which can provide a pure and healthy life in this world and in the life to come.

A religion, which only preaches asceticism and spiritual progress forgets that a man possesses a soul which is bound to a body in which his means of activities are placed, and the faculties and powers with which he employs these means have a certain relationship with the body. Human nature guides man towards social life and civilization so that he may attain perfection in both this and the next life.

Islam and in particular the Shia Ithnaasheri faith, is fortunate in having Allah as the Transcendent Lord, Mohammad (s.a.w.) as the most ideal Prophet, the twelve Imems as the most excellent models, and the Qur'an as the most exemplary precept for the conduct of the life in this world.

Christianity, today, might guide one to asceticism; but there is no guidance either in the "gospels" or in the life of Christ himself to show how the present life is to be lived in order to attain happiness both here and in the next world. We may admire him for his qualities of chivalry and compassion in rescuing a female sinner from being stoned to death by calling out "Let him, who is sinless amongst you, cast the first stone". But we can find no precept or guidance in his life on the mode of leading a marital life in this world except the dictum "And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery". (Mathew, 4:42).

In the life of the Holy Prophet we have an example of an ideal husband who proclaimed: "The best amongst you is the one who is kindest to his family; and I am the best of you in kindness to my family". The Qur'an also says that Allah has created "love and compassion" between husband and wife; and one of its longest chapters is devoted to the rights and duties of women.

Whilst we admire Jesus for his infinite love towards children when he called out "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them, for such belongs to the kingdom of God" (Mark, 10:13), we fail, however to find any guidance or example in Christ's life on the mode of bringing up the children who should be devoted to the worship of Allah and service to humanity. As an ideal father, the Holy Prophet of Islam devoted so much

care and attention to his daughter, Fatima, that she rose to be “above all the women of the universe”. She it was whom the Prophet called “A piece of my heart” (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. II, Chapter ‘Fazaile Ashaab’). Allama Badruddin Aaini, the commentator of Bukhari states in “Fat-hul-Bari” that by “piece of my heart”, the Prophet meant that she was a piece of prophethood and that she assisted him in his task of Apostleship. This was a position no other woman in history had attained. In fact, at that particular period the Arabs used to regard the birth of a daughter as a disgrace and often she was buried alive. The Prophet demonstrated to the Arabs that far from being a disgrace, a daughter was a blessing; and indeed the Prophet’s progeny ensued from his daughter, Fatima. The tens of thousands of Seyyids scattered throughout the globe are descendants of the Prophet through Fatima; and the eleven Imams of the Ithnaasheri faith were the children and grand-children of Fatima.

The world can do without a Prophet who preaches asceticism only; but it can not do without one who was an ideal model for a king, a legislator, a general, a peasant, a trader and for a citizen. We need a set of precepts and a preceptor to guide us to a happy and pure life in both worlds. Such preceptors can only be found in Islam. The Holy Qur’an is a treasure of grand precepts which ensure happiness in this world as well as in the life to come.

The following pages are therefore dedicated to the exposition of those precepts which are embodied in the Holy Qur’an.

PART ONE :

**ROOTS OF RELIGION
(USUL-E-DEEN)**

“USUL-E-DEEN” : THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH

The belief in the existence of God rests upon solid foundations of the intellect and instinct. Its truth has been known to, and verified by, the wise, the matured and the “inspired” of all periods in all parts of the world. They stand out as symbol for the whole human race, telling us what we really are and whither we are going.

Poet Tennyson’s phrase is true- “Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet”. Compare what the Holy Qur’an says:- “We are nearer to him than the jugular vein.” (Ch.50, v.16).

Materialism has been described as a tyranny and so is also atheism. The atheists and materialists cannot find it easy to deny the existence of God in the face of the evident and obvious proofs. When we are incapable of having even a cob-web without a spider to build it; when we cannot have a honey-comb without the bees to build the hexagonal structure of wax (better of which no human ingenuity can design), is it not a mental tyranny to believe that this great universe with its vast oceans and lakes, with the vertebrate cold-blooded animals with grills living in them, the earth with its denizens together with its wonderful mountains and peaks, came into being by themselves without being designed by a Supreme Architect? When you visit the Reims and Notre Dame Cathedrals and the magnificent structures like Taj-Mahal, you cannot help uttering admiration for the Architects who designed those buildings! But have you no admiration for the Supreme Architect who designed the Solar system, the sun, the moon, the billions of twinkling stars and comets?

The existence of God is axiomatic. In other words, it is a self-evident truth. Just as in the Mathematics the facts ‘one is equal to one’ and

‘parallel lines do not meet’ are self-evident truths, likewise the creation and the universe lead one to the acceptance of the great evident truth that there must be a Maker who has designed and perfected everything.

We shall now quote a few verses of the Qur’an which conclusively establish Allahs existence:-

Said their Apostles: What! is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? (Ch.14, v.10)

Such is Allah, your lord, the Creator of all things. There is no God but He Then how are you deluded? (Ch.40, v.62)

Allah is He Who made for you the earth as a dwelling-place and the sky for a canopy, and gave you shape and made your shapes beautiful; and hath provided you with sustenance with thing good and pure. Such is Allah, Your Lord. Hallowed is then Allah, the Lord of the worlds. He is the Living One, there is no God but He, so call upon Him, the religion; All praise is Allah’s the Lord of the Worlds. (Ch.40, v.54-55)

He it is who enables you to traverse through land and sea, so that you even board the ships, and they sail with them with a favourable wind and they rejoice thereat; then comes a violent storm and the waves come unto them from all sides and they think that they are overwhelmed therewith, (then) they cry unto Allah, sincerely professing their faith in Him, If thou dost deliver us from this, we shall truly be of the thankful ones. (Ch.10, v.22)

Say: Who provides you sustenance in the sky and the earth, or Who owneth hearing and sight; and Who bringeth forth the living from the dead and bringeth forth the dead from the living; and who directeth the course? They will say: Allah, Then say Will ye not then keep your duty (unto Him?) (Ch.10, verse.31)

THE UNITY OF GOD (TAUHID)

The belief in One supreme Being (to whom belongs all power and Authority, in Whose hands is the power to reward and punish, to grant and to withhold , and in Whose Kingdom people are equal) perfects the human spirit, liberates it and directs it towards the common welfare of all creatures. He, and He alone, is the all powerful God who controls the destiny of all things and judges acts of his creatures by the intention that motivates them.

With the belief in “Tauhid”, the attention of the entire creation is focused on the One to Whom undivided loyalty is due, and this renders the path of obedience and virtue clear.

Islam is the only religion which preaches a pure and unadulterated monotheism, that tolerates no compromise with nationalism, racism, duality, trinitarianism, saint-worship or veneration of images. Whole-hearted acceptance of the doctrine of the one-ness of God makes the believer broadminded and sympathetic to all his fellow beings, because they all are made by the same Creator; it produces an unsurpassed dignity and self-respect, and makes him indifferent to, and independent and fearless of, all powers other than God, at the same time generating in him humility and modesty. The believer in “Tauhid” is a righteous man because he is convinced that, unless he acts justly, he cannot succeed. The believer does not despair or lose hope, regardless of adversity. His faith in God, as the Master of all universe, whose power and Mercy are infinite, gives him immense consolation in trouble so that he never yields to pessimism and despondency. The true believer will persevere in his work with patience and implicit trust in God to the end.

In the following verses, the Holy Qur’an lays a great stress on the belief in the Oneness of Allah:-

Your God is one God; there is no God save Him, the Beneficent, the

Merciful. (Ch.2, v.163)

Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternally Besought of all! He begetteth not nor was begotten, and there is none like unto Him (Ch.112)

If there were therein Gods besides Allah, then verily both (the heavens and the earth) had been disordered. Glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne, from all that they unto Him! (Ch.21, v.22)

Say: Is there of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one that produceth Creation and then reproduceth it? Say: Allah produceth Creation, then reproduceth it. How then, are ye misled? (Ch.10, v.34)

Say; Is there of your partners (whom ye ascribe unto Allah) one that leadeth to the Truth? Say: Allah leads to the Truth. Is He Who leadeth to the Truth more deserving that He should be followed, or he who findeth not the way unless he (himself) be guided. What aileth you? How judge ye? (Ch.10, v.35)

Allah! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His Throne includeth the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them, He is the sublime, the Tremendous. (Ch.2, v.255)

NOTE: “Neither slumber nor sleep-overtaketh Him”

These words give a lie to the belief of those who say that Allah has a physical body. If he had, He would also be subject to “slumber or sleep”! “His Throne encompasses the heavens and earth”. The Word

“kursi” (throne) means “knowledge”. See Lisanul-Arab and Muntahal-Arab which interpret “kursi” as “knowledge”. The verse implies that the Divine knowledge encompasses the heavens and the earth. (Tafsirul-Muttaqin, page 49)

He is the Living (One): There is no god but He: Call upon Him, giving Him Sincere devotion. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds! (Ch.40, v.65)

But it is to God That the End and The Beginning (of all things) Belong. (Ch.53, v.25)

All that is on earth Will perish; But will abide (for ever) the Face of thy Lord - Full of Majesty. Bounty and Honour, (Ch.55, v.26-27)

Lest thou not turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had granted him power? Abraham said: “My Lord is He Who Giveth life and death”. He said: “I give life and death” Said Abraham: “But it is God That causeth the sun to rise from the East: Do thou then cause it to rise from the West”. Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected Faith, Nor doth God give guidance to a people unjust. (Ch.2, v.258)

Or (take) the similitude of one who passed by a hamlet, all in ruins to its roofs. He said: “Oh! How shall God bring it (ever) to life, after (this) its death?” But God caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up (again). He said: “How long didst thou tarry (thus)?” He said: “(Perhaps) a day or part of a day.” He said: “Nay, thou hast tarried thus a hundred years; But look at thy food and thy drink: they show no signs of age; and look at thy donkey: and that We may make of thee a sign unto the people, look further at the bones how we put them together and clothe them with flesh!” When this was shown clearly to him, he said: “I know that God hath power over all things” (Ch.2, v.259)

To God do belong the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth, and to Him goeth back every affair (for decision); Then worship Him; and thy Lord is not Unmindful of aught that ye do. (Ch.11, v.123)

But solemnly rehearse God's favours on you, and the fact that He sent down to you the Book and Wisdom, for your instruction. And fear God, and know that God is well acquainted with all things. (Ch.2, v.231)

From God, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heaven, (Ch.3, v.5)

He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He. Exalted in Might, The Wise. (Ch.3, v.6)

God is He, than Whom there is no other god; - The Sovereign, the Holy One, The Source of Peace (and Perfection), The Guardian of Faith, The Preserver of Safety, The Exalted in Might, The Irresistible, The Supreme. Glory to God! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. (Ch.59, v.23)

He is God, the Creator, The Evolver, The Beslower of forms (or colours) To Him belong the most beautiful names: Whatever is in the heavens and on earth does declare His Praises and Glory: And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (Ch.59, v.24)

God has said: "Take not (For worship) two gods: For He is just One God: Then fear Me (and Me alone)" (Ch.16, v.51)

Say: If there had been (other) gods with Him, - as they say, - behold they would certainly have sought out a way to the Lord of the Throne! (Ch.17, v.42)

They call on such deities, besides God, as can neither hurt nor profit

them: That is straying far indeed (from the Way)! (Ch.22, v.12)

He is the First and the Last, The Evident and the Imminent: And He has full knowledqe of all things. (Ch.57, v.3)

He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and is moreover firmly established on the Throne (of authority). He knows, what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And God sees well all that you do. (Ch.57, v.4)

It is He Who is God in heaven and God on earth; And He is Full of Wisdom and Knowledge. (Ch.43, v.84)

All that hath been promised unto you will come to pass, nor can you frustrate it (in the least bit). (Ch.6, v.134)

And Moses said: “If ye show ingratitude, you and all on earth together, - yet is God Free of all wants, Worthy of all praise. (Ch.14, v.8)

Say: “Shall I take for my protector any other than God, The Maker of the heavens and the earth? And He it is that freedeth but is not fed.”

Say: “Nay! but I am commanded to be the first of those who bow to God (in Islam), and be not thou of the company of those who join gods with God.” (Ch.6, v.14)

No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, Yet is acquainted with all things (Ch.6, v.103)

When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: “O my Lord! Show (Thyself) to me, that I may look Upon Thee” God said: By no means canst thou see Me; but look upon the Mount; If it abide in its place, then shalt thou see Me.” When

his Lord manifested His glory on the Mount, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses, he said ‘Glory be to Thee! To thee I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe.’ (Ch.7, v.143)

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

It is an essential part of “Tauhid” that we should also believe in the positive and negative attributes of Allah. By positive, we mean those attributes which are inseparable from Him. They are (1) ‘Hal’ (Ever-Living), (2) ‘Qadeem’ (Eternal), (3) ‘Qadir’ (Omnipotent) (4) ‘Alim’ (Omniscient), (5) ‘Mudrik’ (Comprehending), (6) ‘Mureed’ (Possessing of Will and Intention), (7) ‘Mutakallim’ (The Speaker) i.e. Allah can infuse speech in any animate or inanimate object and (8) ‘Sadiq’ (The Verity, The Truth Personified)

The negative attributes are those which are incompatible With God-head and all Muslims are required expressly to deny the existence of these attributes in Allah. They are (1) ‘Shirk; (polytheism); (2) ‘Jism’ (Physical body), (3) ‘Makan’ (Place) Allah has no place or abode, He exists everywhere; (4) ‘Mohtaj’ (Allah is not dependent on anyone or anything), (5) ‘Mar’ee’ (Allah cannot be seen and will never be seen), (6) ‘Taghayur’ (Allah is not subject to change), (7) ‘Murakkab’ (Allah is not made or composed of any material), and (8) ‘Hulool’ (incarnation). Allah is not merged in anything and nothing is merged in Allah

We shall now proceed to examine these attributes in the light of the Qur’an

SIFATE-SUBUTIYYA (POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES) “HAI” - ALLAH IS EVER-LIVING

Allah! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. (Ch.2, v.255)

He is the Living One: There is no God but Him (Ch.40, v.65)

And faces humble themselves before the Living, the Eternal (Ch.20, v.111)

And trust thou in the Living One Who dieth not and hymn His praise (Ch.25, v.58)

“QADEEM” -ALLAH IS ETERNAL

He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden and He is Knower of all things. (Ch.57, v.3)

All that is on earth will perish; But will abide (for ever) the Face of thy Lord, Full of Majesty, Bounty and Glory, (Ch.55 vs.26-27)

“QADIR” -ALLAH IS OMNIPOTENT

Be think thee of him who had an argument with Abraham about his Lord, because God had given him the kingdom; how when Abraham said: “My Lord is He Who Giveth life and Causeth death”, he answered “I give life and cause death”. Abraham said “Lo! Allah causeth the sun to rise in the East: so do thou cause it to rise from the West”. Thus was the disbeliever abashed. And Allah guideth not wrong doing folk (Ch.2, v.258)

Or (be think thee of) the like of him who passing by a township which had fallen in utter ruin, exclaimed “How shall Allah give this township life after its death”? And Allah made him die a hundred years, then brought him back to life. He said “How long hast thou tarried?” (The man) said “I have tarried a day or part of a day”, He said “Nay, but thou hast tarried a hundred years, just look at thy food and thy drink, they have not rotted! and look at thine ass and that We make thee a token unto mankind. Look at the bones how We assemble them and then

clothe them with flesh!” And when (the matter) became clear unto him, he said “I know now Allah is able to do all things.” (Ch.2, v.259)

If He will, He can remove you, O people, and produce others (in your stead), Allah is able to do that. (Ch.4, v.133)

“ALIM” (OMNISCIENT)

To Allah do belong the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth, and to Him goeth back every affair (for decision): Then worship Him, and put thy trust in Him and thy Lord is not Unmindful of aught that ye do. (Ch.11, v.123)

Know that Allah Knoweth what is in your minds, so beware of Him. (Ch.2, v.233)

Say, (O Mohammad): Whether ye hide that which is in your breasts or reveal it, Allah Knoweth it. He Knoweth that which is in the heaven and that which is in the earth, and Allah is able to do all things. (Ch.3, v.29)

“MUDRIK” - (COMPREHENDING)

Vision comprehendeth Him not but he Comprehendeth (all) vision. He is Subtle, the Aware. (Ch.6, v,103)

NOTE: “Vision comprehendeth Him not” clearly gives a lie to the belief of those who say that Allah will be seen on the Day of Judgement.

Lo! nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Him (Ch.3, v.5)

“MUREED” - (POSSESSING OF WILL AND INTENTION)

He it is who fashioneth you in the wombs as pleaseth Him. There is no

God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise. (Ch.3, v.6)

Thy Lord bringeth to pass what He Willeth and Chooseth. They have not any choice. Glorified be Allah and exalted above all that they associate (with Him)! (Ch.28, v.68)

Allah Effaceth what He Wills, and Establisheth (what He Wills) and with Him is the source of Ordinance. (Ch.13, v.39)

He is not questioned as to which He Doeth, but they Will be questioned (for theirs). (Ch.21, v.23)

“MUTAKALLIM” - (THE SPEAKER)

And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee: And Allah spoke directly unto Moses. (Ch.4, v.164)

And when Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord had spoken to him. (Ch.7, v.143)

Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a Messenger to reveal with His permission, what He Wills: For He is Most High, Most Wise. (Ch.42, v.51)

Of these messengers, some of whom We have Caused to excel others, and of whom there are some unto whom Allah spoke. (Ch.2, v.253)

“SADIQ” - (THE VERITY, THE TRUTH PERSONIFIED)

Perfected the Word of thy Lord in truth and in justice; None can change His words: For He is the One Who Hearth and Knoweth all. (Ch.6, v.116)

Never think that Allah will fail His apostles in His Promise; For Allah is Exalted in Power, the Lord of Retribution. (Ch.14, v.47)

(It is) the Promise of Allah. Never does Allah depart from His Promise: But most men understand not. (Ch.30, v.6)

Say Allah speaketh truth, So follow the religion of Abraham, the upright. He was not of the idolators. (Ch.3, v.95)

That is because Allah, He is the Truth. Lo! He quickeneth the dead and lo! He is able to do all things. (Ch.22, v.6)

**“SIFATE-SALBIYYAH” - (NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES)
“SHIRK” - REFUTATION OF POLYTHEISM**

Allah hath said ‘Choose not two gods There is only one God: So of Me, Me only, be in awe. (Ch.16, v.51)

Say: if there were other Gods along with Him, as they say, then had they sought a way against the Lord of the Throne! (Ch.17, v.42)

He calleth, beside Allah, unto that which hurteth, not benefiteth him That is the far error. (Ch.22, v.12)

For whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky and the birds had snatched him or the wind had blown him to a far off place (Ch.22, v.31)

He unto Whom belongeth the sovereignty of the heaven and the earth. He hath chosen no son nor hath He any partner in sovereignty. He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a measure. (Ch.25, v.2)

Lo! Allah pardoneth not that partners should be ascribed unto Him.

He pardoneth all save that to whom He will. Whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah hath wandered far astray. (Ch.4, v.116)

He is the Allah, than Whom there is no other God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb, Glorified be Allah from all they ascribe as partner (unto Him). (Ch.59, v.23)

**“JISM” and “MAKAN” - (ALLAH HAS NO PHYSICAL BODY
NOR PLACE OR ABODE)**

He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and He mounted the Throne. He Knoweth all that entereth the earth and all that emerges there from and that cometh down from the sky and all that ascendeth therein, And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah is Seer of what ye do. (Ch.57, v.4)

And He it is Who in the heaven is God, and in the earth is God. He is Wise, the Knower. (Ch.43, v.84)

We verily created man and We Know what his soul whispereth him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Ch.50, v.16)

**“MOHTAJ” - (ALLAH IS NOT DEPENDENT ON ANYONE
OR ANYTHING)**

And Moses said: “If ye show ingratitude, ye and all on earth together, yet Allah is free from all wants, Worthy of all Praises. (Ch.14, v.8)

Say: Shall I choose for a protecting friend other than Allah, the Originator of the heavens and earth, who feedeth and is never fed? Say: I am ordered to be the first to surrender (unto Him); And be not thou of the idolaters. (Ch.6, v.14)

And know that Allah is Self sufficient, Owner of Praise. (Ch.2, v.267)

Allah is Independent of all creatures. (Ch.3, v.97)

I created jinn and human kind only that they might worship Me. I seek no livelihood from them, nor do I ask that they should feed me. Allah! He it is that giveth livelihood, the Lord of unbreakable Might. (Ch.51, vs.56-58)

“MAR’EE” - (ALLAH CANNOT BE SEEN AND WILL NEVER BE SEEN)

Vision comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth (all) visions. He is Subtle, the Aware. (Ch.6, v.103)

And when Moses came to our appointed tryst, and his Lord had spoken to him, he said: My Lord, show me (Thyself) that I, may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou wilt never see Me, but gaze upon the Mountain! If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me.” When his Lord revealed (His) glory to the Mountain, He sent it crashing down, and Moses fell down senseless. And when he awoke, he said: “Glory unto Thee! To Thee I turn repentant, and I am the first of true believers.” (Ch.7, v.143)

NOTE: The negative used is “I’an tarani” (thou wilt never see Me). The word “I’an” is a permanent negative and there can therefore be no question of seeing Allah on the day of Judgement. He has no physical body capable of being seen. The idea of seeing Him is preposterous and irrational. (Tafsirul-Mattaqin, p.199)

“TAGHAYYUR” - (ALLAH IS NOT SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

“Allah! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them

and that which is behind them while they encompass nothing of His Knowledge save What He will. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth. and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous. (Ch.2, v.255)

And verily We created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in six days, and naught of weariness touched us. (Ch.50, v.38)

“MURAKKAB” - (ALLAH IS NOT MADE OR COMPOSED OF ANY MATERIAL)

This is an obvious fact needing no Qur’anic verse to implement it. Anything composed of any material or compounded of any mixture cannot be Allah, the Supreme Architect of the entire Universe. Any such belief would render a person an idolator.

“HULOOL” - (ALLAH IS NOT MERGED IN ANYTHING AND NOTHING IS MERGED IN ALLAH)

The Aristotelian doctrine of hylomorphism, like the Christian doctrine of incarnation is rejected by almost all Muslim theologians and is opposed to pure ‘Tauhid’. The idea of Allah merging in some other body or vice-versa is an impossibility when we know that Allah has no physical body and He cannot be contained in anything or place. Any belief in ‘Hulool’ therefore amounts ‘Shirk-fit-Tauhid’ (polytheism). Muslims also do not believe in the incarnation of souls ‘tanasukh’. Such a belief is opposed to Islam and amounts to ‘kufr’ (infidelity).

NOTE: Whilst the bulk of the Muslims believe in the Asmaul-Husna (the Excellent Names of Allah) and recite them as a matter of ‘Tasbih’ on rosaries. It is only ‘the Ithna-asheri sect alone which provides in its fundamental principles the belief in the Positive and Negative Attributes of Allah which are set out above. This fact alone establishes the purity of its ‘TAUHID’ and the importance of denying expressly the

negative attributes which are unworthy of or incompatible with God-head.

“ADL” - (JUSTICE OF ALLAH)

It is a fundamental article of Shia Ithna-Asheri Faith to believe that Allah is Just and that whatever He does is strictly according to Justice and reason. Here I would like to copy a few pages from “Islam” written by Seyyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Chief Missionary, Bilal Muslim Mission -Tanzania “. . . . Frankly speaking, this root of religion is the most important one to study, if anybody wants to know the real and basic difference between Sunnis and Shia Ithna-Asheris. So far as the existence and Unity of God is concerned, it comes under the First Root ‘TAUHID’. i.e.. The Unity of God. But the actions of Allah come under this second root; and here the differences are vast and manifold: Here I beg to show the difference in a few words:-

1. First and foremost difference is that while certain Muslim sects hold that nothing is good or evil by itself: and only what God has commanded us to do, is good; what He has forbidden is evil. The Ithna-Asheris, on the other hand, believe that irrespective of religious commandments, there is real merit or demerit in different courses of action, and it is because a certain thing is good that God commands us to do it; and because the other thing is bad that He forbids it.
2. Stemming from the above mentioned difference is the fact that the Shias believe that God never acts aimlessly, i.e., without any purpose or design. All His actions are based on wisdom and intelligent purpose, though we may not know them. The Sunnis, on the other hand, say that there is no real demerit in acting aimlessly, and if God does anything without purpose, the mere act of God will make that action good.
3. The Shia Ithna-Asheris say that if a person can do good to any other person and he does not do it, it is against the Virtue. Likewise,

they say that if God can do anything beneficial to His creatures and then, suppose that, He does not do it, it will be against Virtues of God and not commendable. Therefore, the Ithna-Asheris say that: “It is morally incumbent upon God to do every act of Grace dealing with mankind.”

Here is a quotation from our book of beliefs:-

“By Grace is understood that action on the part of God which would help to bring His creatures nearer to His devotion and obedience and facilitate their moral correction (which is) morally incumbent on Him. i.e., GOD. Allah has commanded us to be just, while He Himself treats us with something better, namely Grace “TAFADHUL”. Justice, ‘Al-Adl’, means that He requites a good act with a good reward and an evil act with a punishment. The Prophet said ‘No man ever enters Paradise by virtue of his good actions alone except by the Mercy of Allah”

The Sunnis, on the other hand, do not believe that ‘Lutf’, i.e., Grace is incumbent on Allah They say that even ‘Adl, i.e., Justice is not incumbent on Allah, even if He sends good and virtuous persons to Hell, it will be quite right.’

Then comes the most vital difference between Ithna-Asheris and Sunnis. i.e., the question of ‘Taqdeer’ (Predestination). The position of Sunnis in this respect is according to general belief:-

“No act of any individual, even though it be done purely for his benefit, is independent of the will of Allah, for its existence; and there does not occur in either the physical or the extra-terrestrial world the wink of an eye, the hint of a thought, or the most sudden glance, except by the decree of Allah, of His power, desire and will. This includes evil and good, benefit and harm, success and failure, sin and righteousness, obedience and disobedience, polytheism and true belief”. (Al-Ghazzali).

We the Ithna-Asheris on the other hand believe that we know the difference between falling down from a roof-top and coming down by ladders. The second act is done by our power, will and intentions; while the falling down is not done so. And we know that our own actions are not like falling down from a roof-top; but they are like climbing down with our own will and power. Therefore, they are our acts and they cannot be attributed to Allah.

Again we see that we are praised or blamed for some of our acts, while for other acts we are neither praised nor condemned. It means that the first category comes within our power and will; and the second is beyond our power and will. We may be advised to treat our ailments in such and such a way, but we cannot be advised to recover from the illness. It means that getting treatments is within our power: but getting recovered is not within our sphere of activities. Therefore, we say that there are many things and aspects of life which are within our own power and will, while some are not within our power. Those things for which we can be advised, for which we can be praised or blamed, all those acts are within our power and will. And as the commandments of religion come under this category, therefore, it is wrong to say that our sins or righteousness, our obedience or disobedience or polytheism or true belief, are by the decree of God. Therefore, it has been written in the book of our creed that:-

“Allah possesses fore-knowledge of human actions, but does not compel mankind to act in any particular manner. When Allah will collect His servants on the Day of Resurrection, He will ask them concerning what He had enjoined on them and will not question them concerning what He had destined for them.”

But it does not mean that man is quite independent of God. In fact, the power and will to act as we like is given us by God. Thus Imam Jafar as-Sadiq said “There is no compulsion (by God); nor is there absolute delegation of power (from God to man); but the real position is between these two extremes.” (Book of Creed).

And at what point does our ability to do things start? Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s) said: “A man acquires that ability when four conditions are fulfilled: - 1. When there is nothing to hinder his plans; and his 2. health and 3. faculties (needed for that work) are upto the required standard; 4. and God provides him the occasion of that work. When all these conditions are fulfilled a man becomes able to act according to his own free will.” When asked about an example, he said: “Let us suppose that there is a man, without any hinderance, of good health and strength; yet he cannot commit adultery unless he finds a woman. When (the 4th condition is fulfilled, and) he gets a woman, then it is upto him to choose one of the two alternatives - either he controls his evil emotions and saves himself as Joseph did; or, on the other hand, commits adultery; if he protects himself from that sin, it will not be by compulsion of Allah (as some people think), and if he commits the sin, it does mean that he was above the power of Allah (as others think).”

According to our point of view, if anybody believes in predestination, he cannot, at the same time, believe in the Day of Judgment. Because, if Allah decrees every act which is done on our hands, then it is gross injustice to inflict punishment upon us for those sins and evils and polytheism and disbelief and immoralities which were predestined by Allah Himself.

On this subject, in short, the Shia Ithna-Asheri faith, to use the words of Allama Hilli, accepts that we are free agents - “Af’aluna bil Ikhtiyar” (Al Bab ’l Hadi-‘Ashar).

Those who believe in the opposite doctrine base their belief on verse 96 of Chapter 37 of the Qur’an.

“And Allah has created you and what ye make.” But these were the words of Prophet Abraham addressed to idolaters when he taunted them for worshipping the idols which they had themselves carved! This is made clear from the preceding versa - “Said he, do you worship that which you yourselves do carve? And Allah has created you and

what ye make”. Obviously the words “what ye make” refer to the material used for carving the idols and not with the act of carving. However, this appears to be the only basis upon which the doctrine of “jabr” or “kasb” is based.

Al-‘Ashaira, believe in “kasb”. The doctrine of “kasb” says that the human beings are not the actual doers of their acts. They believe that their actions are done by Allah Himself. Man is only instrumental to perform the actions of Allah. But even then he is responsible for those actions performed by Allah upon his hands. They argue:- There is no Creator but Allah. The works of the creatures are created and predestined by Him as He said in the Qur’an Ch.37. v.94 “And Allah has created you and what ye do” Man is able to create nothing (Macdonald’s Development of Muslim Theology, p.294).

According to the creed of an-Nasafi “Allah the Most High is the creator of all actions of His creatures, wheher of unbelief or belief, of obedience or rebellion; all of them are by Will of Allah, and His sentence, His conclusions and His decreeing”. (Macdonald’s p.310) This in effect means that a man has no choice of abstaining from commission of the sin and yet he is punished for it!

The doctrines of “jabr” (compulsion) and “kasb” have been condemned by our Imams. Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (a.s) has stated:- “Those who uphold “jabr” make out God to be a participator in every sin they commit and a tyrant for punishing those who are impelled to commit sin by compulsion. This is infidelity”. The Imam then gave an example of a servant sent by his master to purchase something from the market (without giving him any money) while the master knows well that the servant cannot bring the thing, not possessing the wherewith to buy it, and nevertheless the master punishes him. The Imam added - “The doctrine of “jabr” converts God into an unjust Master” (Ihtijaj-ut-Tabrasi p.236).

The Shia doctrine of Ikhtiyar means freedom to do the right and to reject the wrong. God has endowed each human being with the capacity to understand His commands and to obey them. They, who exert themselves to live purely and truly, them He helps; they are those who please him; whilst those who disobey Him are sinners. Imam Raza (a.s) has stated “God has pointed out to you two paths, one which leads you to Him; the other takes you away from His Perfection. You are at liberty to take the one or the other; pain or joy, reward or punishment, depend upon your own conduct. But man has not the capacity of turning evil into good or sin into virtue”. (Ihtijaj-ut-Tabrasi, pp 214).

This is the only reasonable and correct exposition of the doctrine made by our great Imams, namely, that human actions are the immediate creations of man, but evil and good are pointed out by Allah. Says the Qur’an - “Lo! We have shown him the way whether he be grateful or disbelieving”, (Ch.76, v.3)

The following verses of the Qur’an clearly establish the correctness of the doctrine of Ikhtiyar as expounded by the Imams-

Say: O Mankind! Now hath the Truth from your Lord come unto you. So whosoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his own soul, and whosoever erreth, erreth only against it. And I am not a warder over you (Ch.10, v.108)

And when they commit a deed of shame they say, we have found that our fathers did so, and Allah obliged us to do it. Say thou (O Mohammad): Surely, Allah requireth not Shameful doing. Tell ye concerning Allah that which ye know not? (Ch.7, v.28)

There doth every soul experience that which it did aforetime, and they are returned unto Allah, their rightful Lord and that which they used to invent hath failed them. (Ch.10, v.30)

And whoever gets to himself a sin, gets it solely on his own responsibility Allah is ever Knower, Wise. (Ch.4, v.111)

And whoso doeth good an atom's weight will see it then, and whoso doeth ill an atom's weight will see it then. (Ch.99, v.7-8)

Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves. (Ch.13, v.11)

These are people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned and yours is that which ye earn. And ye will not be asked what they used to do. (Ch.2, v.134)

“SUFFERINGS”

It is argued by some people that if Allah is in fact Just (ADIL) then why does He permit the evil forces to exist in the world? Why does He allow the suffering or pain to mar the universe? Who has been free either from distant sight or even personal experience of the horrors of violence of afflictions wrought by dishonest, brutal or depraved men; of the miseries inseparable from poverty, privation and social degradation, and of the agonies borne by sick, diseased and deformed persons? Such dismal sights, such saddening experiences, raise occasional doubts about Divine Justice in the minds of even religious-minded people. It is also asked what is the meaning, what is the use of all this suffering? Why do the virtuous endure unmerited anguish? Why do the wicked flourish?

These problems of evil and suffering are perhaps the oldest ones which have ever confronted human brows. So difficult and gigantic are they that most answers, have not conclusively satisfied the humanity and they raise them again and again.

The Qur'an asserts:-

Lo! Allah wrongeth not mankind, but mankind wrong themselves (Ch. 10, v.44)

Evils are generally accepted to be of two kinds: firstly, sins and secondly, sufferings. Sins are, of course, laid down and expounded by the Shariat In clear terms and they need no elucidation here. But we have to divide, for the purpose of explanation, the sufferings in the following six categories:-

- a. Sufferings inflicted on human beings by evil forces or atrocious or criminal acts;
- b. Sufferings resulting from a person's own sins or crimes;
- c. Sufferings resulting from a person's own acts, though not unlawful, but still harmful to the doer (TARKE-AULA);
- d. Expiation (Kaffara). Sufferings undergone as an expiation of one's sins;
- e. "IBTILAA" Trial or 'Imtihaan'. Sufferings endured by servants of Allah to test their faith; and
- f. Sufferings resulting from natural disasters and catastrophies

As regards atrocities and sufferings resulting from crimes committed by wicked men, we are asked to explain why does not Allah intervene to prevent them? If Almighty were to intervene to stop commission of any sin or crime, the freedom of action would be shattered. Where can there be then question of requital or retribution on the Day of Reckoning? Almighty had already sent 124,000 Prophets and a number of scriptures to guide humanity to the right path and to warn them against evils and sins. He had prescribed for those who had suffered and retributions against those guilty of evil deeds, on the Day of Judgement. If He were to intervene at every stage to prevent human being from doing acts which were contrary to His pleasure or injurious to other persons, He would be an unprincipled Ruler placing impediments to the principle of "freedom of action". He had shown mankind, through His inspired messengers, how to conduct themselves in this world and it is now left to mankind to select the

course it would follow. Allah says in the Qur'an:-

“Verily, We have shown him the way, whether he be grateful or disbelieving” (Ch.76, v.3).

Allah's decision in this respect, is reserved for the Day of Judgement when those who had suffered atrocities on earth shall amply be requited and those who were guilty of evil acts shall suffer adequate retribution.

We now come to the sufferings resulting from the natural consequences of a person's sins or crimes. We have seen, or perhaps experienced ourselves, that every crime or sin has its natural consequences on this earth. We have seen people being flogged and imprisoned for crimes; we have seen men go to gallows for homicide and we have seen sinners disgraced and ostracised and some even contracting diseases as result of their sins. So far so good. Let the evil-doer suffer. But we are being asked: “Is it right that others connected with the sinner, who are completely innocent of the crime or sin, should also suffer? We know perhaps of a married man, having been infected with some loathsome disease by promiscuous association, causes his wife to give birth to a blind child. Can anyone blame Almighty for the sufferings of the innocent child? A gambler causes his family to be destitute and starving. Is Almighty responsible for their starvation? A robber is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment in consequence of which his children suffer from want. Would you blame the Court or the law for the suffering of the children? A murderer is hanged because of his crime and his aged mother perishes in distress. Would you hold the Judge, who passed the death sentence, to be responsible for the old woman's death? Surely it is the criminal and the criminal himself responsible for having wrought miseries to those near and dear to him. These are the natural consequences of his action. It is inevitable that one man's sins or wrong's should also affect other innocent persons. The world is like a machine: if one part of the machine goes wrong the entire machine is

affected. Similarly, if you throw a stone in a calm sea, it will not merely affect the part where the stone dips but will also cause a stir in its entire surroundings. If one part of a man's limb ails, the entire body suffers. This is the law of nature and has also its advantages. Many a times persons have refrained from crimes or sins because of the effect they would have on their innocent dependants. But those innocent people will surely be recompensated of their pains and sufferings on the Day of Judgement by the Merciful Allah.

All sufferings is not necessarily an evil. Who has not known someone who has been turned from wrong course by sickness?

And the Almighty, in His Mercy has decreed that the troubles and sufferings of the believers will be counted as expiation of some of their sins, to make them fit to join the band of His virtuous servants. Who has not seen a gold-smith insert a piece of gold in a burning furnace? His intention is not to burn the gold but to purify it by heating it with fire so that it may be fit to be worn by a charming damsel. In the same way, when a believer, who had erred against his Lord, undergoes sufferings and tribulations in this world his sufferings make him fit for the companionship of the high. Such suffering is indeed a blessing for the sufferer. And if he is already clean from sins, then the sufferings enhance his grade and rank in presence of Allah.

The experience of sufferings tends generally to educate, and reform a sinner and discipline his emotions. Consequently, if sufferings bring man back to chaste life, then such suffering is surely justified.

Again, it is often through pain that a man's cruelty, pride and lust may best be broken, for such men are hardly amenable to correction by mere words. Is not pain in such circumstances a blessing?

If prosperity has created an arrogant pride in us which will lead us to our downfall, poverty may create the humility which can save us. Loss

of fortune and loss of health are extremely unpleasant but they contain lessons which dissuade us from vainglory. All these are blessings in disguise.

Let us now briefly examine “TARKE-AULA”, in which a person encounters suffering because of the natural consequences of his action. It is not necessary that the action shall itself be a sin. Many a times a person, performing perfectly lawful act, suffers because the act, though lawful, is injurious to his bodily constitution. It would have been, in his own interest, preferable for him to have abstained from doing the act. His act, though blameless, is described in the language of the Shariat as “TARKE-AULA”, which means “leaving a better course of action”. Examples of “tarke-aula” can also be found in the lives of some of the Prophets who had to suffer afflictions in consequence thereof. They had committed no sin but had merely done lawful acts which proved harmful to themselves. Indeed, we ascertained that “tarke-aula” was part of their Tabligh (Apostolic function). Tabligh comprises precepts and examples. For the purpose of active “tabligh”, it was necessary that these Prophets should demonstrate by examples the effect of “tarke-aula” for the benefit of human beings. Although it entailed their suffering, still they demonstrated to humanity that by forsaking a preferable course of action, a person, though not a sinner, may still have to endure suffering in consequence thereof. We owe these Prophets a special debt of gratitude and it is the highest degree of ingratitude to accuse them, on the contrary, of being sinners. It is necessary to refute these accusations of fallibility against the Prophets, but unfortunately there is no scope for it in this small brochure, otherwise we would have dealt with accusations made against every such Prophet and shown how untenable such claims were in the light of the Qur’an, Ahadith and common-sense.

In spite of all its blunders and all its sins, humanity may yet profit by its sufferings, its blood and its tears, by stretching forth its hands to grasp the great truth that a divine process of justice (ADL) does in fact rule

the world. Says the Qur'an:

Allah (Himself) is witness that there is no God save Him, and the Angels and the men of learning (too are witnesses), Maintaining His creation in Justice. There is no God save Him, the Almighty, the Wise. (Ch.3, v.18)

Verily Allah does not deal unjustly with men in aught; but men do injustice to their own souls (Ch.10, v.44)

Perfect is the word of thy Lord in truth and justice. There is naught that can change His words. He is the Wise and Knower (Ch.6, v.115)

God doth erase or confirm what He pleaseth; With Him is the source of ordinance (Ch.13, v.39)

He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs) (Ch.21, v.23)

(It is) the promise of God. Never does God depart from His promise But most men understand not (Ch.30, v.6)

He Who created Death And Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: And He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. (Ch.67, v.2)

Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, In order to try him: So We gave him (the gifts) Of Hearing and Sight. (Ch.76, v.2)

That which is on earth We have made but as a glittering show for the earth. In order that We may test them - as to which of them are best in conduct. (Ch.18, v.7)

We broke them up into sections on this earth. There are among them some that are the righteous, and some that are tried them with both prosperity and adversity: In order that they might turn (to Us) (Ch.7, v.168)

Do men think they will be left alone on saying “We believe,” and that they will not be tested? (Ch.29, v.2)

And know ye that your possessions and your progeny are but a trial, and that it is God with Whom lies your highest reward. (Ch.8, v.28)

Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those Who patiently persevere who say, when afflicted with calamity ‘To God we belong, and to Him is our return’ (Ch.2, v.155-156)

And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported (mettle). (Ch.4, v.31)

IMTIHAN AND IBTILA TEST, TRIALS AND AFFLICTIONS

Tests, trials and afflictions are essential means of testing the sincerity or otherwise of an individual’s claim to faith and of establishing his spiritual rank. Every person, even a believer, has, according to the following verse of the Qur’an, to undergo the test:-

“Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, We believe, and will not be tested? Lo! We tested those who came before them. Thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere and knoweth those who feign” (Ch.29, vs.2-3)

Allah is Omniscient, there is no question about His Knowing. In the case of ordinary believers, the test is meant to cleanse them from impurities, like the fire applied to a gold-smith’s crucible to burn out the dross, In the case of Prophets and Imams, the trial is to establish to the universe at large their competency and suitability for the high spiritual offices held by them and also, as defenders of Allah’s religion, to face all challenges against the religion or its tenets.

Every individual, whether he be a Prophet, an Imam or an ordinary person, has to undergo the test for verse 155 of Ch.2 stresses the point: “We will most certainly try you.” Indeed, verse 2 of Ch. 76 states that Allah has created man in order “to test him”.

There are numerous traditions to show that the more a man rises in faith and in quality of patience, the more he is beset with trials in the form of afflictions, and as he endures them, he is raised more and more in the sight of God.

Prophet Adam’s afflictions and Prophet Noah’s trials raised them to be amongst Allah’s chosen ones over his creatures. (Ch.3, v.33)

Prophet Ibrahim, having undergone the test of almost sacrificing his own son - Ismail - with his own hand, in obedience to the vision seen by him, rose to the rank of being chosen by Allah as His Khalil (Friend) and when he faced the burning furnace with complete confidence in the Lord’s Power to turn the fire into “cool and safe” meadow, he was raised to be an Imam for the men. (Ch.2, v.124)

Prophet Ismail, on being consulted by his father - Ibrahim about his vision to sacrifice him, answered: “O my father! do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast.” He was ransomed by Allah with a Great Sacrifice. (Ch.37, v.106-107)

Prophet Musa having endured the sufferings inflicted by Pharaoh, was honoured by “Allah speaking directly with him.” (Ch.4, v.164)

Prophet Yakub’s trial consisted in the pangs of separation from his dear son Yusuf for whom he moaned so much that he lost sight of his both eyes and yet he was described by Allah as “kazeem”, the Patient.

Prophet Yusuf, having suffered the ignominy of being sold like a slave, was faced by a tremendous temptation against his honour and

chastity which he preserved despite being imprisoned He is described by Qur'an as "Siddique" (the Veracious) and ultimately became the Ruler of Egypt.

Prophet Zakaria was a devout servant of the Most High Lord but he was sawed into two when he sought refuge in the trunk of a tree from the torments of his enemies.

Prophet Yahya (John), whom the Qur'an described as "pure devout and chaste" was imprisoned by Herod, when he had reproved him for his sins, and was beheaded at the instigation of a harlot with whom Herod was infatuated.

Prophet Isa, the son of Mary, suffered affliction at the hands of the Jews who had prepared to crucify him but Allah "raised him to Himself".

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) who had been persecuted and chased out of his place of birth by the infidels, ultimately enters Mecca as a conquerer and proclaims amnesty for his old enemies. He was "Rahmatul-lil-Alamin", a Mercy to the entire creation.

Hazrat Ali, who was thrice brushed aside from his rightful succession, had to pass 25 long and miserable years in enforced retirement. He never lost his patience nor did he give vent to any outburst. The welfare of Islam was his only concern and he engaged himself in the collection and teaching of the Qur'an in the light of the Holy Prophet's teachings although at times he was heard to murmur "My sorrows are great". Was it not a heart-rending fact for him that after the death of the Holy Prophet, he never saw a smile on the countenance of his immaculate wife, Fatima, and a few months later she also parted him, a martyr to agonies and sufferings, leaving Ali a lonely and forlorn figure, to care for her infant children! When taunted by one of his adversaries, he said: "Although you intended to degrade me by mentioning my afflictions, you have in fact praised me. What greater

blessing can a Moslem aspire to than to suffer afflictions and trials in the cause of Allah?” A Christian (Major Osborn) has rightly described Ali as “the truest-hearted and best Moslem of whom Mohammadan history has preserved remembrance.”

The trials and afflictions reached their climax with Imam Husain. He and his small band of kinsmen and friends and a retinue of women, when seeking refuge in the desert of Iraq, were surrounded by hordes of Yazid’s army, consisting of at least 32,000 horsemen, who cut them off from the water of Euphrates and demanded from him an oath of allegiance to the monstrous debaucherer occupying the throne of Syria. Husain’s allegiance would have set seal to the profligacy of the monarch and bring to an end the Islamic life of piety and purity bequeathed by the Holy Prophet. Husain would under no circumstances submit to such a demand. His duty was to save Islam and he was determined to do so at the cost of his own life and the lives of those near and dear to him. Husain’s determination to face all trials, tribulations and afflictions, can be gauged from the following quotation from Hughe’s Dictionary of Islam:-

“When his sister bemoaned his hard fate, he is reported to have said “Trials, afflictions and pains, the thicker they fall on man, better, dear sister, do they prepare him for his journey heaven-ward. We rejoice in tribulations, seeing they are but temporary, and yet they work out an eternal and blissful end.

“Though it is predestined that I should suffer martyrdom in this manner, yet the treasury of everlasting happiness shall be at my disposal as a consequent reward. Thou must no longer be sorry. The dust raised in the field of such battles is as highly esteemed by me, a sister, as the philosopher’s stone was, in former times, by the alchemist. and the soil of Kerbela is sure remedy of my inward pains.”

Impressive words these but more impressive was the conduct of the valiant Cavalier of Kerbela. He commands his 18 years old son - Ali

Akbar - "My dear son go forth and be the first amongst Ahlul-Baet to be slain in defence of Islam!" The young lad bows to his father and proceeds to the inevitable death awaiting him.

We shall now pay a curt glance at the trials and tribulations facing Husain's sister - Zainab. When Husain's entire kinsmen are cut down, Husain, weary and wounded, emerges from his tent to go forth to the battle-field. There was no man left to bring forth his horse. Zainab dashes out, brings forth the horse, holds its bridle and assists her brother to the saddle.

What had prompted Hazrat Zainab, who had only a few hours before sacrificed her two sons to save the Imam, to be so willing now to hasten her brother to the battle-front? Had she lost the affection for her dear brother? No. Hazrat Zainab and other ladies of the Tent had sacrificed every one near and dear to them when it was a question of saving Imam Husain. But the issue now was whether to save Husain or Islam. Husain could only now be saved by paying allegiance to Yazid which was tantamount to the death of Islam. What was she to prefer? The survival of Husain or the survival of Islam? The gallant lady had already made her choice. She preferred the survival of Islam and was willing to sacrifice a brother like Imam Husain for achieving that purpose and this prompted her to assist Imam Husain to ride to his final journey to martyrdom. All glory to this brave lady who willingly sent Husain to die the death of a hero so that Islam may survive! And when the torturous hour came at last to an end and the Imam lay butchered on the sand, the dauntless daughter of Ali was seen emerging from her burning tent, proceed to the body of her brother, fall on her knees facing Qibla and raise the body on her two hands towards the heaven and cry out, "My Lord, wilt Thou accept this humble sacrifice from the House of Mohammad and save Thine religion?"

This was only the beginning of Zainab's 'imtihaan' (test) which

culminated in Yazid's court at Damascus when, though a captive, she stood up in the presence of 700 dignitaries present in the Court and pointed an accusing finger at Yazid and said:-

“Oh Yazid! when you blocked our paths on the face of the earth and compelled us to go from place to place like prisoners, did you consider us to be degraded before God and yourself exalted? Is it because you met with material success and found all your affairs in order and there was not threat to your rule from us then you were filled with pride and gloried your pomp and power? Yet wait a while! Have you forgotten the words of Allah, “Let not those who disbelieve think that My silence and forbearance is good for their souls; rather it is to give increase to their sins and for them is a painful punishment.” Is it justice, oh son of a freed slave, that you should keep your women folk and maid servants in seclusion while the daughters of the Apostle of Allah are imprisoned and taken from place to place?

“What better can be expected of him (Yazid) who has chewed the liver of good and pure persons and who has been nurtured on the blood of martyrs?

“How strange and unnatural is it that the followers of Satan and freed slaves have killed the pure men of Allah and with their hands have shed our blood and with their mouths have chewed our flesh.

“Our cry for redress is to Allah and of Him do we seek help. So contrive your plots, intensify your efforts and strive your utmost, but, by Allah you shall be unable to efface our commemoration or wipe out the canons of Divine Laws or achieve our exalted status. Neither shall you succeed ever in cleansing yourself of the stains of your guilt and shame. Your intentions are mean, your origin base and nothing is left of your life but a little. There would be no army to defend you, save a disorderly band. Be prepared for the Day when a caller shall call out “The curse of God is upon oppressors.”

This bold sermon proved to be last nail to Yazid's coffin. It aroused an awakening and a revulsion of feeling which resulted in Yazid's ruination.

Will the ladies of the Shia community teach their daughters to live as Hazrat Zainab did and give every sacrifice to uphold Islam and its Shariat?

PROPHETHOOD (NUBUWWAT)

A belief in the mission of the Prophets is the Third Article of our Faith.

As Almighty God had created human beings endowed with full faculty and freedom of action, it was necessary that divine guide should be forthcoming from Him to educate the human beings and guide them on the correct use of their faculties and freedom.

Amongst the greatest gifts of God to humanity was the commissioning of His chosen servants to rise in every age and clime to proclaim the duties of man to himself, his fellow-beings and to his Creator. These men have been the messengers, they came amongst their people and conveyed the divine commandments of truth, purity and justice. Each of the messengers was an embodiment of spiritual perfection: each came to purify, to reform, to elevate a degraded race, a corrupted manhood. Some came as teachers to influence a small sphere: some came to a larger area or tribe: but only the Holy Prophet of Islam came with a world-wide message - a message not confined to one race or nation but intended for all humanity, in fact he came as a "Mercy" to the entire universe.

The Prophethood is a divine office of very high position: and as a safe-guard against impostors, it is necessary to remember the qualifications of Prophethood and the personal qualities of the Man holding the position.

A Prophet must be infallible; he must possess perfect intellect: he should be pre-eminent amongst all men of his time; he should be of pure (i.e., legitimate) birth and have a pure and unblemished pedigree; he should possess all laudable virtues and be free from all abhorrent thoughts and deeds. And even if these qualifications and qualities are combined in a man in a singular degree, he can not claim to be a Prophet unless he is appointed by Allah. And to prove the authenticity of their claims, Allah gave the Prophets one or more miracles.

In any event, the chain of Prophethood ended with the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) who was the last and the final Prophet. Anyone claiming to be a prophet after him is an imposter and any person believing in such an imposter should be regarded as a “kafir”.

The number of Prophets commissioned by Allah since the creation of the world is generally accepted to be 124,000: The names of most of the Prophets are not known to us. We are expected to expressly believe in the prophethood of those Prophets whose names are mentioned in the Qur’an. They are Adam, Idris, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Khizr, Shu-ayb, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elisha, Job, Elias, Hud, Saleh, Jonah, David, Solomon, Dhul-kifl, Yasaa, Zachariah, John, Jesus and the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.). Of these, five Prophets, namely, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) have been designated as “Ulul-Azm” (possessors of stout hearts), who were blessed with Books, namely: Ibrahim with “booklets”, Moses with Torah, David with Psalms, Jesus with gospel and the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) with the Qur’an. Unfortunately the four previous books, namely Booklets of Ibrahim, Torah, Psalms and the Gospel, have been lost or corrupted and interpolated by human agency and we have only the Holy Qur’an miraculously preserved in its original and true form. The Qur’an has the effect of repealing all the previous scriptures. Some other Prophets also were honoured with books from Allah but their identities have been lost in antiquity. In any event, such writings cease to have any effect after the revelation of the Qur’an.

The following verses of the Holy Qur'an clarify the views as to Prophethood expressed above:-

And verily we have raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming),
Serve Allah and shun false Gods. (Ch.16, v.36)

Whosoever followeth guidance, followeth it for (the good of) his own soul, and whosoever erreth, erreth only to its hurt. No laden soul can bear anothers load. We never punish until We have sent a messenger (Rasul) (Ch.17, v.15)

Verily, we sent before thee (Mohammad) messengers to their own folk. They brought them clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty). Then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty (in regard to them). To help believers is incumbent upon us. (Ch.30, v.47)

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: I will place a vice-gerent (khalifa) on earth. They said: Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood, While we do hymn Thy praises and sanctify Thee? He said Surely I know that which you know not (Ch.2, v.30)

INFALLIBILITY OF THE PROPHETS - (ISMATE ANBIYA)

As messengers of Allah were commissioned by Allah to purify and guide mankind, it was essential that they should be sinless and infallible; otherwise they could have led their nations into perdition. The Qur'an bears testimony of their infallibility in the following verses:-

And We made them Leaders, guiding (mankind) by Our command. and We sent them inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practise regular charity: And they constantly served Us (and Us only) (Ch.21, v.73)

(Mine is) but conveyance (of the truth) from Allah and His Messages

and whose disobeys Allah and His Apostle, - for him is Hell, he shall dwell there-in for ever. (Ch.72, v.23)

We sent not an Apostle save that he should be obeyed by Allah's leave. And if, when they had wronged themselves, they had but come unto thee and asked forgiveness of Allah, and asked forgiveness of the Apostle, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful (Ch.4, v.64)

NOTE: This verse conclusively establishes the fact it is the prerogative of Almighty alone to place vicegerents on earth and that no question of election by the creatures therefore arises. (Tafsirul-Muttaqin, p 7)

Of some apostle We have already told thee the story; Of others We have not: - And to Moses God spoke direct. (Ch.4, v.164)

It is not fitting for a man that God should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil or by the sending of a Messenger to reveal, with God's permission, what God wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise. (Ch.42, v.51)

Never think that God would fail His Apostle in His promise: For God is Exalted in Power, - The Lord of Retribution. (Ch.14, v.47)

THE PROPHETHOOD OF HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD (s.a.w.)

The position of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) stands foremost amongst all the Prophets and Apostles and as - "Khatamun Nabiyyin" (the last of the Prophets), he occupies a unique Status far above the entire creation. He was commissioned by Almighty to the entire creation including men, jinns and angels and his apostolic jurisdiction was accordingly unlimited by either space or time. Allah is described as the Lord of the Worlds (Rabbul-Alameen); and the Holy Prophet according to the Qur'an, was "Rahmatul-lil-Alamin" (Mercy to all the Worlds): and as "Lila'lamina nadheera", he was a warner to the entire universe. No creature, whether animate or inanimate,

was excluded from the Holy Prophet's authority and indeed all the previous prophets may be included into his "Ummat", because all of them had in fact entered into a covenant with Allah to believe in his apostleship and support him. Says the Qur'an:-

When Allah made (His) covenant with the prophets (He said): 'Behold that which I have given you of the Scriptures and knowledge And afterward there will come unto you a Messenger confirming that which ye possess, Ye shall believe in him and ye shall help him'. He said: 'Do you agree and will ye take up My burden (which I lay upon you) in this (matter)?' They answered 'We agree' He said: "Then bear ye witness I will be a witness with you" (Ch.3, v.81).

This verse clearly shows the supreme importance which Almighty God attached to all the prophets accepting the mission of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w) and of rendering him due assistance. This assistance was firstly rendered in the form of prayers for him and telling their Ummats of the coming of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) and exhorting them to believe in him when he came. We find in the Qur'an as well as in the Bible instances of such assistance.

"And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundation of the House (Abraham prayed) Our Lord: Accept from us (this duty) Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower. Our Lord! and make us submissive unto Thee and of our seed an "Ummat" submissive unto Thee and show us our ways of worship, and relent towards us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Relenting, the Merciful. Our Lord! and raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the scripture and in wisdom and shall purify them. Lo! thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, Wise". (Ch.2, v.127-129) .

This was the Patriarch Abraham's prayer for the raising of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.). And Moses said in his prayers:-
"And ordain for us in this world that which is good and in the

here-after (that which is good). Verily, we have turned unto Thee. He (Allah) said: “I smite with punishment whom I will and My Mercy embraceth all things, therefore I shall ordain it for those who believe our revelations; Those who follow the Messenger, the “Ummi” Prophet, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear. Then those who believe in him and honour him, and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him; they are the successful”. (Ch.7, v.156-157) .

“The Ummi Prophet” is the well-known description of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) .

NOTE: Some translators of the Qur’an have rendered the word “Ummi” as meaning “illiterate”. This is an insult to the Holy Prophet. According to Tafsire-Ayyashi, Imam Mohammad Baqir has stated that the Holy Prophet was called “Ummi” because he was a denizen of “Ummul-Quraa”, i.e: Mecca. Imam Mohammad-Taqi has said that curse be on those who accuse the Holy Prophet of illiteracy. How could he have been an illiterate when the Qur’an says that he was commissioned “to recite Allah’s ayaats, to purify the people and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom?” “By Allah” added Imam Mohammad-Taqi, ‘the Holy Prophet was able to speak and write in 72 languages and he was only named “Ummi” because he lived in Mecca which was called “Ummul-Quraa”, (Tafsirul-Muttaqin). Of course, he was not taught by any human being All his knowdage came directly from Allah.

In Old Testament, Moses is reported to be saying - “The Lord, your God, will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you from your brethren, him you shall heed (Deuteronomy 18:15). “And the Lord said to me “They have rightly said all that they have spoken. I Will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren and I will put my words in his mouth. and he shall speak to them that I command him”. (Deuteronomy 18:17-18).

As regards, Jesus the Qur’an slates “And when Jesus, son of Mary said

‘O Children of Israel! Verily, I am the messenger of Allah unto you confirming that which was (revealed) before me in Torah and bringing good tidings of messenger (Rasul) who cometh after me whose name is Ahmed’, (Ch.61, v.6).

In the New Testament, a similar prediction by Jesus Christ is recorded in John 16:12 & 13:- “I have yet many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now, however, when the spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come”.

It should be noted that in old editions of the New Testament, the word “Paraclet” existed in the place of the words “The Spirit of Truth”. “Paraclet” meant “The Praised One” i.e. “Ahmed” or “Mohammad”. In order to save Christianity from embarrassment, the word “Paraclet” has been changed into “The Spirit of Truth” in the revised editions of the Bible.

Compare also the words “for he will not speak of his authority but whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come”, with the verses of the Holy Qur’an “Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired” (Ch.53, v.3-4).

It is evident from the foregoing passages that the coming of the last of the Prophets was the theme of every Prophet. Every one was expecting and waiting for him as they all accepted him to be the foremost amongst them. The Holy Prophet was imbued with divine attributes and character. The Holy Qur’an is infact a mirror of the Holy Prophet’s character and attributes and he takes precedence even over the Qur’an itself as he is referred to as “Light” which preceded the Qur’an:-

“Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain scripture” (Ch.5, v.1).

The sacred heart of the Holy Prophet was the repository of the Divine Knowledge. His heart was the recipient of the Qur'anic revelations:- "And verily it is a revelation of the Lord of the Worlds, which the True Spirit has brought down upon thy heart, that thou mayest be (one of the warners)." (Ch.26, v.192-194). This indicates that the Holy Prophet's heart was the Book which enshrined the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an:- "That this is indeed a noble Qur'an; In a Book kept hidden which none toucheth save the purified" (Ch.56, v.77-79). Are there adequate words to praise the Holy Prophet whose heart was the treasury and the fountain of the knowledge of the Qur'an? For these reasons it is highly sacrilegious to compare the Holy Prophet with other ordinary human beings. Of course, the Qur'an says:- "Say: I am a human being like you, revelation is sent to me that your God is only one God". (Ch.18, v.110). Although in form and appearance he was a human like us, his distinctive feature was that he was inspired by Allah. Every creature endowed with life is called an "animate". This definition would cover both animals and human beings; but we distinguish human being from animals by describing him as "rational animate". Similarly every man is an ordinary mortal as well as the one inspired by Allah. If we cannot place "a rational animate" on the same level with a brute, how can we place an "inspired human being" on the same level with an erring mortal? How can a prophet who has been commissioned by Allah to bring ordinary mortals to life be compared with us? The Qur'an says:-"O ye who believe, Obey Allah and the Messenger when he calleth you to that which may bring you to life". (Ch.8, v.24) According to Tafsire Safi, Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) has stated that by obeying the Prophet and the Imams and accepting their authority, the affairs of believers are straightened and justice and equity prevail amongst them and they are assured of paradise.

We shall now proceed to consider some other verses of the Qur'an relevant to the prophethood of the Holy Prophet:

Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them

an Apostle from among themselves, who reciteth unto them His revelations and causeth them to be sanctified, and teacheth them the Scripture and wisdom, although before that they had been in manifest error. (Ch.3, v.164)

And those who believe and do good works and believe in that which is revealed unto Mohammad and it is the truth from their Lord. He riddeth them of their ill-deeds and improveth their state. (Ch.47, v.2)

He it is who hath sent among the denizens of Ummul-Qura (i.e. Mecca) an apostle from among themselves, to rehearse to them His signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error. (Ch.62, v.2)

Mohammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets and Allah is aware of all things. (Ch.33, v.40)

NOTE: “Mohammad is not the father of any man among you”. The phrase “among you” is limited to the men of the “Ummat” and does not extend to the members of Ahlel-Baet as it is a historical fact that the Prophet was the father of his sons Kassim, Tayyib, Tahir and Ibrahim. In the Tafsir known as Majmaul-Bayan, It is stated that the Prophet had described Imam Hassan as “My son” and had further stated ‘My sons Hassan and Husain are Imams, whether they rise to assert their Imamate or pacifically remain silent’. In Talsire-Safi, the Prophet is reported to have said “All children of a daughter are regarded to be from their father’s family except Fatima’s children. I am their father and progenator.” (Tafsirul-Muttaqin p.507)

And Allah Himself has given Hasan and Husain the title of “Sons of the Holy Prophet” in the Ayat of Mubahila, which will be given in a later chapter.

He it is who hath sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may cause it to prevail over all religions. Allah is sufficient as a Witness. (Ch.48, v.28)

Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful amongst themselves. Thou seest them bowing and falling prostrate (in worship), seeking bounty from Allah and (His) acceptance. The mark of them is on their foreheads from the traces of prostration. Such is their likeness in the Torah and their likeness in the Gospel. (Ch.48, v.29)

We have sent thee Inspiration as We sent it to Noah and the Prophets after him. We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ishmael and Issac and Jacob and the Tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon and to David We gave the Psalms. (Ch.4, v.163)

We have not sent thee (O Mohammad) save as a universal (messenger) to men, giving them good tidings, and warning them (against sin) but most men understand not. (Ch.34, v.28)

Blessed is He who hath revealed unto His slave the Criterion (the Quran), that he may be a warner to the universe. (Ch.25, v.1)

NOTE: Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq has stated that the Holy Prophet was sent as Messenger to the entire Universe including mankind and 'Jinn' (Tafsire-Safi p.414)

O Prophet, We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and warner. And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission and as a lamp that giveth light (Ch.33, v.45-46)

“Ya Sin” By the Wise Qur’an, Thou art of the Prophets on a straight path. (Ch.36, v.1-4)

NOTE: Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq has stated that ‘YA SIN’ was one of the names of the Holy Prophet and names - ‘O Hearer of Revelation’. (Tafsire-Safu p.421).

Mohammad is but an Apostle: many were the Apostles that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on

your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah: But Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve Him) with gratitude. (Ch.3, v.144)

Say: Obey Allah and the Apostle. But if they turn back Allah loveth not those who reject Faith. (Ch.3, v.32)

And the unbelievers say: “Why is not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?” But thou art truly a warner, and to every people a guide. (Ch.13, v.7)

Say: If you do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Ch.3, v.31)

CHARACTER OF THE HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

The Holy Prophet had declared that he had been commissioned by Almighty to consummate the virtues of character.

Noble qualities abounded in his fine character; truthfulness, beneficence, forbearance, fortitude, courage, profundity, humbleness, forgiveness and loyalty were a few of the outstanding traits that endeared him to the hearts of men.

Centuries have gone by, but the character of Mohammad (s.a.w.) has remained so distinctive and forceful that not even those sceptical of his Message can ignore it. His exemplary conduct had the greatest influence on the spiritual and moral transformation which was accomplished in his day. The principles of equality, brotherhood, justice and freedom which he defined as integral elements of the faith have accomplished their task by engendering a righteous character and noble spirit in Muslim society. The Qur’an gives eloquent prominence to the character of the Holy Prophet in the following verses:

And thou (standest) on an exalted, standard of Character. (Ch.68, v.4).

There hath come unto you an Apostle from amongst yourselves; it grieves him that ye should perish; Ardently anxious he is over you; to the believers he is most kind and merciful. (Ch.9, v.128)

We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures (Ch.21, v.107)

Say: (O Mohammad): If the Beneficent One had a son, then I am the first amongst the worshippers. (Ch.43, v.81)

NOTE: To be the foremost worshipper amongst the entire creation, is the most treasured virtue. (Tafsire-Safi p.458)

We have exalted thy fame. (Ch.94, v.4)

Nor doth he (Mohammad) speak of (his own) desire. It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired. (Ch.53, v.3-4)

NOTE: The foregoing verse makes it clear that every word uttered by the Holy Prophet was inspired! Can such a personality be found, other than Muhammad (s.a.w.) who is described by the Allah as “having exalted standard of character”. “a Mercy for all Creatures”, whose “fame was exalted” by Almighty, and whose every word of speech was an inspiration? Such a kind, truthful, friendly and exalted personality deserves the blessings of every one. Indeed, He is the one upon whom Allah, His Angels and the believers shower their blessings each time his name is mentioned:-

Verily, Allah and His angels bestow blessings on the Prophet. O Ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. (Ch.33, v.56)

It is part of the Mercy of God that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (God's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast

taken a decision, put thy trust in God. For God loves those who put their trust (in Him). (Ch.3, v.159)

THE QUR'AN

What is the Qur'an? The answer is given in Ch.10, v.1: "It is the Book of Wisdom." Why was it revealed? Ch.31, v.3 answers -"A Guide and Mercy to the doers of good." The verse clearly indicates that the Qur'an is meant to be a guidance for the entire humanity but a mercy only to the "doers of good." Who are he "doers at good?" This is answered by verses 3 and 4 of Ch.2: "Those who guard against evil, believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in their prayers, spend out of what We have provided for them and who believe in that revealed unto thee and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the Hereafter."

The foregoing introductory words serve to show the object of the Holy Qur'an. It is a Law of Guidance. It is a Message of Instruction (Ch.80, v.11) which has to be obeyed and followed.

All the traditions which commend the constant recitation of the Qur'an have one common purpose in view, namely, that a person should keep in close contact with the Qur'an by constantly reading it to appreciate his duties and obligations and endeavour to fulfil them. There is no purpose in merely reading a Monarch's Proclamation with no intention of abiding by it. Similarly, there is no virtue in merely reciting the Law of Guidance (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) unless there is a sincere desire to follow the guidance.

Imam Ali, in one of his sermons, in Nahjul-Balagha, said:- "Read the Holy Qur'an carefully, because it is the most sublime of all the holy books; try to understand and study it diligently, because it is the best food for thought; enlighten your mind with its teachings, because its divine light is the best cure for diseased mentality; and read it with sincerely good intentions, because it contains very useful and

instructive episodes from the history of man”.

The Qur’an, as the Word of God, has precedence over all other scriptures. Ibn Mas’ud quotes a hadith which states that the Qur’an has superiority over all other things and anyone showing reverence and respect for the Qur’an is regarded as showing reverence and respect towards Almighty God.

Imam Ali has described the Qur’an as the best guide in the realm where Glory of God dwells. It contains the best of everything that can give satisfaction for a supermind. It is the greatest source of knowledge for mankind. It purifies one’s ideas and broadens visions. (Nahjul-Balagha).

The teaching and learning of the Qur’an has been stressed consistently by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Imam. “Know all, that one who has studied the Qur’an carefully, does not require any other book to guide him, and without knowledge of the Qur’an, no other knowledge is complete or useful”. (Nahjul-Balagha).

To one suffering from the consequences of his own vices and sins, Imam Ali advised:

“If you have lost balance of mind through attachment to vices and sins, then seek treatment and guidance from the Holy Book. It will cure your mind of disease of schism, doubts, heathenism and cruelty.” (Nahjul-Balagha).

To those afflicted by misfortunes and calamities, Hazrat Ali advises:

“Seek the help of Qur’an, it will teach you how to face misfortunes and calamities. Invoke the help of God through Qur’an, go towards Him with its love in your mind, But remember, do not make Qur’an an instrument of beggary in society because it teaches you how to seek help from God; take instructions from the Qur’an and make it your leader to take you to the dominion of God.” (Nahjul-Balagha)

Lastly, Hazrat Ali forbids anyone from giving preference to his own views against the Qur'anic doctrines:

“Believe me, your views are quite misleading. Have patience in calamities and sufferings. For all of you, there is a beacon (in the Qur'an), try to be guided by it. Islam has its aim for each of you to aspire and to attain it. God has imposed certain duties and obligations upon you, discharge these duties and comply with those commandments. On the Day of Judgment I shall bear witness to your activities.” (Nahjul-Balagha).

The following verses of the Holy Qur'an fully establish that the Qur'an occupies the highest position equal to that of Ahlul-Bait as proclaimed by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) in Hadith-u-Thaqalain:

This is the Book; sure, without doubt, in it is guidance to those who fear God; (Ch.2, v.2)

Say: “If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support. (Ch.17, v.88)

Or they may say, “He forged it.” Say, “Bring ye then the Suras forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than God! -if ye speak the truth! (Ch.11, v.13)

And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. (Ch.2, v.23)

We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss. (Ch.17, v.82)

And We have explained to man, in this Qur'an every kind of

similitude: Yet the greater part of men refuse (to receive it) except with ingratitude! (Ch.17, v.89)

Verily this Qur'an does guide to that which is most right (or stable), and gives the glad tidings to the Believers who work, deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward. (Ch.17, v.9)

Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts looked up by them? (Ch.47, v.24)

Then the Apostle will say: "O my Lord! truly my people took this Qur'an for just foolish nonsense. (Ch.25, v.30)

IMAMATE (THE APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION)

The belief in Imamate is the fourth fundamental principle of the Ithnaasheri Faith. An Imam is the vicegerent of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Representative of Allah amongst His creatures.

It is generally believed that it is essential to have an Imam to protect the faith and interpret the laws promulgated by the Holy Prophet. These limited functions, though essential, do not by themselves establish the absolute necessity for an Imam as those could also be performed by a Muslim Ruler or Ulemas (jurists). It was this restricted conception of the Imam which had given rise to imposters. Literally the word "Imam" means a leader; but as used in this chapter, it means "an Imam appointed by God to guide mankind", (Qur'an Ch.21, v.73)

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) has, in one of his sermons, given the following description of an Imam:- "The Almighty God has placed his Trust in Aal-e-Mohammad (i.e. the Imams of the house of Mohammad). They are the strongholds where His commands receive protection and from which they are expounded and interpreted, they are fountain-heads of Allah's knowledge; they are

the shelter for his teachings; they are the refuges for Heavenly Books and they are mountain like citadels to defend His religion. None of the followers of the Holy prophet could be brought in comparison with them, and none should be considered equal to them. There can be no resemblance between those who distribute (Allah's) bounties and those who receive them" (Nahjul-Balagha).

Indeed the Iman's are "Ulul-Amr" invested with Allah's authority (Qur'an, Ch.4, v.59). All the angels, and particularly those who "govern the event" (Ch.79, v.5) and those who distribute blessings" (Ch.51, v.4) are under the command of "Ulul-Amr" (i.e. the Imams).

According to Allamah Majlisi, the greatest theologian of the Safavid period, "the Imamate is on the authority of God to Apostle and is not to be determined by the Agreement or choice of men" (Hayatul Qulub, Vol.3). The Imams are mediators between God and Mankind. The Imams are sinless, and every Imam is a final and absolute authority in spiritual and religious matters. An Imam is an absolute necessity or without one, says a Hadith, "verily the earth itself would collapse with all those who dwell upon it".

An Imam, as divinely appointed representative of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) has, like the Holy Prophet, precedence over all previous prophets, and apostles. This is supported by the Holy Prophet's hadith, as quoted in "Arjahul-Matalib" by Maulvi Obeidullah Amritsari, who says that the Holy Prophet said:-

"Whoever's Prophet I am, Ali is his Imam". If the Holy Prophet was a prophet over the preceding prophets and apostles, then Ali must also be deemed to have been an Imam over such prophets and apostles. It is logical to accept that the Imams' jurisdiction extends to every creature over whom the Holy Prophet has spiritual domain.

The Ithnaasheri believe that there were, by express divine appointment, twelve Imams in the following order:

1. Ali Ibn Abi Tallb, usually styled 'Murtaza' (the chosen), 'Asadullah' (the lion of Allah), 'al-Ghalib' (the victorious); was Born in Kaaba and was murdered during morning prayers in the Mosque at Kufa, Iraq, in A.H. 40. (661 C.E.)
2. Hasan Ibn Ali, styled 'Mujtaba', (the Approved). Died at the age of 46 years poisoned at the instigation of Moawiya the son of Abu Sufiyan, in AH. 50. (670 C.E.)
3. Husain Ibn Ali, Shahide-Kerbala, the Martyr of Kerbala A.H. 61, (680 C.E.).
4. Ali Ibn-ul-Husain, known for his piety 'Zainul Abidin', (the Ornament of the Worshippers). Died AH. 95. (713 C.E.), poisoned by Waleed Ibn Abdil Malik bin Marwan.
5. Mohammad Ibn Ali, known as 'Al-Baqir', (the Explainer of Mysteries); a man of great learning and ascetic austerity. Born A.H. 57, (676 C.E.) died A.H. 113, (731 C.E.) poisoned by Hisham bin Abdil Malik.
6. Jafar Ibn Mohammad, known as 'Sadiq', (the True); was the eldest son of Mohammad al-Baqir. Born in Medina in A.H. 80 (699 C.E.); "As a scholar, a litterateur, and jurisconsult, his reputation stands high among all sects of Moslems. His learning and his virtues, the transcendental purity and truth of his character, won him the veneration even of the enemies of his family" (Spirit of Islam). He died in A.H. 148, (765 C.E.) poisoned by Mansur Dawaneeqi.
7. Musa Ibn Jafar, known as 'al-Abdus-Saleh', (the Holy Servant) on account of his piety, and "his efforts to please God". He died at Baghdad on the 25th Rajab A.H. 183, (800 C.E.) in a prison where he was confined for a number of years by Harun-ur-Rashid, who was extremely jealous of the veneration in which the Imam was held in Hijaz. De sacy says Musa was put to death secretly in his confinement by order of Harun. His suffering and his pure and exalted character endeared him greatly to all classes of people, and gained for him the title of "KAZIM" (the patient).
8. Ali Ibn Musa, known as 'ar-Riza', (the Acceptable), for the purity of his character. "He was a scholar, a poet and a philosopher of

the first rank”. (Ameer Ali). He died at TUS in Khorasan in A.H. 202 (818 C.E.) poisoned by Mamun-ar-Rashid.

9. Mohammad Ibn Ali, known as ‘al Jawwad’ for his munificence and generosity, and “Taqi’ for his piety. He died in A.H. 223 (835 C.E.) poisoned by Mu’tasim, the Abbaside ruler.
10. Ali Ibn Mohammad, known as ‘Naqi’, (the pure), ‘al-Hadi’ (the guide). He died at Samarra A.H. 254 (868 C.E.) poisoned by Mu’taz, the Abbaside ruler.
11. Hasan Ibn Ali, and called ‘al-Askari’ for residence at Samara. “He was a man of eminent piety and great nobility of character, a distinguished poet and litterateur. He died at Samarra, poisoned by Mo’tamad bil-lah, the Abbaside ruler, in A.H. 260 (874 C.E) (Ameer Ali).
12. Mohammad Ibn Hasan al-Mahdi, born A.H. 255 (869 C.E.). He is the last Imam and is still alive and expected to establish Islam in the whole world and to restore the purity of human race. He is styled “Ghalib” the (Secluded), Muntazr (the awaited) and the Qaim (One who will stand with sword in the way of Allah).

The following verses of the Qur’an amply support the belief that the Imam is appointed by Allah through the Holy Prophet and preceding Imam. It would be illogical to leave the erring masses to elect some erring human beings to be Imams “to guide mankind by Allah’s command”. The decision on any issue by the votes of majority cannot be made applicable to religious affairs. If the Rule of Majority were to be applied to religious matters, it would lead to chaotic condition. For instance, the majority of Muslims have discarded “purdah” (the veil), most of them indulge in dances, music and cinema shows. If their votes were to prevail, the Sharia would be superseded by making lawful those acts which the Sharia declared to be unlawful. Islam is governed by the law of God and not by the votes of the majority of Muslims, however eminent they may be.

Commonsense also demands that the vicegerents of the Prophet

should be infallible like the Prophet himself and the infallibility of the Imams is a fundamental principle of the Ithnaasheri faith which is based on the Holy Qur'an.

And remember when Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled: He (Allah) said "I have appointed thee an Imam to the mankind" He (Abraham) pleaded - "And also (Imams) from my offspring!" He (Allah) answered: "My covenant includeth not the evil-doers"(Ch.2, v.124)

NOTE: The above verse makes it abundantly clear that the appointment of Imam is made by Allah and that a person who is not sinless can never attain that position. (Tafsirul-Muttaqin, p.221)

O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Prophet and those of you who are invested with (Allah's) authority. (Ch.4, v.59)

NOTE: An eminent Sunni Muhaddith, Jamalul-Deen, states in Rauzatul-Ahbab that when this verse was revealed, Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari addressed the Holy Prophet and said: "We know Allah and His Apostle but who are the ones who are invested with authority?" The Prophet replied: "They are my Caliphs, the first of them is Ali Ibn Abi Talib, then Hasan, then Husain, then Ali Ibn-el-Husain, then Mohammad Ibn Ali, surnamed Baqir. O Jabir! when you meet him convey to him my salaams. Then Jafar Ibn Mohammad, then Musa Ibn Jafar, then Ali Ibn Musa, then Mohammad Ibn Ali, then Ali Ibn Mohammad, then Hasan Ibn Ali and then Mohammad Ibnel Hasan (Mahdi) who will fill the earth with justice and equity after it had been engulfed by oppression and Inequity".

We appointed them Imams who guided by our command when they were steadfast and believed firmly in our revelations. (Ch.32, v.24)

NOTE: The Imam (s.a.) had declared that as it was within the knowledge of Allah that Ale-Mohammad would be steadfast in suffering and adversity, He appointed them as Imam. (Tafasire-Safi. p.397).

And We make them Imams Who guide by Our Command, and We

inspired in them the doing of good deeds and the establishment of regular prayers, and the giving of alms; and they were worshippers of Us (alone). (Ch.21, v.73)

NOTE: The verse clearly defines the functions of an Imam. namely that he guides men with Allah's command, he is inspired to do good deeds, to establish prayers, to give alms and worships Allah alone.

Thy Lord doth create and chooseth as He pleases: no choice have they (in the matters). Glory to Allah! and exalted is He above all that they associate (with Him)! (Ch.28, v.68)

NOTE: The verse means that the choice of appointing an Imam is that of Allah alone and that people have no authority to appoint an Imam (Tafsire-Safi. p.381).

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels. "I will create a vicegerent on earth". They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? -Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not". (Ch.2, v.30)

God only wishes to remove all abomination from you, O Members Of the family! and to make you pure and spotless. (Ch.33, v.33)

Between them shall be a veil, and on the Heights Will be men who would know everyone by his marks: they will call out to the Companions of the Garden, "Peace on you". They will not have entered, but they will have an assurance (thereof). (Ch.7, v.46)

You are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God. (Ch.3, v.110).

O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to God and His Apostle, if ye do believe in God and the Last

Day: That is best, and most for final determination. (Ch.4, v.59)

They perform (their) vows and they fear a Day whose evil flies far and wide. And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphans, and the captive, (Saying) “We feed you for the sake of God alone: No reward do we desire from you, nor thanks. (Ch.76, v.7-9)

The day We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imams: those who are given their record in their right hand will read it (with pleasure), and they will not be dealt with unjustly in the least. (Ch.17, v.71)

INFALLIBILITY OF THE IMAMS (ISMATE AIMMA)

The verses quoted under the “Imamate” above make it clear that the Imams should be immaculate and free from sins. Abraham was told by Allah in definite terms that the covenant of the Imamate “includeth not the evil-doers”. We have also been told in another verse that the Imams receive inspiration from Allah “to do good deeds, to establish prayers, to give alms and to worship Allah alone”. A few additional verses from the Qur’an are appended below which show the infallibility of Imams whom the Ithnaasheri Faith accepts as rightful successors of the Prophet

Allah’s wish is but to keep removed all abomination from you, O People of the House, and to keep you pure and spotless.(Ch.33, v.33)

And ye do not desire aught unless Allah willeth. Allah is Knower, Wise. (Ch.76, v.30)

NOTE: The twelfth Imam has stated:- “Our hearts are repositories of Allah’s Will. When he Wills, we also will it”. (Tafsire-Safi p.519).

And they say the Beneficent has taken unto Himself a son. Be he

glorified. Nay but (those whom they call sons) are honoured slaves. They speak not until He hath spoken, they act according to His command. (Ch.21, v.26-27)

NOTE: In Ziyarate-Jamia, which has been handed down by the Tenth Imam. Hazrat Ali-un-Naqi, we address the Imams in similar terms - "Peace be on the honoured slaves of Allah who speak not until He hath spoken and they act according to His command".

IMAMAT OF HAZRAT ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A.S.)

The Imamate of Imam Ali had been acknowledged by all the Prophets. Allama Shahabudeen records in "Tauzih-ud-Dalail", Ibn Abdul Barr writes in "Isti'ab" and Imam Thalabi states in his Tafseer of the Qur'an:-

"The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "On the night of the 'Miraaj' (Ascension), all the Prophets had assembled before me. God inspired me to ask them on what basis had they been appointed as Prophets? They answered: "We were commissioned as Prophets to attest to the Unity of Allah, to believe in your Prophethood and to accept the "wilayat" (i.e. the Imamate) of Ali Ibn Abi Talib".

Allama Muhyiddeen Arabi states in his book "Al Yawaqeat wal Jawahir", Sheikh Suleiman Balkhi Hanafi writes in "Yanabiul-Mawaddah" and Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal records in his "Musnad" and Mohamed Yusuf al Kanji Shafei writes in Fusulul-Muhimmah that the Holy Prophet had said:

"Whosoever desires to perceive Adam's knowledge, Noah's understanding and fear of God, Abraham's friendship with Allah, Jacob's grief, Joseph's grace, Moses' supplication and prowess, Job's patience, Jonnah's abstinence, John's piety, Jesus's devotion, and Mohammad's character and personality, he should look at Ali Ibn Abi Talib; for verily in him are enshrined the character and qualities of ninety Apostles".

The possession of the character and qualities of Apostles coupled with being the living image of the character and personality of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) undoubtedly placed Hazrat Ali in a pre-eminent position in relation to all the Prophets save the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.). Hazrat Ali himself was questioned on this delicate comparison at the most critical period of his life when on the 20th Ramazan, 40 A.H., he was lying mortally wounded in his house at Kufa. He was visited by a number of friends and companions and, in his anxiety to serve Islam even during his last breaths, Ali said to them “Question me before you miss me, but please shorten your questions”.

Sa’sa’a Ibn Sauhaan was amongst the visitors. He was a man of great learning and piety and a lecturer of renown in Iraq. He was also regarded as one of the closest confidants of Hazrat Ali. He approached Ali’s bed and said to the Imam - “Will you inform me whether you have precedence over Adam, or Adam takes precedence over you?”

The Imam replied: “Self-praise is repugnant; but Allah has commanded in the Qur’an to give publicity to His Bounty:(Ch.93, v.11).

“I say,” the Imam continued, “I have precedence over Adam.” Then Sa’sa’a questioned him about Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus and the Imam answered “I have precedence over all of them”. Sa’sa’a then inquired the reasons why he had been accorded precedence over these great prophets and the Imam gave detailed reasons which fully convinced the inquirer. Readers, who are interested to go into the details of the reasons given by Hazrat Ali, are referred to the following books:

- a. “Kursheed-e-Khawar, Vol.I p. 278 - 279
- b. “Tabaqaat” by Ibn Saad
- c. “Istiaab” by Ibn Abdil Barr
- d. “Maarif” by Ibn Qutaiba

Whilst the traditions show that Hazrat Ali was created from the same light as the Holy Prophet and as such was foreordained to be the Prophet's vicegerent, yet we have a number of instances and occasions when the Prophet in this worldly life had indicated Ali to be his successor. Firstly, at the time of announcing his mission to his kith and kin, when he declared Ali to be "my brother, my vicegerent and my Caliph." Secondly, when Ali was anxious to accompany the Prophet for the Tabuk expedition, the Prophet said to Ali "I have appointed thee my vicegerent and left thee in my stead, Return to my post and be my deputy over my people and thine. O Ali! art thou not content that thou art to me what Aaron was to Moses?" (Sairat, by Ibn Hisham, p. 897).

When the Prophet was returning from his last pilgrimage he received Allah's commandment "O Apostle! proclaim (the message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord, and if thou didst not, then thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission, and Allah will protect thee from men; for Allah guideth not those who reject Faith." (Ch.5, v. 70)

This was at a place called "Ghadir-Khum" and the Prophet assembled the people who were accompanying him and proclaimed: "Whosoever's Maulas (Master) I am, Ali also is his Maula (Master). Almighty God! Be a Friend to his friends and a Foe to his foes, help those who help him, and frustrate the hopes of those who betray him."

Allama Sibte Ibn Jauzi writes in "Khawas-ul-Umma": "The historians are agreed that the incident of Ghadir took place on the Holy Prophet's return from the last pilgrimage on the 18th Dhil-Hijjah in the presence of 120,000 companions of the Prophet". On page 20 of the same Book, Allama Sibte Ibn Jauzi states that the 'Maula' here signified Ali's Imamate and submission to his directions.

Imam Fakhruddeen Razi in his "Tafsir-el-Kabir" comments on the verse "O Apostle! proclaim (the message) etc." as follows in Vol. 3 p.635.

“The verse was revealed in honour of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him. And when this verse was revealed the Prophet held Ali’s hand and said “whosoever’s Maula I am, Ali is his Maula. My Lord be friend to those who befriend him and foe to those who are his enemies. Then Omar, may Allah be pleased with him, accosted Ali and said “Congratulations to thee, O son of Abu Talib, you have become my Maula and the Maula of every male and female believer”.

The celebrated Imam al-Ghazzali states in his book “Sirrul-Alameen”: “But the proof has manifested itself and there is universal agreement on the text of the tradition that on the day of “Ghadir-el-Khumm” the Holy Prophet (a.s.w.) in his Sermon had said “Whosoever’s Maula I am, Ali also is his Maula”, and Omar said “Congratulations to thee, O Father of Hasan, thou hast become today my Maula and the Maula of every Muslim male and female”, This constituted acceptance, acknowledgment and homage to Ali’s succession

“Then, after all this, the desire overpowered them because they loved rulership and bearing the flag of Khilafat and flying the ensign, and waving of wind when shaking the buntings and parades of the army’s horsemen and conquest of cities made them drink the cup of desire and they turned towards first disobedience (of the Divine Command) and they threw it (i.e, the Divine command) behind their backs and bought with it a small price (i.e, worldly power) and evil was what they bought.”

The author of Durre-Manthur and Ali Ibn Issa, the author of Kashful-Ghumma, have also referred to Hadith of Ghadir in their respective works. Mohammad Ibn Jarir Tabari has in fact written a book on this Hadith called “Kitabul-Wilaya” and Allama Ali Ibn Musa, who was the teacher of Imam Ghazzali, has stated that in a book-shop at Baghdad, he saw a book on Hadith “Ghadir” which stated on the cover “This is the 28th Volume on Hadith ‘Whosoever’s Master I am, Ali is his Master’ and the 29th volume would be written hereafter.

We shall now proceed to examine other verses in the Qur'an relevant to this subject:

So when thou hast accomplished (thy task) then appoint (a vicegerent). And strive (to recline) towards thy lord. (Ch.94, v.7-8)

In Tafsire-Safi it is stated on the authority of Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq (a.s.) that the verse means that when you have accomplished your Apostle's functions, then appoint Ali (a.s.) in your place and you may incline in this matter towards Allah.

This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam. (Ch.5. v.4)

NOTE: This verse was revealed after the inauguration of Hazrat Ali as Imam of the Muslims and vicegerent of the Prophet at Ghadir when the religion was perfected. (Tafsire-Safi, p.128).

A questioner questioned concerning the doom about to fall Upon the disbelievers, which none can repel. From Allah, Lord of the Ascending stairways. (Ch.70, v.1-3),

NOTE: These verses refer to the incident when the Holy Prophet had inaugurated Ali as his successor. Harith Ibn No'man challenged the Holy Prophet and said that if this appointment was made by Allah's directions, then a doom should overtake him (Harith) from the sky. Immediately a stone landed upon his head killing him instantly. (Tafsire Thalaby, 12).

And We have recounted everything in the evident and pure Imam. (Ch.36, v.12)

NOTE: Hazrat Ali has stated that "By Allah. I am Imamun-Mubeen". (Tafsire Safi, p.421)

Your Master is only Allah, and His Messenger and those who believe, who establish prayer and pay the Zakat whilst bowing down (in prayer). (Ch.5, v.58)

NOTE: The majority of the commentators are agreed that this verse was revealed in honour of Hazrat Ali when he gave away a ring from his finger to a beggar in the Mosque whilst bowing down in prayers. (Tafsirul-Muttaqin, p.139).

Those who disbelieve say; if only some portent were sent down upon him from his lord! Thou art a warner only and for every folk there is a guide. (Ch.13, v.7)

NOTE: The Holy Prophet has stated that “I am the warner and Ali is the guide”. (Tafsire-Safi, 259). Ibn Asakir, Ibn Majah, Thualabyi and Suyuti corroborated this tradition.

O ye who believe: Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed).(Ch.9, v.119)

NOTE: Imam Mohammad Baqir has stated that we are meant by the “true ones”; and Imam Raza has stated that by “true ones” are meant the Imams (a.s.) (Tafsire-Safi, p.219).

Those who disbelieve say: Thou art no messenger (of Allah). Say: Allah and whosoever hath true knowledge of the Book, is sufficient witness between me and you. (Ch.13, v.43)

NOTE: Imam Mohammad Baqir has stated that Allah is referring to us in this verse as “possessing true knowledge of the Book” and Hazrat Ali was the first and foremost amongst us in this respect. (Tafsire Safi, p. 263). It is stated in “Ihtijaje Tabrasi” that Hazrat Ali was meant by the phrase “who has true knowledge of the Book”

“And stop them, for they are to be questioned” (Ch.37, v.24).

NOTE: The verse means that the people will be questioned about the Imamate of Hazrat Ali. (Tafsire Safi, p426).

About what are they disputing? Concerning the Great News, About which they are not agreed. (Ch.78, v.1-3) .

NOTE: It is stated in 'Al-kafi' the Imam of Hazrat Ali is meant by the "Great News"; and Imam Mohammad Baqir has confirmed that "the great news" means the Imam of Hazrat Ali. (Tafsirul Muttaqin, p.703)

And We gave them our Mercy and assigned to them a high and Truthful Tongue (Ch.19, v.50)

NOTE: The high and truthful tongue referred to in this verse is Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Tafsire-Safi, p.314).

Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the Family of Abraham and the Family of Imran above, the entire universe. (Ch.3, v.33)

NOTE: There are three "Imrans" referred to in the Qur'an. The first was the father of Moses and Aaron, the second was the father of Mary and the third was the father of Hazrat Ali whose name was "Imran" and had the surname (kunniyyat) of Abu Talib. In this verse, the reference is to Abu Talib whose progeny was Ale-Mohammad who were chosen by Allah over the entire creation. (Tafsire-Safi, p.82).

Or do they envy mankind for what Allah hath given them of His Bounty? But We had already given the house of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and conferred upon them a great kingdom. (Ch.4, v.54)

NOTE: By great Kingdom is meant the Imam (Tafsire-Safi, p.112)

THE TWELFTH IMAM AL MAHDI (A.S.)

Hazrat Mohammad Ibnul-Hassan el-Askari is the 12th and the last divinely appointed Imam. He was born at Samarra (Iraq) on the 15th Shaban, 255 A.H. (C.E. 878-879). He is also called Imam-e-Ghaib (the Secluded Imam), Muntazar (the Awaited One), and al-Qaim (The one who will stand with sword in the service of Allah)

He went into concealment during his childhood at the age of 5 years after the murder of his father, Imam Hasan al-Askari, by the Abbaside Ruler, who was also determined upon capturing the Imam and

ending his life as he had learnt from traditions that he was Imam al-Mahdi. The Imam has since remained in “Ghaibat” (seclusion) and will re-appear at the time appointed by Allah to cleanse the world of impurity, oppression and wickedness and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

There is nothing irrational in the belief in the existence of the Imam in seclusion as almost all revealed religions look forward to the re-appearance of a Deliverer or a Messiah to bring about an earthly kingdom.

The longevity of his age need cause no concern as it is consistent with the ages of other Prophets like Jesus, Khizr, Elias and Idris who are believed by the Muslims generally, despite the lapse of centuries, to be still alive. (See Rabi-ul-Abrar by Zamakhshari). It is the belief of the Ithnasharis that all these Prophets, and Jesus in particular, are awaiting the re-appearance of Imam al-Mahdi to offer their obeisance to him. The Qur’an gives instances of Prophets who were vouchsafed longevity, the noted amongst them being Noah, who, the Qur’an says, continued to live with his folk “for a thousand years save fifty years”.

It is frequently questioned by the “Incredulous” persons - “What is the benefit of having an invisible Imam?”

We have already, in the Chapter on Imamat, shown that the Imams are the lights of Allah. Whether they are visible or not, their benefit to the creation, like that of the sun, is uninterrupted. When the sun is concealed from view by the clouds, its benefit continues to reach the creation. The moon and the stars shine and twinkle at night by the sun’s light which goes to show that despite its seclusion at night, the sun continues to give service to humanity through the moon and the stars. Similarly when the Imam is in seclusion, his beneficence continues to reach humanity. It should also be remembered that the Imam is endowed with the attributes of Allah. When Allah is Invisible

and yet continues to sustain and nourish the Universe, the Imam, likewise, though invisible for the present, continues to benefit the humanity as Allah's representative over His creation. It is not necessary that we should be able to see everything from Which we derive benefit. Air, the atmosphere we breathe and without which we should soon perish, is also unseen. It is therefore illogical to argue that benefit can only come from a visible Imam.

The belief in "Ghalib" (the Unseen) is one of the important articles of faith in Islam as in religious history one comes across a number of Prophets such as Idris, Joseph, Joshua, Jonnah, Saleh, Moses and others who had disappeared from the sight of mankind for some period to escape assassination. Jesus Christ had to be raised to heaven alive to save him from being crucified and even the Holy Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.) had to conceal himself for a time in a cave (Ghare Thor) to save his life. This has been the "sunnah" or the institutional rites followed by the Prophets when in danger of their lives and the "Sunnah" was accordingly adopted by the Twelfth Imam by the command of Allah. It was not just the question of escaping death but of saving the divine mission entrusted to them which would also have perished with their assassination.

Whilst there is unanimity amongst the Ithnaasheri on the doctrine of the "Ghaibat" (seclusion) of the Imam and of his re-appearance at the time appointed by Allah, this belief receives considerable support from a large number of other Muslim savants, historians and chroniclers who have acknowledged the fact that the Twelfth Imam is in fact Hazrat Mohammad Ibnul Hassan al-Askari and the fact that he is at present invisible (Ghaib) and that he will re-appear to establish peace, justice and order in the world. Names of few such savants, historians and chroniclers are appended below together with the titles of their relevant books:-

1. Allama Kamalu-Deen Mohammad Ibn Talha Ashafei in

- “Matalibu-Su-ul” ,
2. Sheikh Muhyid-Deen Arabi in “Futuhah-Makkiya”;
 3. Sheikh Abdul Wahhab Ibn Ahmed Shaarani in “Yawaqeeet-wal-Jawahir”;
 4. Allama Sibte Ibne Jauzi in “Tazkiratul-Khawasil-Umma”;
 5. Nuruddeen El Jami El Hanafi in “Shawahidun-Nubuwwat”;
 6. Nuruddeen Ali Ibn Mohammad Maliki in “Fusulul-Muhimma”;
 7. Mohammad Ibn Yusuf el Kanji Shafei in “Kifayatut-Talibin Talibin wal Bayan fi Akhbari Sahlbiz-Zaman”;
 8. Khwaja Mohammad Parsa in “Faslul-Khitaab”;
 9. Hafidh Mohammad Ibn al Fawaris in “Arbain”;
 10. Abdul-Haqq Muhaddith, of Delhi, in “Manaqibul-Aimma”;
 11. Seyyid Jamalud-Deen Ataullah in “Rauzatul-Ahbab”;
 12. Mulla Ali Qadiri in “Sharhe-Mishkaat”;
 13. Kadhi Jawaad in “Barahini-Thabita”;
 14. Shahabud-Deen Shamsud-Deen Ibn Omar Daulat Abadi in “Hidayatus-Suadaa”;
 15. Al-Muhaddith Ali Muttaqi in “Kanzul-ummal”;
 16. Ali Akbar Ibn Asadullah Maududi in “Mukashifaat”;
 17. Fazal Ibn Roozbahan in “Sharhe-Shamaile-Tarizi”;
 18. Sheikh Suleiman Qanduzi in “Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah”;
 19. Seyyid Ali Hamadani in “Mawwadatul-Qurbaa” ; and
 20. Ahmed el Khatib el Makki el Khwardzmi in his “Manaqib” , etc.
etc. etc,

When will the Imam re-appear? This is also a question frequently asked. It is a matter entirely within the knowledge of Allah but we can draw our own inferences from the symptoms and signs of approaching “Deliverance” mentioned in authenticated traditions recorded in the ancient books. Sheikh Muhyiddeen Arabi writes in “Futuhah-Makkiya”:-“Know ye that the re-appearance of Mahdi is bound to take place but he will not re-appear until such time as the world is engulfed by injustice and oppression. It will be then that he will come to fill the world with justice and equity Mahdi is from

the progeny of the Holy Prophet through his daughter Fatima, His great grand-father is Imam Husain Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib. His Father is Imam Hasan Al-Askari Ibn Imam Ali-an-Naqi, Ibn Imam Mohammad Taqi, Ibn Imam Ali Raza, Ibn Imam Musa Al-Kazim, Ibn Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq, Ibn Imam Mohammad-al-Baqir, Ibn Imam Zainul-Abidin, Ibne Imam Husain, Ibne Imam Ali Ibn Abl Talib. He bears the same name as that of the Holy Prophet and he will receive allegiance from Muslims between Rukn and Maqaam in Kaaba. In appearance and character, he will be like the Holy Prophet and he will conquer Rome” .

Amongst signs of Mahdi's re-appearance, Allama Zamakhshari quotes the following Hadith of the Holy Prophet in his book “Rabi-ul-Abrar”. The Holy Prophet has stated: “Woe be to the long-haired young-men of the West who will earn their livelihood by dancing and singing which will influence the low charactered people of the East and the West”.

Obviously the Holy Prophet, in this Hadith, was referring to the “Beatles” whose popularity amongst the vulgar folk has spread from the British Isles to Tokyo and from Hong-Kong to California.

In Biharul-Anwar, Imam Musa Ibn Jafar is reported to have said that one of the signs of the re-appearance will be that people would be carrying musical devices in their pockets and that music and songs will also penetrate into Mecca and Medina.

The Imam was obviously foretelling about the transistors which are now being carried about by people in their pockets and it is also a fact that the Meccans and Medinites are at present being entertained on radios by songs and music broadcast from Arab capitals.

Zamakhshari has also recorded in “Rabi-ul-Abrar” that the Holy Prophet has stated that amongst the signs of the re-appearance of Mahdi will be the inventions which would be capable of performing human being's work. This tradition refers to Computers which are

now being used all throughout the world and its use has also been advocated in the juridical field.

Ibn Shehr Ashob (who died in 588 A.H.) records in his “Manaqib” that Hazrat Ali has stated that amongst the signs of the reappearance of Mahdi would be that India would be afflicted because of Tibet and Tibet itself will be afflicted by China.

Zamakhshari writes in “Rabi-ul-Abrar” that in alluding to the signs of the re-appearance of Mahdi, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib has stated “O People of Iraq! shut your doors in the middle of the month of Ramadhan. On this day the rebellion man will be assassinated.”

This prognostication has been fulfilled as Abdul Karim Kassim was assassinated on the night of the 14th of Ramadhan. The event is still being celebrated as a Deliverance Day in Iraq.

These are some of traditions uttered nearly 1400 years ago and have been reproduced here from books written several centuries ago when the writers had no idea of radio transistors, computers etc. which are of recent invention. They illustrate the “unseen” knowledge possessed by the Holy Prophet and his vice-gerents which knowledge had been bestowed upon them by Allah- “He is the Knower of the Unseen and He revealeth unto none His secret, save unto a messenger who He hath chosen”, (Qur’an Ch.72, v.26) .

Most of the signs for the re-appearance of the Twelfth Imam have already manifested themselves and it is hoped and prayed that the day is not far off when “the earth shineth with the light of her Lord”. (Qur’an, Ch.39, v.69).

There is reference also in the scriptures of the appearance of Imam Mahdi. The Qur’an states “And verily we have written in Psalms after the Reminder: The earth will be inherited by my righteous

slaves.” (Ch.21, v.105). The author of “Tafsir” known as “Majmaul-Bayan” states that the Holy Prophet had predicted that: “Even if a day was left of the world, it would be lengthened to enable a member of my Ahlul-Baet to transform it into a place of justice and equity after it had been engulfed by injustice and oppression”.

Compare Psalms 22 1-4:

1. The earth is the Lord’s and the followers thereof the world and those who dwell therein;
2. For he has founded it upon the seas, and establish it upon the rivers;
3. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord
And who shall stand in his holy place?
4. He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully” .

And again Psalms 22 continues:-

7. Lift upon your head, O Gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
and the king of glory may come in.
8. Who is the king of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in Battle.
9. Lift upon your heads, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the king of glory may come in.
10. Who is this king of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the king of glory.”

The “King of glory” referred to in Psalms is Imam Mahdi Hazrat Mohammad Ibnul-Hasan-al-Askari (A.F.) and verse 4 above is a clear Interpretation of the words “Ibadiya-Salihun” used in Qur’an.

We shall now proceed to cite the verses of the Holy Qur'an which support the "Ghaibat" and the Imamat of the Twelfth Imam (A.S.):- Alif, Lam, Mim, This is the Book, a guidance unto those who guard against evil, who believe in the unseen, and establish prayers and spend of that we have bestowed upon them (Ch.2, v.1-3).

NOTE: Imam Jafar-As Sadiq has stated that the verse refers to our Shias who believe in the existence of "Ghaib" Imam. (Tafsirul-Multaqin p.3)

And we desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them Imams and to make them inheritors (Ch.28, v.5)

NOTE: Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq has stated that the verse was revealed in our honour. and Imamat shall remain with us until the Day of Judgment. (Tafsire Safi, p.376).

And Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others); and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and He will give them in exchange safety after fear; they will serve Me; they will ascribe nothing as partner unto Me; those who disbelieve henceforth, they are the miscreants. (Ch.24, v.55)

NOTE: This verse has been revealed in honour of the Twelfth Imam. (Tafsire Safi, p.353). See also Tafsire Qummi and Tafsire Majmaul Bayan.

That which Allah leaveth with you is better for you, if ye are believers! and I am not a keeper over you. (Ch.11, v.86).

NOTE: It is stated in Ikmalu-Deen that when the Twelfth Imam will re-appear he will receive this verse and say "I am Baqiyatullah. I am Allah's Caliph over you". Therefore every person who greets the Imam will do so in these words: "Salaam be on thee ya Baqiyatullah on this earth". (Tafsirul-Muttaqin, p.276).

Vain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah disdaineth (aught) save that He shall perfect His light, however, much the disbelievers are averse. (Ch.9, v.32).

He is Who hath sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions. Allah is sufficient as a witness. (Ch.48, v.28)

NOTE: Allah will cause Islam to prevail through the Twelfth Imam who will fill the earth with justice and equity after it had been engulfed with oppression and injustice. (Tafsir-e-Safi, p.471).

In Fusulul-Muhimma it is stated that the verse refers to the rule of Imam Mahdi, who would be a descendant of Fatima (S.A.). In Tafsire-Kabir and Durre-Mansur it is stated that the verse refers to the period when there will only be Islam on earth and no other religion. A lamb, a cow, a wolf and a lion will drink from the same spring without harming each other and the mankind will be secure from snakes and reptiles. This will be the time when Jesus will descend from the heavens. See Tafsire Durre-Mansur Vol. 3, p. 231; and also Tafsire-Kabir. It is clear that Jesus will come down when the last Imam, Hazrat Mahdi, has re-appeared. (Maulana Farman Ali's translation of Qur'an page 304) .

RESURRECTION -(QIYAMAT)

The belief in "Qiyamat" is predominant not only amongst Muslims but also amongst adherents of all revealed religions who believe in a state of existence hereafter when every human being will have to render an account of his or her actions on earth, and that happiness and misery of individuals will depend upon the manner in which they have performed the behests of their Creator. This is the fifth fundamental principle of the Ithnaasheri Faith.

The phrase “Yaumul-Qiyamah” (The Day of Resurrection) occurs seventy times in the Qur’an. It is called in forty verses “As-Sa’ah” (The Hour or the Day of Judgement) and Al-Ma’ad (The return of life after death). It is also called “Al-Qaari’ah” (The Calamity) (Ch.101); “Yaumul-Fasl” (The Day of Dividing) (Ch.31, v.21); “Al-Waqi’ah” (The Event) in Ch.56; “Al-Haaqqah” (The Reality) in Ch.69; “Yaumul-Hisaab” (Day of Reckoning) in Ch.38, v.53; “Yaumul-Baa’th (Day of Arousing) in Ch.30, v.56; “Yaumun-Muheet” (The Encompassing Day) in Ch.11, v.84 and “Yaumud-Deen” (Day of Judgement) in Ch.1, v.3.

The blasting of the trumpet by Angel Israfil will bring all through life and unite them at the place of gathering called “Al-Mahshar”.

The Qur’an says:

A day when the trumpet is blown and ye come in multitude. (Ch.78, v.18)

His word is the truth and His will be the sovereignty on the day when trumpet is blown. (Ch.6, v.73)

The Day when the trumpet is blown. On that Day We assemble the guilty white-eyed (with terror). (Ch.20, v.102)

The entire humanity will be standing in the presence of Allah. This called “The Mawqif” and the books in which the records of their activities have been made will be opened. Says the Qur’an:

And every man’s augury have We fastened to his own neck, and We shall bring forth for him on the Day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open. (Ch.17, v.13)

“Mizaaan”, the weighing of deeds, is a reality. Says the Qur’an:

Allah it is Who hath revealed the Scripture with truth, and the Balance (Mizaaan). How canst thou know? It may be that the Hour is nigh. (Ch.42, v.17)

Every one shall also have to cross over “Siraat”, the bridge over the Hell. This is a reality borne out by the Qur’an:
There is not one of you but shall approach it. This is fixed ordinance of thy Lord. (Ch.19, v.71)

The interrogation of the dead in the tomb by Munkir and Nakir is a reality and so is “adhabul-Qabr” (the punishment in the tomb). Says the Qur’an:

Then how (will it be with them) when the angels gather them, smiting their faces and their backs! (Ch.47, v.27).

The Paradise is a reality and numerous verses in the Qur’an can be quoted to support the fact but one only will be cited here which in clear terms explains the position:

And give glad tidings (O! Mohammad) unto those who believe and do good works; that theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow; as often as they are regaled with food of the fruit thereof they say: This was given us aforetime; and is given to them in resemblance. There, for them, are pure spouses; there for ever abide. (Ch.2, v.25)

The two important conditions for admission into Paradise should be noted. They are (1) Belief and (2) good work.

Hell is also a reality and supported by numerous verses of the Qur’an. Amongst them are these verses:

That is because Allah, He is the Truth, Lo! He brings to life the dead, and lo! He is able to do all things, And because the Hour (Sa’ah) will come, there is no doubt thereof; and because Allah will raise those who are in the graves. And among the mankind is he who disputeth concerning Allah without knowledge or guidance or a Scripture giving light. Turning away in pride to beguile (men) from the way of Allah. For him in this world is ignominy and on the Day of Resurrection We make him taste the doom of Burning. (Ch.22, v.6-9)

The first two verses of Chapter 22 of the Qur'an give a stern warning to be prepared for the Day of Resurrection:

O mankind! Fear your Lord. Lo! the earthquake of the Hour (of Doom) is a tremendous thing. On the day when ye behold it, every nursing mother will forget her nursing and every pregnant one will be delivered of her burden, and thou (Mohammad) wilt see mankind as drunken, yet they will not be drunken, but the Doom of Allah will be strong (upon them). (Ch.22, vs.1-2)

We shall now proceed to cite other verse relating to Resurrection: Every soul shall have a taste of death: and ye will be paid on the Day of Resurrection only that which ye have fairly earned. Whose is removed from the Fire and is made to enter Paradise, he is indeed triumphant: The life of this world is but comfort of illusion. (Ch.3, v.185)

Then they are restored unto Allah, their Lord, the Just. Surely His is the judgment and He is the Most Swift of Reckoners. (Ch.6, v.62)

NOTE: "SWIFT RECKONER": Allah will obtain from His creatures the account of their doings within the twinkling of an eye. (Tafsire-Safi, p.156).

Allah! There is no God save Him; He gathereth all unto a day of Resurrection whereof there is no doubt. Who is more true in statement than Allah? (Ch.4, v.87)

Nay, but whoever surrendereth his Whole self to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his Lord; And there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. (Ch.2, v.112)

Allah wilt judge between you at the Day of Resurrection, and Allah will not give the unbelievers any way (of success) against the believers. (Ch.4, v.141)

Say (unto them, O Mohammad): Allah giveth life to you, then causeth

you to die, then He gathereth you unto the Day of Resurrection whereof there is no doubt: but most of mankind know not. (Ch.45, v.26)

Thinketh man that We shall not assemble his bones; Yea, verily We are able to restore his very fingers! (Ch .75, vs.3-4)

How (will it be with those) when We have brought them all together to a Day of which there is no doubt, when every soul will be paid out in full what it hath earned, and they will not be wronged. (Ch.3, v.25)

Beautified is the life of this world for those who disbelieve; they make a jest of the believers. But those who keep their duty to Allah will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. Allah giveth without stint to whom He will, (Ch.2, v.212)

And he who turneth away from Rememberance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection. He will say: My Lord! wherefor hast thou gathered me (hither) blind when I was wont to see? He will say: So (It may be) Our revelations came unto thee but thou didst forget them. In like manner thou art forgotten this Day. (Ch.20, v.124-126)

No one, not even the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), has knowledge as to when the Day of Resurrection will be as it is within the absolute knowledge of Allah. Indeed, this was the answer given by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) to the Qureish when they inquired about the matter.

They ask thee about the (final) Hour-when will be its appointed time? Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): None but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth. Only, all of a sudden, will it come to you." They ask thee as if thou wert eager in search thereof: Say: "The knowledge thereof is with God (alone), But most men know not". (Ch.7, v.187)

Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with God (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow: nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with God is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things). (Ch.31, v.34)

We have, however, got from Ahadith an idea of the Signs which will precede the Quiyamat. Some of these Signs are of general type, describing the condition of the society at that time, while a few are Specific Signs.

Some of the General Signs, according to Imam Jafar-As-Sadiq (a.s.). are that the infliction of paralysis will be on the increase and there would be an increase in sudden deaths. According to Rauzatul-Waizeen, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has included the following amongst the signs of Qiyamat:

- a. Disappearance of ilm (knowledge) and the appearance of Jahl (ignorance);
- b. Increase in drunkenness and debauchery, and
- c. Increase in the number of female population over males to the extent of one male against 50 females.

Among the Specific Signs are appearance of Dajjal, the Dabbatul-Ardh. the rising of the sun from west, Reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) and descent of Prophet Isa (a.s.)

PART TWO :

ACTS OF WORSHIP
(FURU-E-DEEN)

FURU-E-DEEN

THE BRANCHES OF THE RELIGION, I.E ACTS OF WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

A good tree is recognised by the taste of its fruits and a sound religion is recognised by the product of worship.

Christianity can boast of the glory of its cathedrals which, it claims are mighty citadels of Faith manifesting God's Majesty -
Soaring as Hymns of Praise
Wrought in Stone, They stand
serene and strong

But the cathedrals are still what they were meant to be, “prayers in stone”. Although they are visited by tourists in thousands, their pews are deserted and the service is attended by a handful of old men and women mainly attracted by music of their organs and choir of young men and charming damsels singing hymns in the praise of their Lord!

If the object of divine worship is to mould human character, then Christianity has miserably failed to attain this object. Recently a Christian writer in an East African daily paper reported that “pop music” was substituted for hymns in a service conducted at All Saints Cathedral at Nairobi and that there were no prayers and no reading from the Bible. The “pop music” attracted a large congregation and there was not an empty seat to be found in the Cathedral and claimed that the occasion was a great success! (Daily Nation, July 23rd, 1974).

Music may claim to be the lovely Queen of all arts but it lacks serenity and solemnity essential in the worship of Allah. Music and songs are highly sensuous materials and they tend to become explosive when associated with young men and women. One can discern this explosion amongst “Beatles and pop singers” who have contributed

to a very large degree in the formation of permissive societies and promiscuous associations. The most disturbing aspect of the picture is that neither the Church nor the Christian States can do anything to halt this explosion. The death in flagrant delicto in Paris of a famous Cardinal, a prince of the Roman Catholic Church and a personal friend of Pope Paul VI, in the apartments of a young blonde married woman exposes the hypocrisy of the doctrine of celibacy of priesthood imposed by the Roman Church. "The Danielous Affair" is the scandal of Paris which has rightly been called "the mother city of scandals" (Time, July 1, 1974).

Sex shops abound in Christian Capitals. Pornography may be purchased without restriction. There are frank sex shows in many theatres and the act of coition is shown on cinema screens and beamed direct into each home by television, and the Church appears to be impotent to restrain it. When a group of nude girls parading the street was accosted by a Christian priest carrying a banner "Prepare to meet thy God," the leading girl in the group answered "I am prepared, I have brought a photo for Him to sign!" Official approval of this state of affairs may be logically deduced from the fact that a probation officer attached to a Crown Court in England advocated that the services of prostitutes should be prescribable under the National Health Scheme to satisfy the lust of blackguards indulging in violent sexual acts! (The Spectator, February 23, 1974).

We may form our own conclusion on the sick state of a society whose disease Christianity has miserably failed to cure.

Islam does not even approve of an attractive or picturesque houses of worship. The mosques contain no semblance of attraction as the congregation is expected to be attracted not by grandeur of the structures but motivated by pure spirit of worship. Allah has said in Hadith-e-Qudsi "I cannot be found in palacial or glamorous buildings; you can only find Me in broken and dilapidated mosques". Again, Allah

has said: “The heavens and the earth cannot contain Me; but the broken heart of a sincere believer can”. There are no attractive choirs of singers or musical instruments in a mosque and its only articles of furniture are limited to a pulpit, coarse prayer mats and perhaps a wall-clock to indicate the time at prayers. Women are not found in a mosque as their proper place of worship, according to the Holy Prophet’s tradition, is within the four walls of their homes. Islam does not countenance, but condemns, the practice of “Dev-Dasi”, the dedication of maiden girls to the idols of a temple to be sexually exploited by the priests of the temple and end their infamy in a brothel or a bawdy house. Islam treats women as sacred creation of Almighty and the word “Harem” (which has been widely misinterpreted in the West) assigns a hallowed place to a woman in her husband’s home. The term “Harem” is ordinarily applied to the sacred Mosque of Mecca and Muslim women are indeed fortunate to be placed by Islam in the dignified position of “Harem”. There have been undoubtedly abuses of “Harems” by lustful monarchs or sexual maniacs as there have been abuses of the Harem of Mecca when 365 idols were placed therein to be worshipped. But these abuses, committed by human follies, do not detract either the “Kaaba” or the womanhood from their dignified position as “Harems”. The Holy Prophet did not desecrate Kaaba because of the presence of 365 idols in it but cleansed it of their presence. Similarly we are not expected to desecrate womanhood and turn her into a street girl because of the abuses of “Harem” by sensuous monarchs and sexual maniacs. We have to assign to them their proper place in womanhood. Her feminist rewards do not consist in dances and cabarets but in caring for her children and bringing them up as worthy Muslims. Her liberation does not consist in her being a suffragist but in feeling confidence in herself as a wife and mother. A Muslim woman is not ashamed to glory in her being a woman and enjoying the satisfaction of having honourable qualities of faithfulness to her husband, affection for her children, and fulfilment of her duties as the Queen of her own home.

Unless we understand why we are here on earth at all, we may blunder badly. We spend our energies wholly on physical needs or animal appetites, on social trivialities or amusements, or intellectual curiosities or futile aims; or endless labour whose rewards are used only to gain these things. We spend and strive to gain a healthy body, a well-nourished body, a finely dressed body. This is good but are these goals an end in themselves? Will the clothes, the food and the stamina always keep us from errors or sins that end in bane and perdition?

We are not here for the body's sake alone but much more for soul's sake. We have to feed, clothe and shelter the body only that it may be instrumental in the attainment of Divine pleasure. We are here to work for the money needed for the body's food, clothing and shelter only that in the end it may carry us along the straight path to God. Earthly life provides for us opportunity whereby we can strive towards the life to come.

Men who have no interest in higher aims, no faith in spiritual ends, no reverence for uplifting ideals, must necessarily fall into moral offence and intellectual defiance, that is "Materialism". Materialists may say what they like but without religious ethics a worthwhile civilization cannot be built up successfully.

Materialism is a temporary phase of man's inability to comprehend the facts of life. To those who wish to escape from the tyranny of materialism, the belief in the existence of one God offers the most effective way and the safest road.

A study of Hadithe-Mufazzal as narrated by Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (a.s) (translated into English and published by Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust of Karachi), which contains unchallengeable proofs on the existence of God, helps us to understand the true relationship between the Divine Being and human being and will enable us to realise our own spiritual potentialities.

Every nation's most burning problem today is human ignorance of divine laws. It cannot be denied that crimes of violence and sordidness, which are the remnants of animality expressed in brutality exist in human life. The concupiscence in human nature, named by the Shariat as "Nasfe-Ammarah", is a fact for all practical purposes. The Qur'an says:-

"Lo! the (human) soul enjoineth unto evil, save that my Lord hath mercy." (Ch.12, v.53).

But to struggle against "Nasfe-Ammarah", we have the divine laws and the examples of the Maasumin to guide us to the pinnacle of divine goodness. If others behave wrongly, let us have the pleasure of behaving rightly. If others are foolish and selfish, let us have the satisfaction of being wise and altruistic. If humanity is going downhill, let us start going uphill.

To return to our theme on the object of worship. The object of divine worship in Islam is not merely to glorify Allah Whose Glory needs no glorification. The Islamic worship is intended to mould human character and the various acts of worship are prescribed to elevate the character of the worshipper and restrict his baser attributes. Rightly understood and rightly performed, the divine worship in Islam ennoble character and protects society by curbing wicked acts and designs. For the purpose of illustration, let us consider "salaat" the prayers which a Muslim is required to perform five times a day. This duty brings home to an individual Muslim that he has to stand before his Creator 5 times a day to account for the deeds committed by him during the interval of one "salaat" to the other. Such consciousness should be sufficient to deter any person from sinful or evil acts. Again, the shunning of all impurities is imperative before embarking on any prayer. No one can even enter a mosque with impure body or garments, much less can he join in any prayer in a state of impurity. Does not the obligation to keep oneself in a state of constant purity for the purpose of five daily prayers ensure that the

worshipper, by reason of the “salaat”, shields himself from all acts which entail physical impurities? Indeed, according to the Qur’an, the whole object of “salaat” is to restrain an individual from lewdness and inequity. (Qur’an: Ch.29, v.45). He must be a daring Muslim indeed to commit an act of inequity knowing that within the next few hours he has to stand before his Creator in prayers and say “We worship Thee alone and seek help from Thee.” The Holy Prophet has described “salaat” as the “Miraaj”, an ascension for a believer; and hence a believer has to be “purity personified” before he commences his journey towards his Lord. Earthly legislators promulgate laws to prevent crimes and physicians prescribe prophylactics against diseases. But can there be a better measure to prevent crimes and diseases of the hearts than “salaat” prescribed five times a day by Islam?

The same object of ennobling human character and restricting his baser attributes are intended by other acts of worship in Islam. The fast, during the entire month of Ramadhan, is prescribed to enable us to guard against evil.

Guarding against evil is the essential safeguard for the protection of society. The object of Islamic fast is not, as is sometime contended, to kill germs (or jantu) in human body. A body enfeebled by continuous fast can hardly be expected to do that. Sufficient varieties of antibiotics are obtainable from chemists to kill “jantus”. Fasting is prescribed by Islam, not to kill “jantus”, but to destroy the power of evil in human beings.

The destruction of all evils is the foundation stone of Islamic faith. The obligation for the payment of zakaat and khums are steps in the direction of destroying the evils of niggardliness and avarice and replacing them by the virtues of generosity and benevolence.

The pilgrimage to the Holy Kaaba of nearly one and a half million persons year by year is meant to portray in this physical world a

picture of the Day of Resurrection. The cries of “Labbaik, Allahumma Labbaik” (My Lord! I am at Thy service) rising from hundreds of thousands of pilgrims at the same time illustrates, though in miniature, the scene of the entire creation crying out “Nafsi, Nafsi” (save me, my Lord! save me) on the Day of Resurrection. It is erroneous to compare pilgrimage with any worldly conference or congress. No discussions are held during pilgrimage on any social, political or even religious questions. There is no room or time for such discussion. Every person is engaged solely in seeking Allah’s blessings and forgiveness: and all acts of worship, whether in the centre of Kaaba or on the plain of Arafat or in Minaa, are directed towards elevating human character and the destruction of evil. The act of sacrificing an animal in emulation of Patriarch Abraham, is a symbol to demonstrate the pilgrim’s determination to sacrifice everything to cleanse the earth of all evils.

The unparalleled bitterness of times through which we are now passing indicate that we need the support of a faith which would elevate mankind in character and set restrictive bounds on his baser attributes. That faith is Islam which inculcates in mankind a belief in Supreme Being and prescribes acts of worship which dignify humanity and destroy evil tendencies.

PRAYERS (SALAAT)

Prayer (salaat) is not only the first but the foremost requisite of the Faith. It occupies the same position in Furu-e-Deen as does “TAUHID” (Unity) in Usul-e-Deen. If a person’s belief in Tauhid is deficient, he ceases to be a Muslim. Similarly, according to an authentic Hadith, if an individual’s salaat (prayers) are rejected, no other act of piety on his part would be acceptable to Allah. Indeed, if a person were to deny the obligation of “salaat”, he would ipso facto cease to be a Muslim and shall be treated by the Shariat as a “KAFIR”.

“Salaat” has been described by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) as “Imad-ud-deen” the pillar of the faith. It is also called the “Miraaj” of the believer as, according to the Qur’an, it is the only way to communion with Allah. Prayer protects one from indecency and evil (Qur’an Ch.29, v.45) and is a means of moral elevation of man.

The institution of Muslim prayer (salaat) rests upon the precepts of the Qur’an and the example of the Holy Prophet. It is a worship consisting of supplication to, and adoration of, Allah. The form set by the Holy Prophet must be followed if the prayer is to be accepted. “Establish or perform the worship” (Aqimus-Salaat) is the distinct formula by which the Qur’an enjoins the practice. There is no doubt that Muslim prayer is meant to be a distinctive test whereby a Muslim is distinguished from a “Kafir”.

The fulfillment of “salaat” is the sheet-anchor which fastens a Muslim to his faith. Prostration (sajdaa) proclaims and serves to actualize a totality of his surrender to Allah. The face, the proudest thing in man, comes into contact with dust, the lowest thing in nature. The physical body thus embodies and expresses the spiritual. To remember Allah in this way is to be restrained from evil and sin.

Masjid (Mosque) is desirable to use at all times and in congregational prayers (Salaatul-Jamaat) there is the stimulus of association and fellowship. But every man’s prayer-mat is a portable mosque and wherever he chooses to express it, he can find his “qiblah” and fulfill his worship. He needs no priest or mouth-piece, since the prayers are known by every person who professes Islam to be his faith.

The Muslim principle of “Tauhid” or unity runs through all the prayers. Allah alone is the sure Protector, and the Right Guide. There is no other arbiter, no other Lord. Hence the seeking of Allah’s Guidance, Protection and Favour are indispensable to every human being. In the opening Surah (Al-Fatihah), we seek to be among those upon whom

Allah shows favour, not among those Who stood under His wrath.

It is often asked: Why should We have to say our prayers five times a day? The answer is Simple. For a Muslim his prayer is his spiritual diet, of which he partakes five times a day; and those who think that it is too often should remember how many times daily they require food for their physical bodies. Is not spiritual growth much more essential than physical growth? Is not the soul more valuable than the body? If food is needed several times a day to minister to the needs of the body, is not spiritual refreshment at the same time badly needed? If the physical part of the human body must not be starved, there exist stronger reasons that the spiritual side must similarly not be starved.

We shall now proceed to append below a few verses to show the great stress the Holy Qur'an lays on the prayers (salaat):

Verily, I am Allah, there is no God save Me: So serve thou Me and establish regular prayers for my Remembrance. (Ch.20, v.14)

When Ye have performed the act of prayers, Remember Allah, standing, Sitting down and reclining; But when ye are in safety, set up regular prayers: For Such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times. (Ch.4, v.10)

Recite that which hath been inspired in thee of the Book, and establish regular prayers: for prayers restrain from lewdness and iniquity; but verily remembrance of Allah is more important. And Allah knows What Ye do. (Ch.29, v.45)

O ye Who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord; and do good; That happily ye may prosper. (Ch.22, v.77)

And be steadfast in prayers; pay the wealth-tax and bow your heads with those who bow down (Ch.2, v.43).

Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night Verily good deeds annul illdeeds. This is reminder to the mindful. (Ch.11, v.114)

Establish regular prayers at the going down of the sun until the dark of night and (the recital of) Qur'an at dawn. Verily (the recital of) the Qur'an at dawn is ever witnessed (Ch.17, v.78).

Establish regular prayers and pay wealth-tax and obey the messenger, that haply you may find mercy. (Ch.24, v.56)

O ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation, hasten into remembrance of Allah and leave your trading. This is better for you, if you but know. (Ch.62, v.9)

Be guardians of (all) your prayers, and (particularly) of the midmost prayer, and stand up With devotion to Allah (Ch.2, v.238)

Imam Mohamed Baqir (A,S,) has stated that the “midmost” prayer is the “Zuhr” prayer (Kafi & Tahzib).

“DUA” (PRAYER OR SUPPLICATION TO ALLAH)

“Dua” must be distinguished from “salaat” in that while in the latter we have to conform to the formula and time prescribed by the Shariat, in the former we have a free choice and right of petitioning Allah at any time in the form of supplication to attain any purpose or object, whether spiritual or temporal, provided it is not unlawful (Haram). In the Holy Qur'an we find instances in the lives of the great prophets calling upon Allah in supplication to achieve not only spiritual but worldly benefits also. We have the examples of Prophet Sulaiman praying for kingdom on earth (Ch.38, v.35); Prophet Zakaria calling upon Allah to grant him a son (Ch.3, v.38); Prophet Yunus seeking relief from affliction (Ch.21, v.87); Prophet Ayyub petitioning for

deliverance from his torments (Ch.21, v.83); Prophet Isa's prayer for food (Ch.5, v.117); Prophet Ibrahim's prayer for Mecca to be made the spiritual centre of the world (Ch.14, v.37) and Prophet Nuh's prayer for the destruction of transgressors (Ch.71, v.26).

Allah is, of course, Omniscient, and He does not need to be informed of our needs and requirements: but He has, in His Eternal Wisdom, prescribed "Dua" as a means of moulding our characters. All acts of devotion and worship in Islam have one common purpose, i.e, the moulding of a human being's character. If "salaat" is meant to prevent impurity and immorality, the observance of fast has been devised to be a citadel for guarding against evil. If "zakaat" has been prescribed to destroy niggardliness, "Dua" is meant to demolish pride and arrogance, the two main evils which cause sufferings to humanity. Says the Holy Qur'an:

And your Lord says, 'call on Me; I will answer your call: But Those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell in humiliation' (Ch.40, v.60)

It should be noted that in the foregoing verse, "Dua" is described as "Ibada" (service to Allah) and failure to do so is described as arrogance leading one to hell. Indeed this was the meaning attributed to the word by Imam Zain-ul-Abidin (a.s.) in his "Dua" bidding adieu to the holy month of Ramadhan:

"My Lord thou hast described "Dua" as "ibadat" and the omission thereof as an act of arrogance and in case of abandoning it, Thou hast promised a shameful entry into Hell."

The object of "Dua" is therefore to create a sense of humility and destroy arrogance. A promise is distinctly made in the verse to the effect that prayer will be answered by Allah, though it does not mean immediate fulfilment of exactly what is sought for. Allowance must be made for what He, in His Wisdom, sees best for us. But there are requisites laid down by the Holy Qur'an for the efficacy of the "Dua":-

“I answer the prayer of every suppliant who calleth on Me; Let them also, with a will, answer My call, and have faith in Me, that they may proceed aright”, (Ch.2, v.186)

“Faith in Me” means a vivid realization of His Living Presence and the truth of His having care of us. “Answer My call” means obedience to His commandments and this covers everything moral and religious. Allah says, “Fulfill your promise to Me and I will fulfill Mine to you” (Ch.2, v.40)

Although God has promised to answer our prayers, this promise is not absolute in the sense that everything we seek shall be attained. It is hardly reasonable to expect that every person’s prayer should be granted as two individuals might at the same time be praying for two opposite objects, e.g, one may be praying for rainfall and the other for sunshine, it is therefore one of the requisites of the prayer that it should be capable of being granted,

Further, it must be acknowledged that God knows what is best for us and when we pray for something which we may regard as beneficial whilst according to the Divine Knowledge it would be harmful, it is His Merciful Prerogative to reject our prayer and do what He deems beneficial for us.

A human being looks to the immediate benefit or timely success but Almighty looks to the ultimate consequences of which He has knowledge. Therefore it is His Benignity to choose that which is more beneficial to His creatures.

People desire and pray for good things to be hastened on them and God does not hasten on them these things in His Mercy.

Occasionally, a person may seek something in his prayer which, though beneficial to him individually, is nonetheless harmful to the society

in general. It would be inconsistent with the Divine responsibility to accede to such prayer.

Truthfulness is regarded as essential for any one's prayer to be answered, as a mouth which constantly is fouled by lies and falsehoods is hardly worthy of any grace

It is not truth nor philosophy to say that prayer alters nothing, that the laws of nature are fixed and that entreaty cannot change them. "The laws of nature" says H. W. Beecher, 'are fixed on purpose to be used for granting a prayer. Any man can use the laws of nature to grant the request of his child. Does he say that God, who makes these laws cannot do with them as he can?' The Qur'an says Allah effaceth what He will, and establishes what He will and with Him is the source of Ordinance. (Ch.13, v.39)

"The best Ibadat (devotion)" says Hazrat Ali "is to abstain from what is prohibited and the most agreeable of earthly acts to God is to pray to Him, for prayer turneth many a decree even though ordained: "Dua" is the key of mercy, the means of needs being satisfied and wards off every calamity"

The foregoing verse of the Qur'an coupled with its interpretation as rendered by Hazrat Ali, exposes the fallacy of the belief that God is incapable of changing His pre-ordained ordinances. Such belief is a slur on His Omnipotence and unworthy of any credence. Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s) is reported to have said to one of his followers:- "Pray and do not say 'Whatever is ordained shall come to pass'. Verily, there is a rank of nearness to God, which cannot be obtained save by entreaty and verily who shuts up his mouth and asks nothing of God shall receive nothing from Him."

Gods external fore-knowledge does not deprive Him of the power to alter destiny. "Allah effaces what He will and establishes what He

Will". This Indicates that certain destinies are irrevocable and when we pray in respect of the "irrevocables", our human mind may be guided to move in harmony With the Divine Will (Mashiyyat), whilst in the case of revocables our entreaties may prevail. We never can tell, but we do know that the most natural and most effectual means of keeping our own noblest nature in harmony with the Source of All Vital Nobleness (Mabda-e-Fayyaz) is to hold high emotional communion by means of "Dua" with that Source and to plant ourselves humbly in that attitude of devout receptiveness which is becoming attitude in the created towards the Creator. Practically there is no surer test of man's moral diathesis than the capacity of "Dua" as will be shown by the following verses of the Qur'an:-

And enjoin upon the people the prayer, and be constant therein. We ask not of thee a provision, We provide for thee. And the sequel is for rogheeousness. (Ch.20, v.132)

When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayers of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: let them also with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way. (Ch.2, v.185)

The most beautiful names belong to God. So call an Him by them: but shun men as use profanity in His names: For what they do they will soon be requited (Ch.7, v.180) .

Or who listens to the (soul) distressed when it calls on Him, and who relieves its suffering , and makes you inheritors of the earth? (Can there be another) god besides Allah? Little it is that Ye heed! (Ch.27, v.52)

All that they said was: "Our Lord! forgive us our sins and anything We may have done that transgressed our duty; Establish our feet firmly, and help us against those that resist Faith." (Ch.3, v.147)

Our Lord! pour out on us patience and constancy, and take our souls unto Thee as Muslims (Who bow to Thy Will)! (Ch.7, v.126)

And there are men who say: “Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter. And defend us from the torment of the Fire” (Ch.2, v.201)

On no soul doth God place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray) “Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear; Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness; Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; Help us against those who stand against Faith”. (Ch.2, v.286)

“Our Lord! (they say), “Let not our hearts deviate now after thou hast guided us; But grant us mercy from Thine own Presence; For Thou art the Grantor of bounties Without measure”. (Ch.3, v.8)

“O my Lord! make me one who establishes regular prayer; And also (raise such) among my offspring. O Our Lord! And accept Thou my prayer.” (Ch.14, v.40)

“Our Lord! cover (us) with Thy forgiveness- me, my parents, and (all) believers, on the Day that the Reckoning will be established” (Ch.14. v.41-42)

We gave strength to their hearts; Behold, they stood up and said “Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and of the earth never shall we call upon any god other than Him: if we did, we should indeed have uttered an enormity! (Ch.18, v.14)

SAUM (FASTING)

The observance of fasting in the holy month of Ramadhan is binding

upon all adult Muslims of both sexes, save for aged, the sick, the pregnant women , nursing mothers and travellers

Fasting is enjoined for the moral elevation of man and for his spiritual betterment. The object is made clear in the Holy Qur'an itself: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may guard (against evil)". Before the advent of Islam, fasting meant the suffering of some privation in times of mourning and sorrow. In Islam, it becomes an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man "so that you may guard agatnst evil". The object is that man may learn how he can shun evil, and hence fasting in Islam does not mean simply abstaining from food and water but from every kind of evil. The Holy Prophet has stated "How many persons there are who achieve nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst?" The Holy Prophet clearly indicated that to attain spiritual achievement, a person who fasts must also abstain from all evil acts and thoughts

Fasting enables a man to realize that if, in obedience to Divine commandment, he can abstain from that which in ordinary days is lawful, he likewise can abstain from those evils which are forbidden by Allah. If a person can, in obedience to Allah's injunctions, renounce the satisfaction of his hunger and the quenching of his thirst, he can similarly renounce gratification of his unlawful and lustful desires.

The Holy Qur'an does not content itself with Simply enjoining the doing of good and refraining from evil, but it also teaches a man the means by which the tendency to evil in him can be suppressed and the tendency to good improved. Fasting is one of those means.

Fasting also stimulates a spirit of benevolence and charity amongst those in affluent positions who had never experienced want or hunger. Fasting brings home to them the pangs of hunger and starvation which poor members of humanity suffer and hence we see

that charity amongst Muslims is at its highest peak in the holy month of Ramadhan. Fasting also generates the spirit of equality amongst million of believers scattered throughout the globe who, as brethren in faith, collectively abstain, during the holy month of Ramadhan, from food and water, from dawn to sun-set, in obedience to the commandment of their Lord, the Creator of the Universe.

Physically fasting habituates a man to endure tribulations and sufferings. It prepares him to withstand the crisis and the struggle entailed in human life.

What is significant in fasting is the assertion that a man has larger needs than bread, that his body is his servant, not his master, and that ordered voluntary privation is a fine school of patience and endurance. Says the Qur'an:

And that ye fast is better for you, if ye did but know. (Ch.2, v.184)

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off evil. (Ch.2, v.183)

The month of Ramadhan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proof of the guidance, and Criterion (of right and wrong), and whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, let him fast the same number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you, and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful. (Ch.2, v.185)

HAJJ-PILGRIMAGE

Performance of pilgrimage to Mecca is obligatory upon every adult Muslim once in his life, subject to condition that he has means to undertake the journey as well as to make provision for those

dependent on him. Security of life is also a necessary condition.

The most significant part of the pilgrimage, apart from its other principle points, is entering in the state of IHRAM, in which (apart from other conditions) the ordinary clothes are put off and all pilgrims wear one kind of apparel, consisting of seamless sheets, leaving the head uncovered. It will be seen that the state of IHRAM makes all men stand upon one place of equality, all wearing the same simple dress, and living in the same simple condition. All distinctions of rank and colour, of wealth and nationality, disappear there; and the king there is undistinguished from the peasant. The whole of humanity assumes one aspect, one attribute, before its Maker and thus the grandest and noblest sight of human equality is witnessed. The whole world is unable to present another such noble picture of real brotherhood and practical equality. The fire of Divine love being kindled in the heart of the worshipper and like a true lover, he finds his highest satisfaction in sacrificing his very heart and soul for his Beloved Lord. "Labbaik" takes more expressively into the heart of every worshipper "At Thy service, O God!"

The pilgrim presents himself whole-heartedly before God with no other thought than this Divine encounter. His physical coming to Mecca is a kind of token spiritual response to the revelation and Law of God which were commenced at this focal point. His cry of recognition of Allah and of what He has sent down pledges him to a sustained and ever-renewed devotion. He makes a solemn promise of unflinching allegiance to his Creator. "Allahumma Labbaik" "Thee it is before Whom I stand"

We find in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an the strict and implicit injunction in relation to the performance of the pilgrimage and, one of them, clearly indicates that the denial of the obligation of Hajj is tantamount to KUFRA (unbelief):
In it are clear signs: the Standing place of Abraham, and whoever

enters it shall be secure and pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, (upon) everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it: and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, above any need of the worlds. (Ch.3, v.97)

Perform the pilgrimage and lesser pilgrimage (umra) for Allah (Ch.2, v.196)

The pilgrimage is (performed in) the well-known months: so whoever determines the performance of pilgrimage therein there shall be no foul speech nor abusing nor disputing in the pilgrimage; and whatever good you do, Allah knows it, and make provision, for surely the best provision is the guarding of one-self and be careful (of your duty) to Me, O men of understanding. (Ch.2, v.197)

And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage: they Will come to you on the foot and on every lean camel, coming from every remote path. (Ch.22, v.27)

ZAKAAT (WEALTH-TAX)

It is the principle of social responsibility by which the possession of wealth obligates the possessor to concern himself about those who lack what he enjoys. Private property is recognised in Islam on condition of private benevolence. This is zakat as interpreted in Muslim social thought.

The institution takes its honoured place with prayers fasting and pilgrimage. It has clearly Qur'anic force. Zakat is frequently linked with salaah as one of the principle obligations of the Muslim. In the Holy Qur'an it is very often mentioned in conjunction with prayer "Perform the prayer and pay the zakat" is the constant formula of the Qur'an.

Those who withhold zakat are a class synonymous with idolaters (Qur'an, Ch.41, v.7) "and (woe to) the idolaters, who give not the Zakat and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter". Zakat, as serving to identify a Muslim as such, is noted in Ch.58, v.12 - 13. The following are some of the verses which direct the payment of zakaat:-

And be steadfast in prayers; pay the zakat; and bow your heads with those who bow (in worship). (Ch.2, v.43)

And be steadfast in prayers and pay the zakat; and whatever good you send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with Allah. For Allah sees what you do. (Ch.2, v.110)

But the firm in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you and those who keep up prayers and those who give the zakat and the believers in Allah and the last day, these it is to whom We will give a mighty reward. (Ch.4, v.162)

Verily, alms (i.e., Zakat) are only for the poor, and the needy and the workers (in the administration of Zakat), and those whose hearts' alliance is sought, and the (ransoming of the) captives, and those in debt, and in the way of Allah, and the way-farer; a duty ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-knowing, Wise. (Ch.9, v.60)

KHUMS (ONE-FIFTH)

As Zakat is in the form of alms or poor-rate, the Shariat has deemed it derogatory for either the Holy Prophet or his descendants to receive any share from it because zakat in fact denotes the purification of a man and his wealth from impurity. The Qur'an has, therefore, made a specific provision for the Holy Prophet and his descendants by directing the payment of Khums out of a person's acquired wealth. The Khums is divided into six equal shares, namely: (1) for Allah; (2) for the Holy Prophet; (3) for the kindred of the Holy Prophet (i.e., Imams) and

(4), (5) and (6) for the orphans, the needy and the wayfarers amongst the Prophet's descendants. Of course the Holy Prophet utilized his and Allah's share for the benefit of the Muslims and so did the Imams after him. During the Ghaibat (seclusion) of the Imam, the three first shares are at the disposal of a Mujtahid who may utilize the same for building mosques, schools and for further religious education and propagation of the faith.

Indeed, Khums has enabled the Mujtahids to spread the faith and the learning among the Shia world. Without it, these services would have lacked funds and enfeebled the spread of faith. Refusal to pay Khums (or denial of its obligation), accordingly tantamounts to defeating the aims of the religion, which is a grievous sin.

Before quoting the verse which prescribes Khums, it is necessary to say a few words on the interpretation of the term "ghanimtum" used in the verse which has been widely translated as "anything acquired by you in war". The words "in war" do not exist in the Qur'an text but appear in many translations.

The Arabic word "ghanimtum" is derived from the word "ghunm" which means "acquisition of anything" and "ghanimtum" means "you have acquired something".

Hence the original meaning of the word "ghanimat" is simply "acquisition" or "achievement". It does not necessarily apply to things acquired in war but by later usage the word has been applied to what is acquired by war, and "ghanimat" is now technical term for such property.

According to the accepted traditions of our Imams and unanimous opinion of our Shia jurists (ulema), the acquisition of any property or riches by means other than war is also liable to the payment of Khums and hence Khums occupies an important position in our "Furu-e-Deen".

And know that whatever thing you acquire, a fifth of it is for Allah and for the Apostle and for the near of the kin and the orphans and the needy and the way-farer, if you believe in Allah and in that which We revealed to Our servant, on the day of distinction, the day on which the two parties met: and Allah has power over all things, (Ch.8, v.41)

And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. (Ch.17, v.26)

It might be added that the “spoils of war” are referred as “ANFAAL” in the Qur’an and are dealt with separately in Ch.8, v.1.

They ask thee concerning (things taken as) spoils of war, Say: “(Such) spoils are at the disposal of God and the Apostle: so fear God, and keep straight the relations between yourselves: Obey God and His Apostle, if ye do believe”, (Ch.8, v.1)

What God has bestowed on His Apostle (and taken away) from the people of the townships, belongs to God, to His Apostle and to kindred and orphans, the needy and the wayfarer: In order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you. So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear God; for God is strict in punishment (Ch.59, v.1)

JIHAD

The word “Jihad” has been grossly misinterpreted by the enemies of Islam as denoting proselytising people to Islam by “a sword in one hand and the Qur’an in the other”. Nothing is further from the truth. The word “Jihad” does not mean “staging a war”. Its correct meaning is “striving” or “exerting oneself” in the cause of Truth. There is nothing in the word to indicate that this striving is to be effected by

the Sword or by the tongue or by any other method. Indeed we have various forms of “Jihad” in Islam, namely, “Jihad-bil-Mal” (striving with wealth to propagate the faith); “Jihad-bil-Qalam” (striving with pen in the cause of Islam); “Jihad-bil-lisaan” (striving with tongue to preach Islam) and in secondary sense “Jihad-bis-Saif” striving with sword in the cause of Islam. For example, the Qur’an itself enjoins “strive with your goods and your persons in the cause of Allah”. (Ch.9, v.41)

Striving with life is the last recourse in face of danger or self-annihilation. All Islamic wars in the life-time of the Holy Prophet were fought in self-defence, and, indeed, history is unable to furnish a single example in the lives of the twelve Imams who were the Holy Prophet’s rightful successors of engaging themselves in any war of aggression. On the contrary, We find that they themselves suffered tribulations, tortures, imprisonments and martyrdom at the hands of those unjustly claiming to be the Rulers of Islam,

The Holy Qur’an states: “Permission (to fight) is given to those Upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is able to assist them; Those Who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say ‘Our Lord is Allah’. And, had not been Allah repelling some people from others, Certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters, and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered: and surely Allah will help him Who helps His cause and most Surely Allah is Strong Mighty”. (Ch.22, v.39-40).

This was the earliest permission given to Muslims to fight. The Words in which the sanction is given show clearly that war was first made on the Muslims by their opponents and that the Muslims had already suffered great oppression at the hands of their persecutors and because Muslims were very weak, they were assured of Allah’s succour. The verses show that the Muslims had been expelled from their homes and that they had to fight not only in self-defence but also to protect

and preserve all places of worship, such as mosques, churches, and synagogues “in which the name of Allah was much remembered”. Can any other religion, except Islam, point to a single direction in its scripture to show that its followers could lay down their lives to protect the places of worship of other religions? This honour is due only to Islam for its tolerance and chivalry towards other religions!

“And fight in the way of Allah”, says the Qur’an, “with those who fought with you and do not exceed the limit, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limit. And kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from where they drove you out, and mischief is severer than slaughter, and do not fight with them at the sacred mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers. And if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving and Merciful”. (Qur’an Ch.2, v.190-192).

The four verses quoted above lay down the strict code for the conduct of war in Islam: firstly, that fighting is permitted in self-defence, and the opposing forces were to be killed wherever found (which is a rule followed by any civilised State in time of war); secondly, that Muslim land and homes seized by the invading army must be recovered; and, thirdly, that clemency must be shown by stopping fighting as soon as the enemy desists.

It should be made abundantly clear that Islam cannot be held responsible for the aggressive wars waged by the so-called Rulers of Islam, who were not lawful successors of the Prophet. Islam must be judged only by the Qur’an, and by the conduct of the Holy Prophet and the twelve Imams who were his lawful successors.

Some other relevant verses on jihad are appended below:

Therefore let those fight in the way of Allah who sell this world’s life for hereafter; and whoever fights in the way of Allah, then he be slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a great reward. (Ch.4, v.74)

O Prophet! strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and be unyielding to them; and their abode is hell, and the evil is their destination. (Ch.9, v.73)

NOTE: Although Jihad is one of the requisites of the faith, it is only permissible with the sanction of the Imam or his nominee or in self-defence.

Go ye forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of Allah. That is best for you, If you (but) knew. (Ch.9, v.41)

Fighting is prescribed for you and ye dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and that you love a thing while it is bad for you. But God knows, and you know not. (Ch.2, v.216)

AMR BIL MAARUF AND NAHY ANIL MUNKAR

Ordering that which is good and forbidding that Which is reprehensible are also two of the requisites of the Ithnaasheri faith and are the seventh and eighth principles of Furu-e-Deen. These are the positive roles in helping others to take the straight path and abstain from evil acts, which are the two essential ingredients for forming a healthy society. No Society, be it of any faith, can survive which lacks men of goodwill amongst them who can inspire virtuous acts and discourage vicious deeds. In the Islamic Society, the obligation to fulfil this duty has been imposed upon the entire Muslim nation, and, Indeed, in the Shia Ithnaasheri jurisprudence, this duty occupies a position equal to that of performing prayers, fasting, pilgrimage etc

Whilst members of other faiths have to form voluntary Societies like the Salvation Army, the Servants of India Society and other organisations for this purpose, Islam embodies in its code the fulfilment of this duty as a matter of religious obligation. The importance attached to this duty can be gauged by the fact that Imam

Jafar-As-Sadiq (A.S.) has stated “Amri bil Maaruf and Nahy anil Munkar are two of the attributes of Allah; and whosoever propagates these objects shall be honoured by Allah; and any person Who forsakes this duty will, likewise, be forsaken by Allah”. (Tafsire-Safi, p.9).

Those who practise “Amr bil Maaruf” and “Nahy anil Munkar” occupy an esteemed position in the Sight of Allah who groups them amongst His triumphant servants. Says the Qur’an “Triumphant are those Who turn repentant (to Allah), those who serve (Him), those who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves (In worship), who enjoin What is good and forbid what is evil, and Who keep the limits of Allah, and give good news to the believers”. (Ch.9, v.112)

A few verses on the subject are appended below:

Let there arise out at you a nation who invite to goodness and enjoin What is right and forbid What is evil: They are the one’s to attain felicity. (Ch.3, v.104)

You are the best community that has been raised up for mankind: You enjoin What is right and forbid What is evil, and You believe in Allah; if the people of the scripture deary it, it had been better for them, some of them are believers, but most of them are evil-livers. (Ch.3, v.110)

O my son! establish regular prayers and enjoin the good and forbid the evil and bear patiently what befalls thee; for that is the steadfast heart of things. (Ch.31, v.17)

NOTE: According to Tafsire-Safi, p.393, Hazrat Ali has said that this verse is intended to mean that one has to bear patiently any suffering he may encounter in “ordering what is good and forbidding that which is reprehensible”.

And the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other: they enjoin good and forbid evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His Apostle: Allah will show

mercy to them; surely He is Mighty, Wise. (Ch.9, v.71)

NOTE: The verse makes it clear that believers can only be guardians of each other if they enjoin good and forbid evil.

TAWALLA

“Tawalla” is the ninth requisite of the Ithnaasheri faith and has ordinarily been translated as “love for Ahlul-Baet”. This is rather a narrow interpretation of the term. In the Holy Qur’an the terms “HUBB” and “MAWADDAT” have been used to express “love”. For example the Qur’an states:

“Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah” (Ch.2, v.165).

Here the word “HUBB” is used in respect of love for Allah whilst in the case of Ahlul-Baet the Qur’an has used the word “Mawaddat”. “Say (O Prophet) I do not ask you any reward for it but love for relatives” (Ch.42, v.23)

The word “Tawalla” is a technical and comprehensive term denoting not only “love” but “adherence and loyalty to” Ahlul-Baet in all matters which they strove for and propagated. “Love” standing alone by itself is an abstract sentiment existing only in the mind or the heart of a person, but “tawalla” demands an expression of “love by acting in conformity with the precepts and examples of Ahlul-Baet and adherence to the principles enunciated by them.

The term “tawalla” has in fact been used in the Qur’an to denote a “direction” towards which Muslims are to look for guidance. For example, the Qur’an says:- “And everyone has a “direction” to which he turns (himself), therefore hasten to do good work” (Ch.2, v.148)

For Muslims, Ahlul-Baet constitute a “direction” towards which they have to turn themselves for guidance and “do good work”. Mere

assertion of “love” (however genuine) is unacceptable even in secular matters. In expressing our warm affection to the country or a State, we pledge not only our loyalty to it but also to conform and adhere to its laws and commandments.

Similarly, “Tawalla” expects us not only to love Ahlul-Baet but to be loyal to them by conforming to their precepts and examples. Indeed, the Holy Qur’an makes it abundantly clear in the following verse that “love for Allah” can only be genuine if it is accompanied with “obedience to the commandments of the Holy Prophet”:

“Say, (O Prophet) if you love Allah then follow me”. (Ch.3, v.3).

A few verses of the Qur’an are appended below on the subject:

That is of which Allah gives the good news to His servants, (to) those who believe and do good deeds. Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein; surely Allah is Forgiving, Grateful. (Ch.42, v.23)

NOTE: According to Tafsire-Safi, p.451, the Prophet has stated that the term relatives means “my Ahlul-baet and kinsmen. Love them and observe my directions in relation to them”

Seyyid Ali Hamadani, a Sunni Alim, has written a book called “Mwaddat fil Ourba” in which he established by Ahadith and the Qur’an that the word “Qurba” (relatives) in this verse refers to Hazrat Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husain and their progeny.

In Tafsire-Safi, page 452, it is stated that Imam Hasan (A.S.) In one of his sermons stated: “I am one of Ahlul-Baet whose love has been prescribed for every Muslim in the verse of “love for relatives” and the words “who earns good” in the verse refer to affection for us”

Say, “ If ye do love Allah, Follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. For Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Ch.3, v.31)

Surely (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, the Beneficent will appoint for them “love”. (Ch.19, v.96)

NOTE: Allah appointing “Love” for the righteous applies in a greater degree to Ahlul-Baet who were his righteous servants and acted according to His command. Many Sunni and Shia traditions confirm that this verse was revealed about Hazrat Ali (a.s.)

TABARRA - (RENUNCIATION)

The doctrine of “Tabarra”, which is the tenth and the last requisite of Furu-e-Deen, has been mischievously interpreted by our enemies as enjoining us to indulge in abusive or loathsome language against those who opposed or oppressed our Imams. This is a travesty of truth and displays a very poor knowledge of the language of the Qur’an. “Tabarra” means nothing more than renunciation of, i.e., keeping ourselves clear of, or dissociating ourselves from, those who perpetrated atrocities and oppression against all righteous servants of Allah. By renouncing them, we seek to keep ourselves clear of their oppressive or wrongful actions. Indeed, the Holy Qur’an has given numerous examples of the various Prophets who, on the express directions of Allah, dissociated themselves, in clear terms, from those who opposed Allah and his righteous servants; and in every such instance the renunciation was made by the use of the term “tabarra”. A few of these instances are given here.

1. Chapter 6 verse 19: The Holy Prophet is directed by Allah to say to the polytheists: ‘He is only one God, and surely I am (bariun) clear of that which you set up (with Him)’.
2. Chapter 9 verse 3: “And an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage that Allah and His Apostle are (bariun) free from liability to the idolators”.
3. Chapter 26 verse 216: “If they disobey you, then say: Surely I am (bariun) clear of what you do”.
4. Chapter 9 verse 114: ‘And Abraham asking forgiveness for his sire

(uncle) was only owing to a promise which he had made to him, and when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he declared himself to be clear (tabarra-a minhu) of him; most surely Abraham was very tender-hearted, forbearing”.

The foregoing verses make it clear that the term tabarra means nothing more than renouncing and dissociating one’s self from evil-doers. Even in the present civilised age, individuals as well as States are expected to denounce evil and dissociate themselves from the evil-doers. In cases of evils of serious magnitude, all civilised States are expected to condemn evil acts in unambiguous terms: and unless they do so, they are deemed to be condoning such evils. Similarly every true Muslim is expected to condemn the evil acts committed in Islamic history and unless they do so in unequivocal terms they must be regarded as condoning the acts of the evil-doers. This condemnation in Islamic theology, is called “laanat” which has loosely been interpreted as “curse”. “Laanat”, in religious language means “the banishing and estranging one from good. “Laanat cannot, by any sense of imagination, be construed as an abuse, particularly when we find that it has been constantly used by Allah in the following verses of the Qur’an:

These who annoy Allah and His Apostle - Allah has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter; and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment (Ch.33, v.57)

Those who hide the proofs and the guidance which We revealed after We made it clear in the Book. Such are accursed of Allah and accursed of those who have the power to curse. (Ch.2, v.159)

And the crier between them crieth: The curse of Allah is on evil-doers. (Ch.7, v.44)

And those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it, and sever that which Allah has commanded should be joined, and make mischief

in the earth: theirs is the curse and theirs the ill abode. (Ch.13, v.25)

O you who believe, do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends; would you offer them love while they deny what has come to you of the truth, driving out the Apostle and yourselves because you believe in Allah, your Lord? If you go forth struggling hard in My path and seeking My pleasure, would you manifest love for them? And I know what you conceal and what you manifest and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight path (Ch.60, v.1)

NOTE: This verse clearly forbids making friends with those who are enemies of Allah and of the Muslims.

PART THREE :
SOME ETHICAL GUIDANCE

REPENTANCE AND SEEKING FORGIVENESS (TAUBA AND ISTIGHFAR)

“Tauba” (repentance) must be distinguished from “Istighfar” (Seeking forgiveness). The former, according to Allama Hilli, is contrition (nadam) for evil in the past, and forsaking it in the present and the determination not to return to it in the future. Whilst “Istighfar” means seeking forgiveness or pardon. The word does not necessarily imply the commission of any sin. It is a term used also in courtesy in ordinary language, and in religious language it is used to seek Allah’s Grace. It has been used by, and in respect of, infallible prophets and forms part of “Tasbih” (Praise to Allah).

We are dealing here with “Tauba” (repentance) which, again according to Allama Hilli, is incumbent (Wajib).

According to Murtadha Husain, who has translated “Sahifa-e-Kamila” into the Urdu language, “tauba” means repentance from a sin, apology for past misdeeds, and displaying before Allah one’s feeling of shame and craving for His Mercy. “Tauba”, says Murtadha Husain, is a petition to Allah to grant us a new lease of pure life, fresh energy to worship Him and to obey His Commandments and courage to resist temptations.

Every “Dua” must be prefaced with repentance for one’s sins. Repentance is an act which attracts His Mercy and Grace. “Say: O my servants! who have been prodigal to their own selves; Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, Who forgiveth all sins. Surely, He is Forgiving, the Merciful”. (Ch.39, v.53)

The mercy and love of God give solace and comfort to the repentants, This verse discloses the all comprehensive mercy of God, before which the sins of men become quite insignificant. He is not a mere judge who decides between two parties but a Master who deals with His servants

as He pleases, and therefore He can forgive the guilty without injustice to anybody.

“Tauba” is specifically enjoined by the Holy Qur’an:- “Turn to Allah with sincere repentance” (Ch.66, v.8); and Allah in His Grace and Benevolence has proclaimed “Allah loves those who repent”. (Ch.2, v.222).

Can there be, in the entire spiritual and physical universe, a greater reward than “love of Allah”? To obtain this love, saints and martyrs have sacrificed their lives but it is there available according to the Qur’an, for the repentants! It is an invaluable and eternal gift worth more than a hundred thousand diadems! But to earn that the repentance should be accompanied by a sincere determination not to return to the sins, to lead a chaste and pure life worthy of a true Muslim because Allah hath also said “And verily I am forgiving him who repenteth and believeth and doeth good and afterward walketh right.” (Ch.20, v.82)

Let us all, in the words of Imam Zainul-Abidin (a.s.) pray to Allah and say:-

“And verily Thou hast said, O Lord, in Thy Mighty Book that Thou acceptest repentance from the creatures and forgivest sins, and that Thou lovest those who repent. Therefore accept our repentance as Thou hast promised and forgive us our sins as Thou has guaranteed. and grant us Thy love as Thou hast agreed”. (Sahif-e-Kamila).

A few verses of the Qur’an on the subject are appended below which show the great importance attached to “Tauba”:-

God accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance repent soon afterwards, to them will God turn in mercy: For God is full of knowledge and wisdom (Ch.4, v.17)

If anyone does evil or wrongs his own soul. but afterwards seeks God’s

forgiveness, he will find God oft-forgiving Most Merciful (Ch.4, v.110)

O ye who believe! Turn to God with sincere repentance in the hope that your Lord will remove you your ills and admit you to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, - the Day that God will not permit to be humiliated the Prophet and those who believe with him, their light will run forward before them and by their right hands, while they say. ‘Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and grant us forgiveness: For Thou hast power over all things.’ (Ch.66, v.8)

And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring God to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins; - and who can forgive sins except God? - and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done.

For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath and eternal dwelling: How excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)! (Ch.3, vs.135-136)

Of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil until death faces one them and he says, “Now have I repented indeed”; nor of those who die rejecting Faith: for them have We prepared a punishment most grievous (Ch.4, v.18)

ACQUISITION OF “ILM” (KNOWLEDGE)

In Islam “Ilm” (knowledge) and religion are synonymous. Without “knowledge” there can be no religion.

The Primary requirement of Islam is “Ilm” (knowledge) . The first revelation of the Qur’an did not prescribe prayers, fasting, Hajj or Zakat. “Iqraa” (Read) was the first injunction and direction of the Qur’an. There can be no better evidence of the importance that Islam attached to “knowledge” than the first revelation of the Holy Qur’an:-

Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth, Createth man from a clot. Read and thy Lord is most Bountious, Who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man what he knows not”. (Ch.96, v.1-5).

The Qur’an places great stress on the words “Read” and the word “pen” as the foundation of literacy and literature.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has said: “Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion”. (Bihar ul-Anwar, Vol.1 Chap. on Knowledge).

When Christianity was branding learning as magic and punished as treason, the Prophet of Islam proclaimed “The acquisition of knowledge is incumbent upon every male and female Muslim”. When Christianity was exterminating philosophy and science, the Qur’an declared “and he unto whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good”. (Ch.2, v.269).

When Christianity was expelling scientific students and burning libraries, the Prophet of Islam described “The ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of martyr”. When science and literature were placed under ban by Orthodox Christianity, the Holy Qur’an was inviting Muslims to study science as one of the means of knowing the Creator of the Universe and appreciating His gifts to mankind. The following verse shows that Muslims were invited by the Qur’an to study Cosmology:

“Lo! in the creation of heavens and earth and in the difference of night and day are tokens for men of understanding. Such as remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining and consider the creation of the heavens and earth, (and say): Our Lord! Thou hast createdst not this in vain.

Glory be to Thee! Preserve us from the doom of Fire". (Ch.3, v.190-191)

The following verses inspire Muslims to make a study of Astronomy:
He it is Who appointed the sun a splendour and the moon a light, and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning Allah created not (all) that save in truth. He detaileth the revelations for people who have knowledge. Lo! in the difference of day and night and all that Allah hath created in the heavens and earth are portents, verily, for folk who ward off (evil). (Ch.10, v.5-6)

The following verse guides one to study Geography:
And He it is who spread out the earth and placed therein firm hills and flowing streams, and of all fruits He placed therein two spouses (male and female). He covereth the night with the day. Lo! herein verily are portents for people who take thought. (Ch.13, v.3)

To those interested in Ethnology the following verse gives impetus for study
And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and difference of your languages and colours. Lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge. (Ch.30, v.22)

The study of Botany is encouraged by the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:
He it is Who sendeth down water from the sky, and therewith We bring forth buds of every kind; We bring forth the green blade from which We bring forth the thick-clustered grain; and from the date palm, from the pollen thereof, spring pendant bunches and (We bring forth) gardens of grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate, alike and unlike; Look upon the fruit thereof, when they bear fruit. and upon its ripening. Lo! herein verily are portents for a people who believe (Ch.6. v.99)

Meteorology: It is a science which predicts weather by means of observatories which give advance information as to the velocity of the wind, fall of rains and approaching storms. The first observatory, according to the learned author of the “Spirit of Islam” in Europe was built by Muslims in Spain. The Gherda or Tower of Serville, was erected under the superintendence of great mathematician, Jabir Ibn Afiah, in 1190 C E. for observation of the heavens. The Arabs also, according to Syed Ameer Ali, invented the Mariners Compass. They were undoubtedly inspired by the following verses of the Qur’an to provide for such exigencies:

He it is Who showeth you the lightning, a fear and a hope, and raiseth the heavy clouds. The thunder hymneth His praise and (so do) the angels for awe of Him. He launcheth the thunder-bolts and smiteth with them who He will while they dispute (in doubt) concerning Allah, and He is mighty in wrath. (Ch.13, v.12-13)

The science of “Embryology”. to explain which Aristotle had to write 40 volumes. has been explained by the Holy Qur’an in 3 verses:

Verily we created man from a product of wet earth. Then placed him as a drop (of seed) in safe lodging. Then fashioned We the drop of a clot, then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators. (Ch.20, vs.12-16)

The words of the Qur’an gave a new impulse to the awakened energies of Muslims and a nucleus of an educational institution was formed in Medina. Hazrat Ali and Ibn Abbas, his cousin, gave public lectures on poetry, grammar, history, and mathematics; others taught the art of recitation, elocution; whilst some gave lessons in calligraphy - in ancient times an invaluable branch of knowledge (Ameer Ali).

The descendants of Ali and Fatima continued the grand task started by Hazrat Ali. “In the nights of misery and unhappiness”, says Syed Ameer Ali, “they followed truly and faithfully the precept of their ancestor,

and found consolation in intellectual pursuits”. Many persons, from various parts of the globe, betook themselves to Medina and gathered round Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (a.s.), a galaxy of talented scholars. There were, according to A’yanus-Shiah (by Muhsin Amili), 5,000 scholars who wrote down every lesson or lecture given by the Imam and distributed the copies thereof round the Muslim world. Thus the nomad Arabs and the camel-drivers were converted by Islam into “emmisaries and ambassadors” of learning and education! Abu Musa Jabir bin Hayyan was one of these scholars. Ibn Khallikan says: “Jabir compiled a work of two thousand pages in which he inserted the problems of his master (the Imam) Jafar-as-Sadiq which formed five hundred treatises”. He is to-day regarded as father of modern chemistry.

Does our young generation appreciate through what courses of scientific knowledge a Shia Alim has to pass before being accepted as a Mujtahid? A mere glimpse of the list is given below to understand the eminent position occupied by them in the Shia world:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. ILMUL ADAB | The Science of Philology |
| b. Ilmul Lughah | Lexicology |
| c. Ilmul Nahw | Syntax |
| d. Ilmul M’ani | Science of sense or meaning |
| e. Ilmul Akhlaq | Ethics or morals |
| f. Ilmul Faraiz | The law of inheritance |
| g. Ilmul Fiqh | Jurisprudence |
| h. Ilmul Ahadis | The science of traditions |
| i. Ilmur-Rijaal | The biographies of the men who handed down the traditions. |
| j. Ilmul Usul | The Fundamentals of the Islamic Jurisprudence |
| k. Ilmul Qiraah | The science of reading the Qur’an |
| l. Ilmul-Kalaam | Scholastic theology |
| m. Ilmul Ilahiyat | Theology |

- n. Ilmu Mantiq Logic
 - o. Ilmu Tawarikh Chronology
 - p. Ilmu Sarf Conjugation
 - q. Ilmu Tafsir Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an.
- Etc. Etc.

Read in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, - He Who taught (the use of) the pen: taught that which he knew not. (Ch.96, vs.1-5)

He granteth to wisdom to whom He pleaseth; and he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth a benefit overflowing; But none will grasp the message but men of understanding. (Ch.2, v.269)

Do ye not see that God has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth, and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure, (both) seen and unseen! Yet there are among men those who dispute about God, without knowledge and without guidance, and without a book to enlighten them! (Ch.31, v.20)

TRUTH - (AS-SIDQ)

Truth is the soul of the ethical code of the entire universe, as without truth nothing will or can survive. In Biblical language, "Truth" means - "God's Will made known to man" (Rom, 1:19). In the Qur'an, where Truth is also referred to as "al-haqq", it is stated that "Truth is from Thy Lord" (Ch.2, vs.147) and Indeed Chap.24 verse 25 asserts "Allah is the very Truth"

Truthfulness, whether in speech, writing or action, must always have priority over all other qualities and this is the lesson given to us by Imam Zalnul-Abidin (a.s) who, in Dua-e-Makarimul-Akhlaq, has said:

“O Lord! Grant me strength to speak and act truthfully though it may be harmful to me and to abstain from uttering the untruth, although its uttering may benefit me.”

The Holy Quran directs: “O ye who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and be with the true ones”. (Ch.9 v.119) This is a very important injunction as truth only makes a man perfect.

Luqman, the Sage, when asked to describe a perfect man, said: He is the one whose tongue is truthful, whose heart is truthful whose mind is truthful and whose soul is truthful.

He proceeded to elaborate these points by saying -The truthfulness of the tongue is its purity from falsehood; the truthfulness of the heart is its purity from uncertainty; the truthfulness of the mind is its purity from imaginations and the truthfulness of the soul is its purity from polytheism. But the first three purities are not beneficial without the last mentioned purity.

He obviously meant that however truthful a person may be by tongue, heart or mind, spiritually they serve no useful purpose if the person is a polytheist. The three purities mentioned before could only be perfect by monotheism.

If we carefully weigh the dictum of the sage, we shall come to the conclusion that the four purities referred to by him can only be found in a singular degree in an infallible person and therefore the direction of the Holy Qur'an requires the believers to be with infallible guides namely, those who, from birth to the death, never told lie, never entertained uncertainty, never suffered from imaginations and never worshipped anyone except Allah. If the Holy Qur'an is to be our guide, as it should be, it has only described infallible persons like Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Yusuf, Prophet Idris and Mariyam, the mother of Prophet Isa. as “Truthful” or ‘veracious”

The history of Islam can point out to Prophet Mohammad (sa.w.) and his Ahlul-Bait only as the persons who had attained the four standards of purity referred to by Luqman and they are the truthful and veracious persons whom Muslims are directed to follow. (See Tafsir-Durre-Manthur, p.290 and translation of Qur'an by Maulana Farman Ali p.327).

The following verses of the Holy Qur'an deal with the subject under review:

And he who brings the truth and he who confirms (and supports) it such are the men who do right. (Ch.39, v.33)

A believer, a man from among the people of Pharaoh, who had concealed his faith said: "Will ye slay a man because he says, 'My Lord is Allah'? when he has indeed come to you with clear (signs) from your Lord? And if he be a liar on him is (the sin of) his lie: but, if he is telling the truth, then will fall on you something of the (calamity) of which he warns you: truly God guides not one who transgresses and lies! (Ch.40, v.28)

O ye who believe! Fear God and be with those who are true (in word and deed) . (Ch.9, v.119)

God will say: "This is a day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are Gardens, with fivers flowing beneath, their eternal home: God well-pleased with them, and they with God: that is the great salvation, (the fulfilment of all desires). (Ch.5, v.122)

LIE - FALSEHOOD (KIDHB)

Telling a lie is a form of conduct unworthy of any human being. It is an evil which may procure a liar a temporary benefit or respite but he is bound to be found out and left in the lurch. "See how they lie against themselves and how the thing they devised hath failed them" (Ch.6, v.24)

“Deceit” and “deception” are also classed as “lies” and are condemned by the Qur’an. Perjury or giving of false evidence (Shahadat-e-Zur) is one of the worst forms of lies and when such false evidence leads to someone being denied justice or being deprived of his liberty or property, it amounts to “Dhulm” (tyranny) and oppression and the liar is deemed to be a Dhalim (a tyrant).

Falsification of accounts or forging of documents are included in the term “telling a lie” and forbidden by the Qur’an.

Whilst It is a wickedness against one’s own soul to tell a lie in worldly affairs, its consequences in religious matters are heinous. It is a blasphemy to utter a lie against Allah (Ch.39, v.32) or His apostle or against the Imam so much so that if the lie is uttered in the course of fasting, it automatically nullifies the fast. This is an example of its ghastly consequences in this world; and in the next world, the Qur’an tells us, the faces of such persons will turn black. (Ch.39. v.60)

The deniers of truth are classified as liars and sinners by the Qur’an: Then, Lo! ye sinners and deniers of truth, ye verily will eat a tree called Zaqqum and will fill your bellies therewith. And thereon you will drink of boiling water, drinking like a diseased camel raging with thirst. (Ch.56, vs.51-55)

Those who wilfully misinterpret the Qur’an or manufacture a false hadith are vicious liars who according to the hadith of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) prepare a place for themselves in the hell.

A few verses are appended below which condemn lying:
But say not for any false thing that your tongues may put forth, ‘This is lawful and this is forbidden’, so as to ascribe false things to God. For those who ascribe false things to God, will never prosper. (Ch.16, v.116)

So hearken not to those who deny (the truth). (Ch.68, v.8)

If anyone disputes in this matter with thee now after (full) knowledge hath come to thee, say: ‘Come! let us gather together, our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of God in those who deny (the truth)’. (Ch.3, v.61)

THE DOCTRINE OF TAQAYYA

“Taqayya”, which means outward conformity with an alien religious belief or practice (or as translated by one scholar as “Dissembling under torture or persecution”), is sanctioned by the Shariat as the only natural defence of the weak and suffering against the strong. The Shia faith survived centuries of persecution by adhering to this doctrine without which it would have been completely exterminated by the hostile dynasties which played havoc with the lives of the Shias whose blood was literally used, in place of water, to construct the walls of their citadels and palaces. Every one is not expected to become a martyr and they had therefore to submit outwardly when they could not oppose. Indeed, the survival of the faith was their object in view and if every one was to suffer martyrdom, there would be none left to offer “pure worship unto Allah”.

Taqayya was the natural off-spring of persecution and torture. If the law allows one to kill his assailant in self-defence, why should it be considered morally or religiously wrong for anyone to have resort to the non-violent and pacifist doctrine of Taqayya to escape death, torture or persecution?

Islam gave its sanction and blessing to the doctrine of Taqayya in its infancy when Ammar bin Yasir, being overcome by the torture inflicted upon him by the Qur’aish, recanted his faith in Islam to escape persecution. When Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was informed that Ammar

had become an apostate, he said - "Nay, he is a believer from head to foot, and belief is flowing in his blood and flesh". (Tafsire-Safi, 281). Maulana Farman Ali adds that when Ammar returned to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) with tears of shame in his eyes, the Holy Prophet wiped out the tears and said "You have suffered no (spiritual) loss. If they torture you again, repeat the same thing to obtain relief from them."

"Taqayya" should not be confused with "Nifaq" (hypocrisy). They represent two different states of mind and two opposing motives.

"Nifaq" (hypocrisy) is concealment of "kufr" (unbelief), whilst "Taqayya" is concealed of "Iman" (belief).

A hypocrite constitutes a danger to others, whilst one who observes "taqayya" seeks immunity from danger.

Hypocrisy causes mischief, whilst "Taqayya" averts mischief.

A hypocrite is a spy in the garb of a friend seeking secret information to cause conflagration, whilst in "Taqayya" a suffering human being seeks asylum to live peacefully

The following verses of the Holy Qur'an clearly support the doctrine of "Taqayya":

Anyone who, after accepting faith in God, utters unbelief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith, but such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from God, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty. (Ch.16, v.106)

A believer, a man from among the people of Pharaoh who had concealed his Faith. said: Will ye slay a man because he says, 'My Lord is God' when he has come to you with clear (signs) from your Lord? And if he be a liar on him is (the sin of) his lie: but if he is telling the truth, then will fall on you something of the (calamity) of which he

warns you: truly God guides not one who transgresses and lies! (Ch.40, v.28)

Let not the believers take for friends or helpers unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, in nothing will there be help from God: except by way of precaution. that ye may guard yourselves from them. But God cautions you (to remember) Himself: For the final goal is to God (Ch.3, v.28)

HUMILITY -(INKISAR)

“Humility” in the ordinary language means “modesty” or “meekness”. But we have to look at its interpretation from the religious point of view. The Qur’an has presented us with a full and excellent definition of “humility” which makes a person an ideal and faithful “servant of Allah”

“IBADUR-RAHMAN”, (the faithful servants of Allah), according to the Qur’an (Ch.25, vs.63-74) are:

- a. Those who walk on earth in humbleness and say “peace” to any ignorant person addressing them;
- b. Those who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord;
- c. Those who say “Our Lord! avert from us the doom of hell”;
- d. Those when they spend, “are neither prodigal nor grudging”;
- e. Those who do not slay the soul, which Allah has forbidden, except in justice and do not commit fornication;
- f. Those who will not witness vanity but when they pass near a senseless play, pass with dignity:
- g. Those who are not blind and deaf when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord; and
- h. Those who make themselves model for “Muttaqin”.

An ideal example of the display of “humility” has been preserved by history. It is related that once when Imam Hasan (a.s.) was passing a road riding on a horse in Madina, a Syrian poured out filthy abuses at

him. The Imam halted silently and when the man had exhausted his vulgar vocabulary, the Imam said to him:- “Peace be on thee. Thou appearest to be a stranger in this town. If thou hast no home, will thou accompany me to my lodging for shelter; if thou art hungry, thou shalt be fed to thy satisfaction; if thou needst garments, thou shalt be clothed respectfully and if thou needst expenses to travel back to thy home, thou wilt find them available”. The man was so struck by the Imam’s magnanimity that he fell down at the Imam’s feet seeking forgiveness and said: “Before this day, I never hated any one more than thee; but from now onwards thou shalt be the most beloved person to me!”

The following verses, of the Holy Qur’an are relevant to the Subject of “humility”.

And the servants of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and When the ignorant address them they say, “Peace!” (Ch.25, v.63)

And lower thy wing to the believers who follow thee. (Ch.26, v.215)

ARROGANCE - (TAKABBUR)

Pride, boasting or vain-glory are considered to be unmannerly in every society, but when resorted to in the religious affairs, they give rise to very grievous and sinful consequences.

The Holy Qur’an speaks of “Fakhr” and “Takabbur”. The former may be translated as “pride” or “boasting” while “Takabbur” means arrogance.

Although “Fakh” is not countenanced by Islam, except the right kind of “Fakhr” (pride) which one may have in Allah (e.g. I am proud that Allah is my Lord) or in the Holy Prophet (e.g. I am proud of being one of the Ummat of the Holy Prophet) or proud of having the Qur’an as our scripture or Ale Mohammad as our Imams. One may also be proud of his humble position in life as the Holy Prophet used to say:-

“Poverty is my pride”.

But any self-conceited pride, egotism or braggart boasting is disliked by Allah (Ch.31, v.18). And when the braggart boasting is accompanied by defiance of Allah’s commandment, or denial of the requirement of the religion, it is termed “Takabbur” which is a grievous sin amounting even to “kufri” (infidelity). We have an example of Satan who, out of sheer pride, refused to make obeisance to Adam and asserted “I am better than he; Thou created me of fire and him Thou didst create of clay” (Ch.38, v.76). He was rejected and cursed for ever.

The verses of the Qur’an clearly define “Takabbur” (arrogance) as refusal to believe in the Day of Judgement (Ch.40, v.27); telling lies about Allah (Ch.39, v.60); omission, by reason of pride to make “dua” or “ibadat” (Ch.40, v.59) and wrangling concerning Allah’s revelations (Ch.40, v.35). All these are treated as “takabbur” (arrogance) and the punishment for such arrogance is, according to the Qur’an, the fire of hell.

The relevant verses are appended below:

Your God is One God: As to those who believe not in the hereafter, their hearts refuse to know, and they are arrogant. (Ch.16, v.22)

And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men nor walk in insolence through the earth; For God loveth not any arrogant boaster. (Ch.31, v.18)

Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height. (Ch.17, v.37)

And on the Day that the unbelievers will be placed before the Fire, (It will be said to them): “Ye received your good things in the life of the world, and ye took your pleasure out of them: but today shall be ye recompensed with a penalty of humiliation: For that ye were arrogant

on earth without just cause, and that ye (ever) transgressed". (Ch.46, v.20)

CHARITY - (KHAIRAT)

Liberality to the poor is an institution which has prominent place in every religion. Islam proclaimed its universality and made it an article of faith to apportion a share in a person's wealth or income, in the form of Zakat, Khums, Fitra etc. for the maintenance of poor persons. It also imposed obligation upon a person to support his aged and needy parents, relatives and kindred. In many non-Islamic societies whilst parents have obligation to maintain and educate their children, no duty is imposed upon the children to look after parents in their old age; and cases are known of millionaires spending their wealth in casinos and night clubs whilst their aged parents have to live in poor-houses or to be supported by "doles".

The Holy Qur'an has clearly laid down priorities in the matter of charities - "They ask thee (O Mohammad) what they shall spend; say: That which you spend for good (must go) to parents and near kindred and the way-farer. And whatever good ye do, Allah is aware of it". (Ch.2, v.215)

Money spent in charity is compared by the Holy Qur'an to a seed sown in fertile land which produces seven-hundred fold or more in this life or in the hereafter. He is not a true Muslim - who does not identify himself with the interests of his brethren in faith. He should be happy in their happiness and miserable in their miseries. The reward for charity depends on the sincerity of the faith in which it is given. A poor man's one cent may have greater effect than a large sum of money spent by another.

But the effect of charity is destroyed if it is accompanied with laying of obligation on the recipient of the charity or by making the recipient

humiliated by reproach. Imam Husain (a.s.) used to give charity by standing behind the door so that the recipient should not feel ashamed of receiving the charity. Imam Zainul-Abidin (a.s.) used to kiss the hand of the man to whom he gave charity by saying that it represented the hand of Allah as stated in Ch.9, v.104: “Know they not that Allah dost accept repentance from his votaries and receives their gifts of charity”.

The Qur’an strongly denounces the charity which is given just to be seen by men. The giving of such charity, according to Ch.2. v.264, amounts to disbelief in God and the Last Day. But if the intention of giving openly is to influence or induce others also to subscribe to the charity, the act would be commendable as Allah judges all acts according to the intention of the person doing the act.

We shall now proceed to subject:

Speak to my servants who have believed, that they should establish regular prayers, and spend (in charity) out of the sustenance We have given them, secretly and openly, before the coming of a Day in which there will be neither mutual bargaining nor befriending. (Ch.14, v.31)

The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of God is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. God giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth: and God careth for all and He knoweth all things.

Those who spend their substance in the cause of God, and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, for them their reward is with their Lord: On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. God is free of all wants, and he is most Forbearing.

O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury, like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in God nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls a heavy rain, which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with naught they have earned. And God guideth not those who reject faith. (Ch.2, vs.261-264)

O ye who believe! Give of the good things which ye have (honourably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes. And know that God is free of all wants, and worthy of all praise. (Ch.2, v.267)

EXTRAVAGANCE - (ISRAAF)

Comprehensiveness is one of the qualities of the Holy Qur'an which has omitted no guidance or direction for a healthy state of the society to enable mankind to live not only happily in this world but also to earn a deserving place in the life to come. Economy plays an important part in Human life and the Qur'an proclaimed 1400 years ago that the faithful servant of the Beneficent were those who "when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging". (Ch.25, v.67)

Islam expects every man to earn sufficient income or wealth as to be able not only to support himself and his dependants but to fulfill the religious obligation of performing Hajj, paying Khums and Zakat and giving charity to kindred, relatives and the needy. Without wealth it would not be possible to build Mosques, Imambaras or endow guest houses for travellers or hospitals for the sick. All these religious, and semi-religious, institutions are necessary for Islam and the Muslims and their existence can be traced back to the early days of Islam. A Muslim is expected to live "hayatan-tayyibatan", a good and true life

on this earth and strive for a better life in the hereafter. (Ch.16, v.97).

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has advised Muslims:-

Work for your world as if you were to live here for ever; and work for your hereafter as if you were to die tomorrow.

These are sagacious words worthy to be imprinted on the heart of every Muslim.

The Qur'an does not condemn wealth but only its hoarding and its squandering. It requires that the spending of the wealth, legitimately earned, should be regulated economically. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32) has no place in Islamic Code. The Qur'an says: "Eat and drink and be not extravagant" (Ch.7, v.31) and, in (Ch.17, v.27) , it describes the squanderers as "the brothers of Satans" as the following verses show:

O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer; eat and drink, but waste not by excess; for God loveth not the wasters. (Ch.7, v.31)

And follow not the bidding of those who are extravagant, (Ch.26, v.151)

And render to the kindred their due right, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. (Ch.17, v.26)

Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute. (Ch.17, v.29)

NIGGARDLINESS - (BUKHL)

Niggardliness must be regarded as the meanest quality of a person who amasses wealth merely to hoard it. It has been condemned by the Holy

Qur'an in unequivocal terms "Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and back-biter who pileth wealth and layeth it by thinking that his wealth would make him last for ever. Nay, but he will be thrown into that which breaks to pieces." (Ch.104, vs.1-4).

Niggardliness of individuals and of group of individuals may cause an explosion in this world. "If a small section of the world's population lives in affluence while the majority of mankind in mass poverty and starvation, the situation is bound to expose the world into an unprecedented explosion". This was the theme of the speakers at the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations which met recently in New York to consider economic cooperation. Such a warning was given by the Holy Qur'an fourteen centuries ago: "But as for he who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent, and disbelieveth in goodness (to the needy ones), surely We will ease his way into adversity. His riches will not save him when he perisheth". (Ch.92, vs.8-11).

Niggardliness has been condemned by our Imams in severe terms. A Shia from a foreign country arrived in Madina to pay his respects to Imam Musa Ibn Jafar (a.s.). The Imam asked him: "How are the wealthy Shias behaving towards their poor brethren?" The visitor answered, "Not very generously". The Imam inquired: "Do they pay regards to the needs and necessities of life of their poor brethren?" The visitor answered: "Very little". The Imam inquired: "Do they visit and provide comfort to the sick amongst them?" The visitor answered: "Occasionally". The Imam inquired: "Do they provide maintenance to the widows and orphans?" The man replied: "Very sparingly". The Imam exclaimed: "Then what right have they to claim to be our Shias?"

The Qur'an says: "And let not those who hoard up that which Allah bestowed upon them of His Bounty think it is better for them. That which they hoard will be their collars on the Day of Resurrection. Allah's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is

informed of what ye do”. (Ch.3. v.180).

In another place in the Qur’an, the misers are termed as hypocrites: “And when He gave them of His Bounty, they hoarded it and turned away, averse. So He hath made the consequence (to be) hypocrisy in their hearts until the day when they shall meet Him, because they broke their word to Allah that they promised Him and because they lied.” (Ch.9. vs.76-77)

The following are some other verses dealing with the subject: (Nor) those who are niggardly or enjoin niggardiness on others, or hide the bounties which God hath bestowed on them; for We have prepared for those who reject faith, a punishment that steeps them in contempt. (Ch.4, v.37)

And let not those, who covetously withhold of the gifts which God hath given them of His Grace, think that it is good for them: nay it will be the worse for them: soon shall the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks like a twisted collar, on the Day of Judgement. To God belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and God is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (Ch.3, v.180)

Say ‘If ye had control of the treasures of the mercy of my Lord, behold, ye would keep them back, for fear of spending them: for man is (ever) niggardly!’ (Ch.17, v.100)

Behold ye are those invited to spend (of your substance) in the way of God: but among you are some that are niggardly. But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own souls. But God is free of all wants, And it is ye that are needy. If ye turn back (from the Path), He will substitute in your stead another people: then they would not be like you! (Ch.47, v.38)

But when He did bestow of His bounty, they became covetous, and

turned back (from their covenant), averse from its fulfilment. (Ch.9, v.76)

O ye who believe! There are indeed many among the priests and monks who in falsehood devour the substance of men and hinder (them) from the way of God. And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God: announce unto them a most grievous penalty on the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. "This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves: taste Ye then the (treasure) ye buried!" (Ch.9, vs.34-35)

And Ye love wealth with inordinate love! (Ch.89. v.20)

“KHIYANAT”

“Khiyanat” is a wide term and includes perfidity, treachery, treason, perversity, betrayal of trust, embezzlement and deceit.

The word has been used in the Qur’an in the following senses: Treason against Allah, (Ch.8, v.71); Betraying the trust of Allah and his Apostle. (Ch.8, v.27); Misappropriation of trust property (Ch.8, v.27); Being false to the husbands, (Ch.66, v.10); Treachery (Ch.8, v.58); deceit, (Ch.5:14); deceitful eyes, (Ch.40, v.19) and perfidity, (Ch.4, v.107).

All these are repugnant acts which are unworthy of a Muslim as shown in the following verses:

O ye that believe! Betray not the trust of God and the Apostle, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you. (Ch.8, v.27)

If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them, (so as to be) on equal terms: For God loveth not the treacherous. (Ch.8, v.58)

(God) knows of (the tricks) that deceive with the eyes, and all that hearts (of men) conceal. (Ch.40, v.19)

Contend not on behalf of such as betray their own souls: For God loveth not one given to perfidy and crime. (Ch.4, v.107)

BRIBERY - (RUSHWAT)

Bribery is a canker which destroys faith in the administration of justice and Muslims are therefore prohibited by the Qur'an from indulging in it. Vide Ch.2, v.188 and also Ch.5, v.42 where it is described as "Suht" which literally means "illicit gain". According to Kafi, Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (a.s.) has said that "Suht" includes bribe paid to a person in authority and it also means income from immoral acts, gains derived from sale of liquor, swine's flesh and money earned in usury and other unlawful means:-

And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as bait for the judges, with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property. (Ch.2, v.188)

(They are) listeners to lie, devourers of the illicit gain..... . (Ch.5, v.45)

LIQUOR - INTOXICANTS (KHAMR)

The intoxicating liquor, which is the most vicious curse to humanity, is a "creature" of the human beings themselves. It has ruined innumerable lives, shattered multitudes of homes, and caused more misery to mankind than all other vices put together. If the man-made laws of the civilized countries have any morality in them, they would have banned the brewing, purveying and consumption of intoxicants. But the traffic in alcoholic liquor brings them huge revenues which they dislike losing. If the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had any virtue in it, its first clause would have declared the entire world as "dry" and prohibited the manufacture, sale and consumption of

this noxious liquid which is a major contributing factor to the ills of the universe. Suppose “intoxication” had been a natural disease like epilepsy, cancer or asthma, billions of pounds would have been spent by the World Health Organisation to eradicate it. But alas! the sane and intelligent man voluntarily spends his own wealth to inflict “intoxication” upon himself. There was a time when the United States of America had come to realise the curse and had imposed complete prohibition, but the “boot-leggers” and contrabands defeated the legislative ban which had to be repealed.

While wine was, and still is, an integral part of Christian ceremonies and the Bible acknowledges the “wine that maketh glad the heart of man” (Psalms, 104:15), it was left to Islam, and Islam alone, to condemn this curse in unequivocal terms and ban its production, sale and consumption.

Mischievous men, in every society, have endeavoured to assert from time to time that nowhere in the Qur’an has wine been declared as “HARAM”. This is merely an exhibition of their ignorance of the language of the Divine Law. Ch.2, v.219 clearly states that intoxicant and gambling are “great sins”. Is it not “haram” for a Muslim to commit a sin? Obviously it is, and when the sin is greater the prohibition is also severer. Even in acts of Parliament we find clauses which state “ If any person establishes any school without the permission of a Minister, he commits an offence”. Is this clause not sufficient to make every one understand the “prohibition” of establishing such schools? Would it be sensible to argue in a court of law that the Act did not actually say in so many words that it was prohibited or unlawful to establish such schools! The fact is that when an action is declared to be an offence (or a Sin), the logical conclusion is that it is prohibited (or haram) in law. But the Qur’an has gone further. In Ch.5, v.93, intoxicant is described as an “abomination” (i.e. a shameful vice) and the verse commands “ESCHEW IT”. This is an imperative divine commandment and its disobedience is therefore a grievous sin.

Why are the addicts of alcohol so blind as not to be able to see the tremendous harm they are doing to the society?

“The Time” (N.Y., U.S.A.) of 22nd April, 1975 states that after heart disease and cancer, alcoholism is the country’s biggest health problem. Most deaths, attributed to alcoholism, are caused by cirrhosis of the liver. An alcoholic’s span of life is shortened by ten to twelve years. The magazine adds: “In half of all murders in the U.S.A., either the killer or the victim or both have been drinking. A fourth of all suicides are found to have significant amount of alcohol in their blood streams. People who use alcohol are seven times more likely to be separated and divorced than the general population. The dollar cost of alcohol may be as much as 15 billion a year. At least half of each year’s automobile death and half of the one million major injuries suffered in auto accidents can be traced directly to a driver or pedestrian “under influence of drink””.

Dr. Tony Smith says in an article in London Times of August, 1975, that each year 10,000 cases of alcoholism are admitted to Hospital and that alcohol is responsible for enormous amount of social destructive behaviour.

Islam does not countenance social destructive behaviour and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), the greatest friend the humanity has ever had, had called a halt to it in stern terms:

May the curse of Allah fall upon liquor, upon its planter, upon its brewer, upon its cup-bearer, upon its drinker, upon its seller, upon its buyer, upon consumer of its price and upon its carrier.

No stronger terms could be used to save humanity from the evils of intoxicating drinks.

The following verses of the Qur’an are relevant to the prohibition of the wine:

O ye who believe! Approach not prayers when you are intoxicated, until ye can understand all that ye say, nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (except when travelling on the road), until after washing your whole body (Ch.4, v.43)

They ask thee concerning intoxicant and gambling; Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." (Ch.2. v.219)

O ye who believe! intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, of Satan's handiwork: Eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God, and from prayers: Will ye not then abstain? (Ch.5, vs.93-94)

FORNICATION - (ZINAA)

Adultery and fornication are both very seriously viewed by the Qur'an which provides corporal punishment for the sin and has commanded that no compassion be shown to the offenders. In case of adultery the death penalty is laid down by the Shariat.

If the offender is unmarried (or is far away from his/her spouse), then the punishment is flogging with a hundred stripes

If he/she is married and had access to his/her spouse, and still committed this shameful act, then the punishment is stoning him/her to death.

The following verses speak for themselves:

Nor come nigh to fornication: For it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils). (Ch.17, v.32)

The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes; let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by God, if ye believe in God and the Last Day: and let a party of the believers witness their punishment. (Ch.24, v.2)

In order to protect the honour of chaste man and woman from false accusation, Allah has also provided a deterrent punishment for the accuser if he is unable to prove his charge:

And those who launch a charge women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegation) flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence even after: for such men are wicked transgressors;

Unless they repent thereafter and mend (their conduct), For God is Oft-Forgiving. Most Merciful (Ch.24, vs.4-5)

SODOMY: BESTIALITY (LIWAT)

Though Sodomy has been condemned as “bestiality”, it is extremely doubtful, even, if the beasts indulge in this loathsome act. The abomination, according to the Holy Qur’an Ch.7 v.80, was first introduced in the creation by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, the two cities which were located on the East of the Dead Sea. The cities together with their inhabitants were destroyed by stonestorm.

Lest there be any misunderstanding about the purport of verse 78 of Ch.11 of the Qur’an in which Prophet Lot is reported as saying to the lustful people who had besieged his house in order to commit abomination upon his guests - “Here are my daughters, they are purer for you”; it should be made clear that he was not offering the girls for illicit purposes but he was offering them in marriage to the people (Safi, 239). This is made abundantly clear by the word “ATHARA” (purer) used in the verse. Another fact which must be made clear is that by “my daughters”, Lot was referring to the girls of the

tribe for whom as a Prophet he was in the position of “loco parentis” (parent). The Qur’an is pure and free from some of the Biblical disgraceful concoction contained in Gen. xix 30-36 that Lot committed incest with his own daughters and had children by them! The Qur’an regards Lot amongst righteous and excellent men (Ch.6, v.86-87).

We shall now deal with the heinous nature of the sin itself. The following anecdote recorded by Kulaini in Kafi on the authority of Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (a.s.) should suffice to bring home the gravity of the sin.

Hazrat Amir-ul-Mominin (a.s.) was once sitting with his companions when a young man appeared and said: “Commander of the Faithful! I have committed an abominal act with a boy. Will you pronounce sentence upon me and purify me of the sin by inflicting the lawful punishment”? Hazrat Ali was taken aback and said: “O man! hast thou gone mad to talk of such matters? Go away from here.” The man returned four times and volunteered the same confession for the fourth time. Hazrat Ali had then no option and said: “The proof has now been established and it is therefore obligatory to pass sentence on thee. The Shariat has prescribed death either by sword, or by being burnt alive, or by being flung down from the summit of a mountain for this sin. Will thou choose the type of punishment thou preferst?”

The man said: “The punishment of being burnt to death is the severest and I would prefer that in the hope that Allah may, in His Grace, grant me immunity from the fire of hell.” Hazrat Ali said: “Very well, this is the punishment thou shalt suffer. Be prepared for it”. The man stood up and recited two rakaats of prayers and then implored Allah in these words: “My lord! I have been guilty of a very grave sin. a sin from which the heavens and earth shudder. Having feared Thy punishment, I have now come to the vicegerent of Thy Prophet so that he may purify me and inflict upon me the punishment prescribed by the Shariat. I have selected the severest penalty of all and I beg Thee

to accept this as an expiation of my sin and save me from the fire of hell". He then proceeded to the trench full of burning wood which had been prepared for him. He got inside the trench surrounded by fire and called out. "Forgiveness, my Lord, I beseech Thy forgiveness". Hazrat Ali and all his companions were shedding tears at the pitiful condition of the man when suddenly Hazrat Ali announced to the man: "Get out of the fire for Allah has accepted thy repentance and has forgiven thee. For verily the angels have expressed sorrow for thee to the Almighty. Commit not sin again." The man emerged from the trench and fell at the feet of Hazrat Ali and said: "May Allah, for the sake of these holy feet, keep me straight on the right path" .

This anecdote is enough to illustrate the gravity of the sin. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) is reported to have said:

"Ten kind of persons in my Ummat become infidels" and he cited one of them being:

"the person Who enters a Woman on her hind"

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has stated:

"Sodomy without entering into anus is 'sodomy', but entering into anus is infidelity".

The following verses of the Qur'an are relevant to the subject:

And (remember) Lut: behold, he said to his people: "Ye do commit lewdness, such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you. Do ye indeed approach men, and cut off the highway? and practise wickedness (even) in your councils?" But his people gave no answer but this: they said: "Bring us the wrath of God it thou tellest the truth". (Ch.29, vs.28-29)

When our decree issued, We turned (the Cities) upside down, and raised down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread layer on layer, (Ch.11, v.82)

