



(ās)
Ahlul-Bait
in the Quran
&
The Prophet's
Traditions
(sunnah)

Al Balagh Foundation



Chapter 1

Presentation

"..Allah desires only to keep away uncleanness from you O people of the House (Ahlul-Bait) and make you as pure as can be."

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

Whoever studies the lives of the Ahlul-Bait (peace be upon them all) will at Once recognize the pivotal role they played and the great task they shouldered in shaping the destiny of Islam. Their glorious lives have always been a source of inspiration to the Muslims in every era and place, interacting with their consciousness, enriching their progress and upholding their Islamic heritage.

The Ahlul-Bait - (the Prophet's holy family) have formed a historical movement and impulsive force in the history of Islam and caused great social changes.

This is worth mentioning to understand the right path of the Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) and to comprehend the features of their school which contains the spirit of originality and motives. The Holy Qur'an singles out this term 'Ahlul-Bait' whereas the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) specifies its confirmation. On one side, this entity is diagnosed after the disappearance of the period of prophethood which was led to grow ideological and political allegiance for the family members of the Holy Prophet and on the other side, some confrontations and conflicts from different fronts and coalitions, in the arena of political life of the Muslim society, started to appear against them. Consequently, ideological, political and bloody war was waged against them. Therefore, the Imams: Ali, Hasan and Hussein and their grandsons became victims by such tragedies in which the Muslim nation lost the enlightened pioneers of its

straight path and were forbidden from the gifts of truth and awareness.

Al-Balagh Foundation; a part of its mission, hopes, to present to its dear readers the holy family of the Prophet, to remove fiction from luminous facts in the history of our Muslim nation, to acquaint the ummah with their straight path and to make them choose the true guidance with its many features and principles.

We beseech Allah, the Most High, to aid and grant us success to accomplish this blessed duty. He is the best of helpers.

Al-Balagh Foundation

Chapter 2

Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) in the Qur'an and the Prophet's Traditions (sunnah)

The Qur'an emphasizes the lofty position and significance of the Ahlul-Bait so as to make mankind follow their right path, consult them when their opinion differs or their faith, situation and concepts contradict. Investigating the verse of Revelation, we will find that the Qur'an sometimes addresses them as 'Ahlul-Bait', like the Almighty's saying: "..Allah desires only to keep away uncleanness from you O people of the House (Ahlul-Bait) and make you as pure as can be."

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

Sometimes as 'relative' (Qurba) like His saying:

"... Say (O' Muhammad unto mankind): I do not ask of you any reward for it (preaching the message)' but love for my relatives (Ahlul-Bait)... " Holy Qur'an (42:23)

The Holy Qur'an, also, focuses on their merits and their virtues through various verses without using these two terms for indicating them like its address concerning Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husein in Chapter (Dahr) and the Mubahala verse or its description of Ali in many verses like the Wilaya and Tabligh verses and other verses. It describes them as being the best among mankind, the pious and... etc. The commentators and narrators single out the causes for the revelation of these verses and acknowledge what is meant by them, then it will be cleared for us through some samples of the interpretation of the Almighty's verses and explain the causes for their revelation:

The Verse of Purity (Tathir):

"..Allah desires only to keep away uncleanness from you O people of the House (Ahlul-Bait) and make you as pure as can be." Holy Qur'an (33:33)

All exegists of the Holy Qur'an and narrators of the Prophet's traditions, unanimously agree that the word Ahlul-Bait, or the Household of the Prophet (s.a.w.) as used by Almighty Allah in the Qur'an, refers only to the following persons: The Prophet's daughter Fatima, her husband Ali and their two children Hasan and Husein (peace be upon them all). The famous exegetist Suyuti in his renowned commentary 'Dur al-Manthur' cites Tabarani's narration from Umm Salama that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) once told his beloved daughter, Fatima, to call her husband Ali and two of their sons; Hasan and Husein. When they came, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) covered them with a Fadak (a place near Madina) cloak and put his hand on them, and said:

"O Allah! these are the Ahl Muhammad (another version says aal (family) Muhammad, so, shower your blessings and favours on aal Muhammad as you showered them on aal Abraham;

"You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious."

Umm Salama said that she raised the cloak to join them, but the Prophet pulled it out of her hand and said: "You are (also) on the right."⁽¹⁾ On many occasions Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) explained the meaning of this verse (of purity) to the Muslims and drew their attention to its significance in order to be enlightened with them (Ahlul-Bait) by following their straight path. Once, it happened that the Prophet while passing his daughter Fatima's (a.s.) house on his way to the mosque for the (lawn prayers, used to call: "To prayer, O Ahlul-Bait, to prayer; Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you, people of the House and make you pure as pure as can be."⁽²⁾ Anas bin Malik narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.) used to go to Fatima's house for six months whenever he went out for prayer. He used to say: "To prayer, O Ahlul-Bait, to prayer; Allah desires to keep a way uncleanness from you, people of the House and make you pure as pure as can be."⁽³⁾

The Verse of Affection (Mawadah):

"... Say (O' Muhammad unto mankind): I do not ask of you any reward for it (preaching the message), but love for my relatives (Ahlul-Bait)... " Holy Qur'an (42:23) The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) explicitly told the Muslims that this blessed verse refers to his Ahlul-Bait, that is; Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husein and urged them to obey and follow these illustrious personalities after him. All commentators, traditionists and biographers said that the word 'near relatives of the Prophet' as used, here, refers exclusively to his Ahlul-Bait that is Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husein.

Fakhruddin Razi, while explaining this verse, says: "... and without doubt no one was so near to the Prophet than Fatima, Ali, Hasan and Husein. This is a well-known fact of all chains of narrations, and these are they who are his 'aal'".

Thus, it is an undisputed fact that the words Ahlul-Bait or aal Muhammad (s.a.w.) refer only to the immediate family of the Prophet; his daughter Fatima, son-in-law Ali and his two sons Hasan and Husein and no one else. First: We have already cited some instances of the Prophet's love for his family. Second: No doubt being his only surviving child, Fatima was intensely loved by her father. The Prophet's famous words are a testimony to this fact. "Fatima is a part of me and whoever makes her angry, makes me angry."

The traditions also confirm this and also his natural inclination towards Ali and his grandchildren, Hasan and Husein. Therefore, it becomes a duty for the Prophet's nation to follow the Prophet's traditions in respect to his Ahlul-Bait. The Almighty says: "... Say (O Muhammad say unto mankind) if you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you... " Holy Qur'an (3:31)

The Verse of Malediction (Mubahala):

"But whoever disputes with you (O' Muhammad) in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge then say: Come, let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves and your selves, then let us beseech Allah and invoke His curse upon the liars." Holy Qur'an (3:61)

This verse points towards an epoch-making event, narrated by all historians and commentators; an event which revealed to the Muslims the status of the family of the Prophet (Ahlul-Bait) (a.s.) (Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husein), and how near and dear they are to Allah, the Exalted. It is narrated that a deputation* from the Christians of Najran came to the Prophet of Islam to argue the merits of their faith and also to discuss with him concerning his prophethood. The Holy Prophet advanced to them arguments showing that Jesus, the son Mary, was a human being and a Prophet, and it was blasphemy to regard him as a son of Allah, because Allah, the Exalted, is high above all such human characteristics. It was when the Prophet, having argued the point fully and convincingly, found them still deliberately persisting in their false belief in the deity of Prophet Jesus, that Allah revealed this verse. It was a challenge to the Christians, to pray and invoke Allah that the curse may overtake the party that insisted upon falsehood.

*-The deputation was comprised of three prominent Christian leaders of Arabia, Abdul-Masih, the political leader; al-Ayham in-charge of their Agro-Pastoral affairs; and Abu Hatam ibn Alqama, who was a Bishop or Pontiff.

Early the next morning on the 24th of the lunar month of Dhilhijja, the Prophet, in accordance with Allah's command, came out to the meeting grounds, carrying Husein in his arms and leading Hasan "our sons" by his hand, followed by his beloved daughter Fatima "our women", behind whom came Ali "our selves" carrying the banner of Islam. Seeing the Prophet was accompanied by his immediate family and convinced that Muhammad (s.a.w.) was truthful, otherwise he would not have dared to bring his dearest of kin along, the Christians backed away from the maledictory confrontation and agreed to pay Jizya instead.

Zamakhshari says in his book 'al-Kashshaf':

That (when this verse was revealed) the Prophet asked the Christians to a Mubahala (malediction) to invoke the curse of Allah on the liars. The Christians held a discourse among themselves that night, in which their leader Abdul Massih stated his views as follows. "By God, O Christians, you know that Muhammad is a God-sent Prophet, who has brought to you the final message from your Lord. By God, no nation ever dared to challenge a Prophet with malediction, but that woe befell them. Not only will they perish, but, their children will also be afflicted with the curse." Saying this, that it is better to reach a compromise with the Prophet, rather than challenge his truth and perish Abdul Massih advised his party to stop hostilities and retain their religion by submitting to the Prophet's terms. "So, if you persist (for a confrontation), we will all perish. But, if you, to keep your faith, should refuse (to have a showdown) and remain as you are, then, make peace with the man (the Prophet) and return to your land."

Zamakhshari continues: "The next day the Prophet, carrying Husein in his arms, leading Hasan by the hand; followed by his daughter Fatima, behind whom came Ali, entered the appointed place and was heard saying (to his Ahlul-Bait): "When I invoke Allah, you all say: Amen."

The pontiff of Najran on seeing the Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait, addressed the Christians: "O' Christians, I am beholding such faces that if God wishes (for their sake), He would move mountains from their places. Do not accept their challenge for Mubahala for if you do you would all perish and there would remain no Christian on the face of the earth till the Day of Resurrection." Heeding his advice the Christians said to the Prophet: "O Abdul Qasim, we decided not to hold Mubahala with you. You keep your religion and we will keep ours."

The Prophet told them:

"If you refuse to hold (Mubahala), then submit, (accept Islam) and you will receive what the Muslims receive, and contribute what the Muslims contribute."

The Christians saying they had no desire to fight the Arabs, proposed a treaty asking for peace, and freed from forced

compulsion to make them forsake their religion. In return they agreed to pay the Muslims an annual tribute of two thousands suits; one thousand of which to be paid in the month of Safar and the remaining one thousand in Rajab, besides thirty coats of iron mail. Accepting the proposal the Prophet remarked: "By the One Who has my soul in His hand death was looming large over the people of Najran. (Had they dared to accept the challenge of 'Mubahala'). They would have been transformed into apes and swines, and the valley would have been set ablaze. Allah would have destroyed Najran with its people, sparing not even the birds on the treetops, and before the passing of the year the Christians would have all been dead."

Continuing his comments on the Mubahala verse, Zamakhshari lays emphasis on the position of the Ahlul-Bait by quoting the following narration from the Prophet's wife Aa'isha: "He mentioned them, Ahlul-Bait, before mentioning the word 'selves' in order to highlight their position and their proximity (to Allah), and to stress their preference to 'selves' which could be sacrificed for them. There is no stronger evidence than this regarding the merits of the Ahl-Kisa*. It is the proof of the truthfulness of the Prophet's mission, because no one however biased, has narrated that they (the Christians) dared to accept that (challenge for Mubahala)"⁽⁴⁾.

Surely this status of the Ahlul-Bait indicates the appearance of the camp of belief (represented by the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his holy family (Ahlul-Bait)) against the camp of idolatry and disbelief, because those who came out to the meeting grounds were the best examples of guidance and the leaders of the nation and the purist among the selves whom Allah kept uncleanness away from them and made them pure as pure as can be. Therefore, we understand that whatever we receive from the Household of the Prophet (Ahlul-Bait) (a.s.) of their thoughts, laws, narrations, jurisprudence, interpretations, and guidance comes from this course and that they are truthful in their utterances, biography and path. The Qur'an challenges the enemies of Islam by them and calls their enemies liars and says that they should be faced with curse and punishment. The Almighty says:

*-Ahl al-Kasa is a term denoting those who gathered with the Prophet under the Kisa (cloak) where upon the verse of purity

was revealed. They are Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husein, as has been already discussed, earlier.

"... then let us beseech Allah and in yoke His curse upon the liars." Holy Qur'an (3:61) Without their (Ahlul-Bait) truthfulness and righteousness, Allah would not give them such status and position nor would the Qur'an have uttered anything concerning them. Fakhruddin Razi, in his 'al-Tafsiral-Kabir', gives an identical narration and after having stated what Zamakhshari has said; adds: 'Mind you, that all interpreters (of the Qur'an) and narrators (of the Prophet's traditions) are unanimous about the authenticity of this narration." But by taking along only these four and no one else besides, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) was showing the Muslims, that the best example for women is Fatima and the best example for boys are Hasan and Husein, according to the Qur'an's wordings, which, also, delicately used the word 'our selves' for Ali, thereby pointing to his close proximity with the Prophet, and solving the question of succession once and for all.

The Verse of Prayer (Salat):

"Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! Call for (divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation."

Holy Qur'an (33:56) The previous verses, of the Holy Qur'an, revealed to us as to who are the Prophet's Ahlul-Bait, their purity of character and the command for Muslims to love and obey them. This verse refers to the salutation *salawat*, which a Muslim is obliged to send on the Prophet and his progeny during the five daily prayers.

In this verse, the Muslims are ordered here to send blessings on the Prophet and his "aal" (progeny), a term exclusively reserved for Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husein and their righteous descendants. The emphasis on the Prophet's "aal", in salutation, is yet another indication of their pivotal position after the Prophet. By asking the Muslims to exalt them, Allah, the Exalted, was reminding the Muslim communities that He had chosen the Ahlul-Bait, for the role of leading the Muslim nation.

In his 'Tafsir al-Kabir', Fakhruddin Razi, commenting on the above verse, narrates the following quotation from the Prophet, who was asked by some of his companions on how to send blessings upon him. The Prophet replied:

"Say: 'O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad and on Muhammad's progeny as You sent blessings on Abraham and on Abraham's progeny; and send grace on Muhammad and on Muhammad's progeny, as You sent grace on Abraham and on Abraham's progeny, You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.'" Before giving this narration, Razi interprets the verse and comments: 'This is a proof of the Shafi'i school, because order means an obligation*; so, to send blessings on the Prophet (s.a.w.) is obligatory, at least in the Tashahhud (testimony during the prayers) if not elsewhere.'⁽⁵⁾

*-Famous jurists had concluded that when there is an 'order' in the Qur'an or the Traditions, then carrying it out is obligatory; unless the Razi further argues: 'If Allah and His angels send their blessings on him (the Prophet), then what need is

there for our blessings?" He, himself, provides the answer: 'When we send blessings on him, it is not because he is in need of them, but, because of already having Allah's blessings, he does not even require the blessings of the angels. When we send, we send to glorify Allah, and, also, it (sending blessings) reveals our gratitude towards Allah, so that He may have compassion on us and reward us. That is why the Prophet said;

"Whoever sends blessings on me once, Allah will send blessings on him ten times."

It will not be out of context, here, to cite Imam Shafi'i's famous quatrain on this subject:

"O' Household of the Messenger of Allah, love for you Is an obligation from Allah, revealed in the Qur'an. It suffices as the greatest honour bestowed on you That his prayer comes of nothing who does not salute you."

context tells clearly that it is a recommendation.

Suyuti, in his , *Dur al-Manthur'*, citing Abdul-Razzaq, Ibn Abi Shaiba, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abd ibn Hamid, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nisa'i, ibn Maja, ibn Mardawayah, who have all narrated from Ka'b ibn Ujra, says: a man once said to the Prophet that greeting him is clear to everyone, but, how does one send blessings on him. The Prophet replied:

"O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad and on Muhammad's progeny as You sent blessings on Abraham and on Abraham's progeny, You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious." Suyuti has cited eighteen different narrations other than this, with slight variations, stressing that the blessings on the Prophet should include his progeny, also. The same has been narrated by compilers of all "Sunan" and "Jawami", books quoting a number of the Prophet's companions, such as; Abdulla ibn Abbas, Talha, Abu Sa'id Khidri, Abu Huraira, Abu Mas'ud Ansari, Buraida, ibn Mas'ud, Ka'b ibn Amra, and last, but not the least, Ali ibn Abi Talib, himself. Similarly, it has been narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Tirmidhi who have quoted Imam Hasan ibn Ali from the Prophet as follows:

"He is a miser who, on the mention of my name to him, does not send blessings on me."⁽⁶⁾ Thus, all jurists agree that it is obligatory for Muslims to send blessings on Muhammad

(s.a.w.) and his progeny during the Tashahud (Testimony) in the five daily prayers.⁽⁷⁾

By analyzing this verse we easily discover the real objective behind this obligatory command; which is to revere Muhammad's (s.a.w.) pure progeny, from whom Allah has kept away all uncleanness and error, and made them pure as pure can be. The emphasis on his "aal" by the Prophet, is yet another indication to the Muslims of their pivotal position after him. By commanding Muslims, to send their blessings on them, Allah, the Exalted, was reminding Muslims of the Ahlul-Bait's eventual leadership. In other words, by taking them as exemplars and accepting their leadership, the Muslims would be spared from trials and controversies.

So, it is clear that Allah has not mentioned them in the prayers for nought. Had it not been for their probity that was proved time and again and for their magnanimity of character, as well as, their deep knowledge, Allah would not have ordered the Muslims to adhere to their straight course and seek blessings for them in every prayer. The very fact that this blessing should be invoked every day in each prayer a Muslim performs was but to draw the attention of the Muslim communities towards the significance of the Ahlul-Bait; which should serve as a constant reminder that it is they who are Muhammad's (s.a.w.) rightful heirs. Or to put it more clearly, anyone ignoring their status deliberately or otherwise, has no excuses, whatsoever, and is deceiving his own self to be astray from Allah's command.

The Verse of Feeding:

"The righteous truly drink of a cup tempered with camphor - A fountain from which the servants of Allah drink, making it flow in abundance. They fulfil vows and fear a day, the evil of which is widespread. And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you, for Allah's pleasure only - We desire from you neither reward nor thanks. Surely we fear from our Lord a stem, distressful day. So Allah will ward off from them the evil of that day, and cause them to meet with splendour and happiness; And reward them, for their steadfastness, with a Garden and with silk." Holy Qur'an (76:5-13)

These verses of the Holy Qur'an speak of the Ahlul-Bait, and places them at the top of preference and piety and shows them as exemplars and models for mankind so that the generations are rightly guided through them and follow their right way. The historical occasion to which these blessed verses refer is the great status of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.). When Ali, Fatima and their two sons Hasan and Husein (peace be upon them all) fasted for three consecutive days, and each day at the time of breaking the fast some needy person, as verse number eight indicates, appeared and the Ahlul-Bait gladly fed him, and themselves passed the nights without food. Allah was so pleased by the generosity of the Prophet's Household that He converted their actions into verses of the Glorious Qur'an to serve as guidance for the Muslims. These verses not only portray the Ahlul-Bait's total submission to Allah's Will, but, also, reveal them as pure and spotless personalities; promised esteem and admiration among the dwellers of Paradise. They are shown as immaculate models of emulation so that whoever, among the Muslim communities, follows their glowing path will achieve salvation and will be assembled in their illustrious company on the Resurrection Day.

Zamakhshari, in his 'Kashshaf' commenting on this verse, narrates from Abdullah bin Abbas - that once Hasan and Husein fell sick and the Prophet, together with some of his companions, visited his sick grandsons. He suggested that Ali should make a vow to Allah for his sons' health. Heeding the

Prophet's suggestion Ali, Fatima along with their maid, Fidha, took a vow that if the boys recovered, they would fast for three consecutive days. Eventually, Hasan and Husein recovered and to fulfill the vow they also fasted along with their parents and maid. Since there was nothing in the house to eat, Ali borrowed from Sham'un, a Khaibarian Jew, three measures of barely.

Fatima grounded one measure into flour and baked it into five loaves (of bread) equal to their number, and placed these before them for breaking the fast. Just then a beggar stopped at their door and said: "al-Salaam Alaikum (peace be upon you), O Ahlul-Bait of Muhammad (s.a.w.), (I am) one of the poorest of Muslims (so), feed me, may Allah feed you of the food of Paradise!" So they gladly gave him all the food and slept that night, tasting nothing but water." They fasted again the next day and at sunset as they placed the bread before them to break the fast, an orphan knocked on the door asking for food and they cheerfully fed him, themselves going without food for yet another day. On the third day of the fast, as the breaking time approached, and the food was spread, a prisoner (of war) suddenly appeared at their door and the same scenario was repeated, with the Prophet's Ahlul-Bait passing the third successive night without tasting a morsel of food. Zamaikhshari continues that when dawn broke Ali holding the hands of Hasan and Husein came to the Prophet's house. The Prophet seeing their pale countenances and noting that they were trembling from hunger, expressed dismay and at once accompanied them to their house. On entering the house, he was shocked to see the sight of his daughter Fatima, sitting hollow-eyed on her prayer mat, her stomach sunk into her back. It was, then, that the angel Gabriel came down with this verse, saying:

"O Muhammad, Allah congratulates you for (the sacrifice of) your household. Then he recited the (verse)."⁽⁸⁾

The Verse of Guardianship (Wilaya):

"Only Allah is your Guardian and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while in (Ruku'). And whoever takes Allah and His Apostle and those who believe as his guardian, then surely the party of Allah are they that shall be triumphant" Holy Qur'an (5:55-5)

There are other numerous verses which extoll Imam Ali's (a.s.) virtue, generosity, bravery, patience, piety, his sacrificing in Allah's way and supporting Allah's Apostle (s.a.w.) and his being the most righteous among the believers and the best among His creatures... etc. The above-mentioned verses from the Book of Allah are as examples:

Zamakhshari, in his 'al-Kashshaf', says the following about this verse: "It was revealed in favour of Ali (May Allah enlighten his face) when a beggar asked him (for alms) while he was in the position of Ruku' during prayer, and he gave away his ring (in the same position). It seems it was loose on his little finger, for he did not exert any effort in taking it off, which would have nullified his prayer. If you ask: 'How could it be in favour of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), when the wordings are in the collective form?' I say. The form is collective, though its instigator is a single man, because this is to encourage people to follow his example and earn a similar reward, and, also, to draw attention to the fact that the believers must be extremely mindful and benevolent, towards the poor, in as much as, if a situation could not be postponed until after the prayer, it may not be delayed till having finished it."⁽⁹⁾

Wahidi, in 'Asbab al-Nuzul', citing Kalbi's narration concerning the cause for the revelation of this verse says: "Surely Allah is your Guardian and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while in prostration (Ruku')." "The latter part of this verse is in favour of Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah be gracious to him) because he gave a ring to a beggar while in Ruku' during prayer."⁽¹⁰⁾

The Verse of Proclamation (Tabligh):

"O Prophet proclaim what has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not you have not conveyed His message, and Allah will protect you from the (evil designs of) people..."⁽¹¹⁾

Holy Qur'an (5:67)

Perhaps the most clear portent of Imam Ali's excellence over the Muslims after the Prophet, is the above verse, which makes a decisive phase in the history of divine revelation. After creating this wide and wonderful world, the Almighty had sent an unbroken chain of prophets to guide mankind towards divine bliss. The last and the greatest link in this eternal chain was Muhammad al-Mustafa (s.a.w.), who was entrusted with the most comprehensive code of laws, capable of solving mankind's needs till doomsday. Now, there no longer was need of any new messenger. But nonetheless, the Wise Creator cannot leave mankind's struggle of thousands of years to the whims and fancies of fallible Arabs, who had spent the greater part of their lives in idolatry and sin. Therefore, to ensure the safety of Islam and Muslims, Allah sent down this verse, appointing Imam Ali as the Prophet's vicegerent. Narrators and historians have testified to that great event.

When the Messenger of Allah left Mecca after the Hajj ceremonies all the Muslims followed him, with the intention of leaving him at a place near Juhfa which was at the crossroads for the caravans of Madinah, Egypt and Syria. On the 18th Dhilhijja,⁽¹²⁾ a little before noon, when they reached Ghadir Khum near Juhfa, he stopped and ordered all the people ahead to come near and wait for those following⁽¹³⁾... When all the caravan had gathered, he called for a congregational prayer⁽¹⁴⁾, and, then, he offered midday prayers in the midday heat⁽¹⁵⁾, then he stood up addressing the people, and started his speech by praising and giving thanks to Him. Then he said:

"O people! I am about to be called to Allah, and depart to Him. I am responsible and so are you. What do you say?"

"We bear witness that you have delivered the Divine Message, and tried your best to guide us on the right path, and always gave us good counsel. May Allah bless you with a good

reward," they replied. The Prophet proceeded: 'Don't you,' he said, 'bear witness that there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, His paradise is true, His hell is true?' "O Yes! We bear witness to all this," they said, "O Allah! Bear witness," he said. Then he said: "Do not you hear?"

They replied, "Yes." Then he went on saying:

'O people! I will precede you and you shall arrive at the pool (Kawther): the pool wider than the distance between Basrah and San'a and which has two goblets of silver as large as the space in which the stars are swimming. When you shall reach me I shall interrogate you about your behaviour towards the two weighty things after my death. Then a caller called: 'mat are the two weighty things, O Allah's Messenger?' He (s.a.w.) said: The weightier one is the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Glorified, which has two bonds, one is in the hands of Allah, the Most High, and the other in your hands. So hold tight to it, don't go astray and don't change your faith. The other mighty thing is my progeny, my household. The Knower of subtleties, the Aware has told me that they will join me at the pool as soon as their life on earth expires."⁽¹⁶⁾

Then, he (s.a.w.) said: "Don't you know that I am more appropriate for authority over the believers than themselves?" "Yes, O the Messenger of Allah"⁽¹⁷⁾ they answered. He (s.a.w.) said: "Don't you know or witness that I am more appropriate for authority over every believer than himself?" "Yes, O Messenger of Allah"⁽¹⁸⁾, they replied.

Then, he (s.a.w.) bent down and lifting up Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) in his hands, showed him to the vast crowd who looked on his armpits's whiteness⁽¹⁹⁾ and proclaimed those famous words, which guaranteed the continuation of divine leadership: "O people! Allah is my Master and I am your master"⁽²⁰⁾. for whomsoever I am master, this, Ali, is his master O Allah! Be-friend whoever befriends him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him⁽²¹⁾, help him who helps him, forsake him who forsakes him, and love him who loves him and hate him who hates him."

Then, he (s.a.w.) said:

"O Allah! Bear witness." Then, they (the Messenger of Allah and Ali) did not separate until the following verses were revealed: "... today have I perfected unto you your religion and

completed upon you My blessings and approved for you Islam as your religion... " Holy Qur'an (5:3)

There are numerous other verses in the book of Allah, which elucidate the position, dignity and honour of Imam Ali; his high status among the Muslims and he (a.s.) is the best after the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.). The following verse certifies this more: "(As for) those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of people." Holy Qur'an (98:7)

All the interpreters and narrators have testified that the above-mentioned verse was revealed in favour of Ali bin Abi Talib and Allah, the Almighty, Himself, described him as the best of people. On the revelation of this verse, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

"O Ali, these are you and your followers." (22) Whoever goes through the traditions of the Prophet, his daily behaviour, and his relation with his Ahlul-Bait, whose purity the Holy Qur'an, itself, has testified to, one realizes that Ahlul-Bait (Ali, Fatima, and their two sons, Hasan and Husein) had a unique role and a great responsibility in the history of the Muslim Nation. So, the Prophet's frequent stress on these four luminaries was not without meaning, nor was it mere emotional behaviour towards his family. In fact, he was only obeying Allah's commands to prepare and guide the Muslims towards acceptance of their leadership, after his eventual departure. Only Suyuti collected about sixty Prophetic traditions (hadiths) stressing the love towards the Ahlul-Bait (a.s.); acknowledge their leadership so as to make the Muslim Nation follow their perfect example and illuminated path; look for guidance towards them and not in blind obedience, but, by a way of discerning comparison with others.

The first step which the Prophet took towards the formal building of this blessed family was the marriage of his daughter, Fatima, (a.s.) to his beloved cousin Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) at the Almighty's command. Thus, became implemented this blessed 'tree' which would eventually extend its shady branches over the Muslims and its historical progress. It is narrated that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Allah has ordered me to marry Fatima to you." (23)

When this marriage had occurred, the blessed family was formed and the two sons (Hasan and Husein) were born, the Prophet used to caress them, saying:

"All sons are their fathers' as their agnation returns to their fathers, except the sons of Fatima, as I am their father and agnation." (Narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbal in 'al-Manaqib').⁽²⁴⁾

Chapter 3

The Qur'an in the School of the Ahlul-Bait

A study of the narrative and the traditions that have reached us on the authority of the Ahlul-Bait and a glance at their lives and works, reveals that the message of the Holy Qur'an and the safeguarding of its letter and spirit, was the prime concern of these luminaries.

Imam Ja'fer al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the Prophet's infallible Household, quotes his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) as saying: "Whoever memorizes the Qur'an and practices its teachings, will be among the ranks of the honourable and the righteous."⁽²⁵⁾ Narrated the forth Imam Ali bin Husein (a.s.): the Messenger of Allah (a.s.w.) said:

"Whoever is given the Qur'an by Allah, but thinks that someone else is given a better thing than he is, would be belittling the great and magnifying the little."⁽²⁶⁾ The fifth Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) is quoted to have said: The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

"O readers of the Qur'an, fear Allah for having charged you with His Book, as I am responsible and you are responsible. I am responsible for communicating the Message, while you will be questioned about what you have been charged with the Book of Allah and my traditions."⁽²⁷⁾ Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"A believer should not die before learning the Qur'an, or trying to learn it."⁽²⁸⁾ He is also quoted to have said:

"The Qur'an is Allah's covenant to His creatures. So, a Muslim is ought to look into his covenant and read so verses of it every day."⁽²⁹⁾ Again he (a.s.) said:

"Three will complain to Allah, the Exalted: A deserted mosque where local people do not pray in it; a learned man

among the ignorant; and the Scripture (the Qur'an) which is covered with dust as nobody reads it."⁽³⁰⁾ He (a.s.) also said:

"The Qur'an is alive, it never dies. It goes on as the night and the day go on, and as the sun and the moon go on... " Thus, we recognize the value and the significance of the Qur'an as seen by the Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) who not only dedicated their lives to its practical rendering, but, also, encouraged the Muslims to follow its principles, memorize it, and build their lives on its foundations.

Chapter 4

Memorizing the Qur'an

Among the blessings of Allah on mankind is that He, Himself, has guaranteed to guard this everlasting Divine Message against any form of distortion, forgery and disfigurement, in such a way that falsehood cannot approach it from any direction. Remarkably, the Qur'an, today, is the same text which was revealed fourteen centuries ago to the Prophet, and is free from any additions or deletions.

The religious scholars (ulama) and researchers, in the school of Ahlul-Bait, certify this great fact. We mention only what Sheikh Tabarasi (one of the prominent interpreters and great Shi'ite scholars of the sixth century A.H.) (may Allah bless him) said: "What is known among the Shi'a scholars and researchers, or what they even positively take for granted, is the rejection of the idea of any falsification."⁽³¹⁾ He also said:

"... of such (baseless) talk about additions and deletions, in the Qur'an, is unbecoming of any interpretation. As to the additions, it is unanimously regarded to be a false assumption; and concerning deletions, a group of our people think of some alterations and deletions in the Qur'an, while the true belief of our people is to the contrary. This has been supported by (Sherif) Murtadha (may Allah bless his soul), who, extensively discoursed on it... "⁽³²⁾

Sheikh al-Balaghi (may Allah glorify his status) said: The Qur'an continues to enjoy great veneration among the Muslims, generation after generation. Everywhere you would encounter thousands of copies of the Book and thousands of those who learn it by heart. They studiously copy from one another and the Muslims recite it to one another for verification. Thousands of its copies stand as sentinels over the learners,

and thousands of learners stand as sentries over the copies of the Qur'an, and thousands of them both stand as guardian over the new copies. We say thousands, while actually they are hundreds of thousands. Nay! Thousands of thousands, because no historical event received such a kind of perpetuity and unquestionable eternity as the Qur'an did, as promised by Allah, the Exalted:

"Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardians." Holy Qur'an (15:9)

"Surely on Us (devolves) the collecting of it and the reciting of it." Holy Qur'an (75:17)

"Therefore, if you happen to hear dubious narratives that something of the Qur'an was distorted and some of it was lost, do not heed such talk, as scholarly researches have proved how disordered, shaky and weak their narrators are, and how contradictory they are to the Muslims... ⁽³³⁾ In a chapter titled 'The Imamiya's opinion rejecting deletions in the Qur'an', Balaghi further states in his 'Tafsir'. "It is no secret that Saduq (may Allah bless him) who is known for the great care he took in what he narrated, says in his book 'Iqtiqad'. Our belief in the Qur'an, which was sent down by Allah to His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.), is that it consists of all that is in between its two covers, and it is what is in circulation among the people, no more... Whoever ascribes to us that we say it was more than that, is but a liar."

Another great Shi'iti scholar, Sheikh Mufid, writes in his book 'Maqalat' that:

"A group of the Imamiya say that nothing was deleted from it (the Qur'an) not even a single word, verse, chapter, but what was omitted were the notes, explanations and interpretations concerning the meanings and the truth of its revelation, which had been written by the Commander of the Faithful Ali (a.s.) on his own compilation of the Book" In 'Kashf al-Ghita fi kittab al-Qur'an', chapter eight, concerning the deletion, it is said:

"No doubt that it is protected against any alteration by the Sovereign, the Almighty, as is proved by the evidence of the Qur'an and the scholars' unanimity of opinion."

Sheikh Bahauddin Amili says:

"... they also differed concerning additions and deletions in it, but the truth is that the Glorious Qur'an is protected against

all that, be it addition or deletion. This is proved by Allah's saying: "We surely are its guardians." Muqaddas Baghdadi, in 'Sharh al-Wafiya' says:

"... the talk about deletion which is in circulation among our companions, is in contrast to the unanimous talk of non-interference in it... it is said that Sheikh Ali bin Abdul-Aali had written an exclusive book refuting the deletion theory', quoting the aforementioned speech of Saduq."⁽³⁴⁾ The late contemporary scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Husein Aal Kashif al-Ghita', in his book 'Asl al-Shi'a wa Usuliha', says: "The Book which is (in circulation) among the Muslims is the Book which Allah had sent down to His Prophet - a miracle and challenge - and there is no deletion, distortion, nor additions in it."

Tas his is the position of the Shi'ati scholars, regarding the Qur'an now in the hands of the Muslims. It is, it was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), and it will remain pure and unadulterated, as long as man remains on the face of the earth, guiding humanity towards virtue and happiness. Certain dubious narrations which allegedly speak about deletions in the holy text, and, sometimes, claim of a Qur'an other than this, have been exploited by purposeful offenders and have obviously misled some people. These simple-minded souls cite the following narration from Imam Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Sadiq to support their misconstrued views:

"... but by Allah (pointing to his chest) we have the weapon of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), his sword and his armour. By Allah we have Fatima's 'Mashaf' (book), wherein are not any of the verses of Allah's Book. It is a dictation of the Messenger of Allah, written by Ali with his hand."⁽³⁵⁾

They have misunderstood the Imam, and without going into the lexical meaning of the word Mashaf thought that he was indicating a Qur'an other than the one in circulation. It was a grave mistake on the part of these people. However, a careful scrutiny of the narrative, will help reveal the actual meaning of the word Mashaf: "By Allah we have Fatima's 'Mashaf' (book),"

By looking up the word Mashaf in Arabic lexicons, we discover what Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) actually meant. Raghib Isfahani says: "(Al-Sahifa means any flat thing such as the flatness of the check, a leaf a page, or a sheet which is used for writing.

Its plural is Saha'if or Suhuf as the Almighty says; "'Suhuf' of Abraham and Moses, and also... receiving pure 'Suhuf' (pages) wherein are all the correct books." Holy Qur'an (87:19)

It is said that it means the Qur'an and that by using the plural Suhuf in which are 'Books', it is meant to say that they include more than what is in Allah's Books. Hence, a Mashaf is a collection of written Suhuf, and its plural form is Masahif.⁽³⁶⁾ Therefore, the word Mashaf means any book and is not a special term for "the Book of Allah". It can mean any collection of Suhuf (leaves of paper or skin), and only in this context can the Qur'an also be called Mashaf because it is a collection of Suhuf.

The exclusive names for the Book of Allah are: Al-Qur'an, al-Dhikr, al-Furqan and al-Kitab⁽³⁷⁾, as mentioned in the holy text, itself. Allah did not call it "Mashaf", but, it were the later Muslims who named it so, after having compiled it on leaves or sheets. Thus, it is clear that the mistake arose from the linguistic use of the word during the early days of Islam, when people did not take 'Mashaf' to mean Qur'an, as it may imply in present day usage.

A closer look at Imam al-Sadiq's narration, itself, will help clarify the misconception. He says that: "In Fatima's Mashaf there are none of the verses of Allah's Book" It obviously means that it is neither the Qur'an nor any part of it. Nor is it a divine revelation, but it is a dictation of the Messenger of Allah written in Imam Ali's handwriting.

According to some scholars 'the Mashaf Fatima' was a collection of supplications and instructions which Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) dictated for the benefit of his beloved daughter Fatima (ass.).

Chapter 5

Principles for Understanding the Qur'an

The Qur'an is the Book of Allah Who sent it down as a Revelation to His Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.).

Allah protected it (the Qur'an) against any distortion, forgery and disfigurement, additions and deletions. Praise be to Allah that all the Muslims agree with the purity and the safety of the Qur'an, but there is a scientific problem which is the problem of understanding the Qur'an and its explanation. Most of the differences in ideological, and jurisprudential opinions belong to the difference that exist in understanding and explaining the Qur'an.

In order to give a correct explanation to the Qur'an, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) used to follow a scholarly method in explaining the Qur'an, these are:

1. The explanation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an, that is; some Qur'anic verses explain some others.
2. The explanation of the Qur'an by true and authentic traditions and narrations. Surely the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) explained what was in need of explanation through his sayings and actions, like the verses of prayer, paying the poor-rate (zakat), pilgrimage and various other Qur'anic concepts and laws.
3. Explaining the verses, whose explanation does not reach us from the pure Prophetic traditions (sunnah), and were not clear, because of other verses, from the linguistic understanding of the Arabic language. Indeed Allah's Book is a clear Arabic Book; what is understood from its literal meaning is an excuse upon the Muslims.
4. The explanation depends on the reason for the revelation in explaining most of the verses of the Qur'an and this should

be done within the framework of the Qur'an and the Traditions in order to give their true and real meanings.

Chapter 6

The Prophetic Traditions (Sunnah) in the School of the Ahlul-Bait

It is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

"May Allah prosper the person who heard my saying, memorized it, comprehended it and retold it (to others) as he had heard it, since a carrier of knowledge may not be a scholar and perhaps one may transport knowledge to a more learned one."⁽³⁸⁾ The Prophetic tradition means the specific actions, sayings and the declarations (confirmations)* of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Allah, the Almighty ordered us to follow the Prophet (s.a.w.) and practise his traditions (sunnah) by saying:

"... whatever the Apostle gives you accept it, and whatever he forbids you abstain (from it)." Holy Qur'an (59:7)

"Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day... " Holy Qur'an (33:21)

"... and If you have a dispute concerning any matter refer it to Allah and the Apostle." Holy Qur'an (4:59)

*- Taqrir in Arabic means "confirmation". it is a declaration, approval and signature and means that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), himself had a witness for the actions practised by the Muslims but, did not forbid them. These divine instructions were strictly adhered to by the Ahlul-Bait and those who followed their radiant path and advocated sincere adherence to the Book of Allah and the Prophetic sunnah in interpretation, narration, jurisprudence, legislation and ideology and other Islamic knowledge and sciences.

Thus, the Prophetic sunnah is the second source among the sources of thought and legislation on which the Muslims depended for judgement, laws and values.

Most of the Shari'ah laws, and their concepts were not clearly detailed in the Book of Allah like the laws concerning the paying of poor-rate (zakat), prayer, wealth, holy struggle (jihad), family, and international relations and others. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) started explaining them and clarifying their rules to the Muslims through his sayings and actions. He (s.a.w.s) told the Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) to return to the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions as two main sources for explaining Islamic laws and rules and to refuse analogy, opinion, approval and other sources upon which some jurists of Islamic sects depended in their inductions and inferences.

It is narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Never is there anything but that is mentioned either in the Book of Allah or in the Prophetic tradition." (39) Sama'ah asked Imam Musa bin Ja'far: "I said to him: 'Is everything found in the Book of Allah and the tradition of His Prophet (s.a.w.); or do you comment on them?' He (a.s.) replied: 'Yes, all things are found in the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Prophet '" (40)

Narrated Imam Ali bin Musa al-Ridha (a.s.) said:

"Do not accept any saying (relating them to us) which disagrees with the Qur'an; surely our sayings should agree with the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions; we speak either quoting them from Allah or His Messenger." (41)

It is narrated that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"Do not accept any narrative related to us unless they agree with the Qur'an and the sunnah." (42) Indeed the Imams of Ahlul-Bait memorized the Prophetic traditions quoting them from their fathers who quote them from the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) and called people to write them down from the period (of rule) of Ali and his son Hasan (a.s.) while the caliphs forbid the writing down of the sunnah and they continued so till the period of Umar bin Abdul-Aziz (43) who ordered, again, to write down the Prophetic traditions in the year of 99 A.H. (44)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"My narration is my father's, and my father's is my grandfather's, and my grandfather's is his father's, and his;

father's is the narrative of Ali bin Abi Talib, and the narrative of Ali is the narrative of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), and the narrative of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), is the words of Allah. the Exalted."⁽⁴⁵⁾ The Imams of Ahlul-Bait were those who comprehended and understood the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, memorized, narrated them to others, and explained their contents to the Muslim nation.

Scholarly Methods for Proving the true Sunnah: In order to distinguish the true narratives (sunnah) from the interpolated and false ones, the scholars of the school of Ahlul-Bait placed some scholarly and ideological bases and measures for proving true sunnah. The most prominent of them are:

1. Any hadith (the Prophet's sayings) should be checked with the Book of Allah to see whether it is correct or not. If it conforms with the Qur'an, then, it is of true hadith, but, if it contradicts the divine text, then it is a false one.

2. All hadiths mentioned in the books of hadith, disregarding the reliability of their narrators, should be checked and investigated by the scholars in order to be sure of the reliability of the narrator and his truthfulness.

3. The scholars should not accept any narration unless their narrators are described by piety and truthfulness, disregarding the sect or the group to which the narrator belonged. Therefore, the method of the jurists of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) is not to view a book of hadith as completely correct or as completely false.

Chapter 7

Monotheism According to the School of Ahlul-Bait

Imam Ali (a.s.) in Nahjul-Balagha says:

"The foremost in religion is the knowing of Him, the perfection of knowing Him is to believe in His Oneness, and the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to be sincere to Him."⁽⁴⁶⁾ Belief in Allah, the One, and the Only, to Whom all the attributes of perfectness are ascribed and Who is above all the attributes of imperfection, is the main origin and base of the Islamic faith, thought, legislation and conduct... etc. Therefore, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) gave more importance to form a pure concept of monotheism free from doubts, perversions, and disbelief of pre-Islamic ignorance and the remnants of pagan thought and strived hard towards correcting such thought by explaining the true meanings and faith of monotheism as proved by the Qur'an.

For more details, we cite some narrations of Ahlul-Bait (ass.) concerning the true meanings of monotheism and its concepts. Imam Musa bin Ja'far (a.s.) wrote to one of his companions and said:

"Verily, Allah is High, and Mighty (Sublime) and Great and far above that the reality of His attributes should be comprehensible. Assign to Him only those attributes that He has assigned to Himself and refrain from qualifying Allah with anything besides those attributes."⁽⁴⁷⁾ Regarding the Almighty's integrity and the purity of Islamic thought from polytheism and paganism, the Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) narrated: "Whoever likens Allah with His creatures is a polytheist; surely Allah is the Almighty and High. Nothing resembles Him and nothing is like Him, and He is totally the reverse of whatever is imagined."⁽⁴⁸⁾

One of the companions of Imam Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Sadiq (a.s.) asked him about the correct sect in monotheism, He (a.s.) said:

"You - may Allah be merciful to you - asked me about monotheism and what that group of people believe in. Exalted is Allah, the like of whom there is naught, and He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing: Allah is above what is attributed to Him by those describers who liken Allah to His creatures, those who are slanderous to Allah. Know you - may Allah be merciful to you that in respect to monotheism, the true doctrine is what is revealed in the Qur'an about the attributes of Allah, the Almighty, the Exalted. Attributed not to Allah, the Sublime, any ideas of nihilism and similitude. Neither should His existence be negated nor should He be likened (to anything). He is Allah, the Established the Existent. Exalted is He far above what the false interpreters attribute to Him. Exceed not the Qur'an or you will go astray after the clear exposition of truth."⁽⁴⁹⁾

Thus, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) explain that the true monotheism is the one called upon by the Qur'an which unified Allah in His Self, His attributes, His deeds and His worships.

Chapter 8

Divine Justice "

"Allah (Himself) is witness that there is no god save Him, and (so do) the angels and the men of learning, maintaining His creation in justice. There is no god save Him, the Almighty, the Wise." Holy Qur'an (3:17)

Justice is one of the attributes of Allah, the Exalted and its effects are discerned in all of His acts. Its manifestation can be seen in the world of creation and in the divine legislation and law, as well.

It (Divine Justice) can be seen in the obligations which He assigns upon His servants as can be seen in the Judgement and Punishment Day, and the compensation of the sufferings resulting from them without punishment nor revenge. Thus, the Qur'an talks about Allah, the Almighty's Justice, and man's responsibility of his deeds and, also, refuses the idea of fatalism. The Almighty says:

"Allah enjoins justice and kindness." Holy Qur'an (16:90)

"... and your Lord wrongs no one." Holy Qur'an (18:49)

"... for it (is only) that which it has earned, and against it (only) that which it has deserved." Holy Qur'an (2:286)

"And whoever does good an atom's weight will see it then. And whoever does ill an atom's weight will see it then." Holy Qur'an (99:7-8)

"We have shown him the way whether he be grateful or disbelieving." Holy Qur'an (76:3)

"And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways." Holy Qur'an (90:10)

"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of that which men's hands have wrought,..." Holy Qur'an (41:30)

Different opinions, among the Muslims, appeared in explaining man's acts and their relation with Allah, the Almighty. Even some Islamic schools believe that man has no free will and no option of his own, and all his behaviour and actions are predetermined by Allah, the Almighty. Therefore, he is forced to do what he does and is not free in his acts.

Others say that man has full choice to do whatever he wills, as his will is separate from Allah's will, and that man does whatever he wills and Allah is actually incapable of stopping man from doing what he wills. But, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait refute both of these beliefs and say: Neither Fatalism nor Self-Determination because, man, if he was forced to do what he does, he would not deserve punishment and reward and if man has full choice to do whatever he wills, Allah will not have power over all things. Thus, the following three opinions appeared to explain man's actions:

1. Fatalism
2. Self-Determination or Free will

3. Neither Fatalism nor Self-Determination Muhammad bin Ajlan, one of those who lived during the period of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) narrated the explanation of the Imam (a.s.) regarding man's actions: He said: I asked him (the Imam):

"Did Allah leave His creatures to their affairs? He said: 'Allah is more generous than to leave their affairs to them,' I asked: 'Then did He impose on them their actions? He replied: 'Allah is more just than to compel a servant to do something, then torture him for that. '"⁽⁵⁰⁾

So, man is responsible for his own deeds, and therefore, deserves punishment and reward because man not only owns free will and option, but, also, Allah grants him kindness and help for guidance and salvation from error and misguidance if one chooses the path of guidance. According to the Qur'an's declaration, man is free to choose one of the ways:

"And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways." "We have shown him the way whether he be grateful or disbelieving."

Chapter 9

Ahlul-Bait and the Perverted Groups

The opponents of Islam realized that the Imam of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) were the very embodiment of originality and purity and acted as a refuge for Muslims in time of distress and calamities. They have a special status and respect in the self of every Muslim who loves the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.). History tells us that diverse, deviated groups appeared, such as; the Zindiks, Exaggerators, Mazdakis, Jews, hypocrites, and even those who are affected with pagan thoughts which came either from the Magis, or from the philosophies of India, China, and Greece, and the like have used their different destructive attempts to deviate Islam and defame its illuminated face.

Some of these deviated groups have even slipped into the ranks of the school of Ahlul-Bait and claimed attachment to them in order to defame Islam and to pollute the right cause of Ahlul-Bait and its purity; like the Exaggerators and the Mazdakis who described the Imams of Ahlul-Bait through the attributes of Divinity and pretended that Allah, the Most Glorified, had transmigrated into the bodies of the Imams of the Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) and authorized the affair of the creation to them. But, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) stood firmly against such destructive and deviated beliefs and disclosed them to the people; strongly repudiated, cursed, dismissed and renounced them.

Among these deviated groups were: 'The Mughira Group', the followers of Mughira bin Sa'id and 'The Kattabiyah', the followers of Abi Khattab Muhammad bin Abi Zainab al-Assadi.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, son of Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), is quoted to have said:

"May Allah curse Mughira bin Sa'id as he used to tell lies against my father, may Allah make him taste the heat of burning iron, may Allah curse those who say a bout us, what we do not say ourselves, may Allah curse those who try to take us away from the servitude of Allah, Who created us, and to Him is our return and in His hand is our control."⁽⁵¹⁾

He (a.s.) also said:

"Don't accept any saying (hadith) relating them to us except that which agrees with the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions (sunnah) unless you see an evidence of our previous sayings with it; indeed Mughira bin Sa'id, may Allah curse him, has interpolated sayings (hadiths) in the books of the companions of my father of which he (my father) did not narrate them, so, fear Allah and don't accept any saying related to us, which disagrees with the statement of Our Lord, the Exalted, and the traditions of our Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) - because we, if we narrate any hadith, we always say: The Almighty Allah or the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) said so and so."⁽⁵²⁾

He (a.s.) further said:

"Mughira bin Sa'id was intentionally belying my father; he used to take the books of his companions, who disguised themselves to be of the companions of my father, and then, they gave them to Mughira who interpolated in them perverted beliefs of unbelief and infidelity and, then, attributed them to my father and therefore, returned them to his companions and ordered them to distribute them among the Shi'a; whenever there is any exaggeration in the books of the companions of my father, be sure that it is the act of Mughira bin Sa'id who interpolated them in his books."

Regarding the exaggeration and the interpolation of Abi Al-Khattab and his lie against the Imams of Ahlul-Bait, Imam Ali bin Musa al-Rida (a.s.) said:

"Indeed Abi Khattab used to tell lies against Abi Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq) (a.s.), may Allah curse Abi Khattab, whereas his companions used to interpolate these sayings (hadiths) up until today in the books of Abi Abdullah (a.s.); therefore, don't accept any saying (hadith) related by them to us if they disagree with the Qur'an, because, all our sayings should agree with both the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions."⁽⁵³⁾

Thus, the Imams of Ahlul-Bait fought the Exaggerators and deviated groups. They called on the Muslims to hold fast to the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) and the pure Prophetic traditions so that they can differentiate between the illuminated path of Ahlul-Bait to which the followers of the school of the Imamiya Shi'a firmly adhered and the misguidance of the Exaggerators and their strayed beliefs.

Chapter 10

The Ahlul-Bait's Method in the Political Field

Political action and thought forms a principal base among the pillars of Islam; Islam is a creed, system and legislation and its application in its social field needs a political authority, state and legitimate leadership. Therefore, this political action and thought takes, in the method of Ahlul-Bait, (a.s.) a high, important position which is based on foundations and principles; among them are:

1. The necessity of establishing an Islamic state and applying its laws.

2. The Muslim leader (Imam) is responsible for safeguarding Islamic laws, applying them and inviting others towards them. He is the political leader and guardian of the ideological line of the ummah (Islamic communities).

3. The Muslim leader (Imam) should be qualified with piety, behavioural righteousness, and be familiar with Islamic laws.

4. It is forbidden to obey or befriend the unjust ruler.

First, it is obligatory for the Muslims to advise him; if he does not respond, it becomes obligatory for the Muslims to boycott him, and if he does not respond, it becomes obligatory to depose him and revolt against him and pledge allegiance to a just ruler who acts according to the principles of the Book of Allah and the traditions of His Noble Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)

These are the clear facts in the practical life of Ahlul-Bait and their struggle against the tyrannical rulers; their guiding and educating the masses of the ummah; preparing them to be conscious vanguards and their support for the movements and revolutions which adopted reform and change.

Among the prominent state of refusing oppression and corruption is the state of Imam Husein bin Ali (a.s.) against the government of Yazid bin Mu'awiyah and his declaration for an armed revolution against him; the support of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) for the revolution of Zayid bin Ali bin Husein in the year 121 A.H. against Husham bin Abdul-Malik; and the support of Imam Musa bin Ja'far for the revolution of Husein bin Ali in Madinah in the year 169 A.H. against the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi.

The life of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) is a continuation of the way in which the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) took and, also, a confirmation for it. Imam Husein, the martyr (a.s.) narrates from his grandfather, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), that he said: "Whoever witnesses an unjust ruler considering the prohibitions of Allah, the Almighty as permissible, breaking the covenant of Allah, opposing the practices of the Apostle of Allah (s.a.w.), treating his servants sinfully and cruelly and had seen all these misdeeds, but, did not oppose him by words or actions, Allah surely will punish him as he wills..."⁽⁵⁴⁾

The life of the (Ahlul-Bait) (a.s.) and their words are a correction for the deviated way and falsified line which was founded by some unjust rulers and their preachers who supported and bowed down to them. They depended on some forged hadiths which were narrated by Muslim in his Sihah; for example, the following narration is mentioned in the above-mentioned book, in the chapter on the order for the necessity of performing prayer, collectively that the Messenger of Allah Muhammad, (s.a.w.) said:

"After me there will be rulers who would not be guided aright nor follow my traditions and among them there will appear men whose hearts look like the hearts of Satans but in the body of human beings."

He asked: I said: O, Messenger of Allah, What shall I do, if I became aware of this? He (s.a.w.) said: 'You should listen and obey such rulers even if they beat your back or take your wealth, then you should listen and obey them'"⁽⁵⁵⁾

All these forged sayings (hadiths) written by the tyrants, and their agents, forms a base for misunderstanding to the extent that some even built their political views on them. Nawawi in his explanation of Sahih Muslim said:

"The jurists and the narrators of Ahlul-Sunnah say: The ruler should not be deposed because of doing corrupt, oppressive, and wronging other's rights. (Such a ruler) should not be deposed nor revolted against, but it is obligatory to advise, and frighten him with the narrations concerning that."⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Imams of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) had a special position against such unjust rulers and they stood against such deviated political lines, therefore, these rulers began to use different kinds of tactics against them. Their (Ahlul-Bait) life is filled of illuminated images of sacrifice for the sake of faith and their history is the highest exemplary of struggle for the sake of truth and who spent their best days between either being killed, poisoned, pursued on the earth or being punished in the darkness of prisons.

Chapter 11

The Ahlul-Bait's Method in Educating their Companions

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

"I dislike for a man to die while there is still a habit of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) which he has not yet practised."⁽⁵⁷⁾ The Ahlul-Bait took great care to educate the Muslims in accordance with the Book of Allah and the traditions of the Prophet, with the objective of building sound Islamic personalities that would hold aloft the torch of guidance. Imam Al-Baqir (a.s.) tried to efface the doubts instigated by some of his contemporaries who, had some mischievous intentions behind their effort. They used to say that it sufficed a Muslim to love the Ahlul-Bait and to regard them as leaders, and, in such a case, there was no need to keep up the other obligatory duties of what had commanded. The Imam explained that the path of the Ahlul-Bait meant putting into practice all that had been brought by the Qur'an, and shown by the Prophet (s.a.w.).

"... by Allah, we have no absolution from Allah, nor are we relatives of Allah, nor have we any argument against Allah. You cannot be nearer to Allah except through obedience. So, whoever is obedient (to Allah) will be benefitted by our friendship, and whoever is disobedient (to Him), our friendship will benefit him naught "⁽⁵⁸⁾

Amru bin Sa'id bin Hilal narrates:

"I said to Abu Ja'far (a.s.): May I be your ransom, I only see you very rarely, after years. Please give me a piece of advice which I may follow.' Imam Al-Baqir replied: 'I advise you to fear Allah, to be pious and diligent. Do know that there can be no piety without diligent... "'⁽⁵⁹⁾ He also advised one of his followers, named Abu Usama, and told him to convey it to his

friends. Here is an extract of the said advice: "... fear Allah and be good, and do not be bad, direct towards us every affection, and ward off from us every abomination, for we are not as they say. We have our rights in the Book of Allah, which were related to the Messenger of Allah and had been purified by Allah. Our birth is so noble that anyone other than us claiming the like, is a liar.* Increase your remembrance of Allah, of death, of reciting the Qur'an and of sending blessings upon the Prophet (s.a.w.) as sending blessings on him is rewarded ten fold."⁽⁶⁰⁾

*- This refers to their noble relations to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) through their mother, Fatima al-Zahra' (a.s.), the Prophet's daughter. Imam al-Sadiq instructed one of his companions, Ismail bin Ammar, as follows:

"I advise you to fear Allah, to be pious, to be truthful, to pay your trusts, to be good to your neighbours and to be frequent in your prostration (prayers). Such were the orders of Muhammad (s.a.w.) to us."⁽⁶¹⁾ Hisham bin Salim says that he heard Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) tell a man called Hamran this:

"Look at the one who is lower than you (in position) and do not look at the one who is higher than you, as in this way you will be more satisfied with what is your lot, and more deserving of Allah's bounty. Do know that (good) routine deeds even if few are worthier than a regular deed lacking certainty. Do know that no piety is more beneficial than avoiding the prohibitions of Allah and refraining from wronging the people. Nothing is more pleasing than a good temper. No wealth is better than being content with the little which suffices. No ignorance is more bitter than conceit."⁽⁶²⁾

Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s.) also cites the Messenger of Allah as describing the believers:

"Whoever is displeased with his evil deed while being pleased with his good deed, is a faithful man."⁽⁶³⁾ These are the true attributes of a good Muslim on the bases of Ahlul-Bait who strived hard to educate and establish them. This is their true method in building and educating the Muslim society and ummah. This is their true call through which they addressed the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) which was to follow the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) and the traditions of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) and to build life on their principles. How beautiful it is when a Muslim is guided aright through

their guidance and follows their will and listens to the remembrance of them.

Chapter 12

A Look at the Islamic School, Jurisprudence

During the days of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), Muslims used to receive the regulations and precepts concerning worship, dealings, and judgements and other social issues, from the Prophet, himself, and had no problem in understanding Islam and obtaining shari'ah laws and regulations.

After his demise, people used to refer to the Book of Allah and the traditions of His Prophet, deriving from them percepts, laws and religious situations, on the authority of the Prophet's Ahlul-Bait and those of the religious scholars of the companions who collectively agreed with the most learned among them, Imam Ali. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said: "I am leaving among you two precious things: The Book of Allah and my Progeny, my Household. And indeed, Allah, the Benign, the All-Aware has told me that these (two) will never part with each other until they return to me at the Pool of 'Kawther' in Paradise."

He (s.a.w.) also said:

"The most learned among you, judicially, is Ali." After recognizing his knowledge concerning the Book of Allah and the Prophet's tradition. A'isha, one of the Prophet's wives, describes him (Imam Ali) by saying:

"He (Imam Ali) was the best informed, among the people, concerning the Prophet's traditions." Imam Ali was the final authority on deriving the Islamic rules and solving their problems.

As a result of what Islam caused of movements, and developments in the fields of society, state and the life of individuals, new issues and affairs concerning such fields appeared, and which later on, needed an organization, and a declaration of

Islamic regulations. An answer to those needs, the Islamic society witnessed a movement and a development in the fields of jurisprudence, legislation, the appearance of jurisprudence, and induction in a developed way, therefore, different schools, views and sects of jurisprudence appeared. This happened in its distinguished form at the end of the first and second century of Hira (emigration) at the period of the two Imams, Muhammad al-Baqir and his son, Ja'far al-Sadiq, upon whom the narrators of Hadiths, jurisprudents, commentators, and others, witnessed their knowledge. For instance, Abu Hanifa, Malik and others studied at the hands of Imam Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Sadiq.

The Imams of Ahlul-Bait called on Muslims to follow the Book of Allah and the Prophet's traditions as the only two sources of Islamic laws and legislations while other Islamic schools of jurisprudence depended other additional for the sources in inducting of laws other than the above-mentioned sources. Among them were:

1. Opinion and Analogy, whose cause is inducted
2. Approval
3. The Closing and Opening of Pretexts
4. Simple Interests

The Imams, of Ahlul-Bait, and their students, who were related to their jurisprudential school, used academic ways of dialogues with the chiefs of other diverse schools of jurisprudence and called on them to depend on the Book and the sunnah as the only two sources. It is worth mentioning, here, that other Islamic schools differ among themselves in accepting and rejecting such sources like analogy and to act with opinion; upon which the Hanafi sect depended. The one who studies these diverse views of jurisprudence, and their principles; which were inducted from them in a comparative study, will find that the reason of difference can be found in two main causes:

1. The difference in accepting and rejecting some narrations, in accordance with the conditions of accepting the narration, with an emphasis on the reliability of the narration.

2. The acceptance of certain Islamic schools of jurisprudence as sources of legislation, other than the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions; like analogy, approval... etc. and refusing

them. For example, each of the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, Zaydi, Shi'a Imamiya jurists,... etc. has its own way and conditions for accepting the narrations proved by the Prophetic traditions.

This difference caused by these two foundations affects the jurists's views and opinions. This, in return, leads to the appearance of jurisprudential difference among them. Thus, it is not a difference between the two sects (the Sunnis and the Shi'as) as some try to pretend in order to sow the seed of disunity and discord among the Muslims. In truth, it is only a scholarly difference among the Muslim jurists, altogether. Therefore, it is not true that this scholarly difference be a cause of discord and disunity among the Muslims. Thus, it is obligatory for all the Muslims to have scholarly dialogues and understandings and to open the door of Ijtihad (endeavouring to discover and deduce the Islamic laws and regulations from their sources) by those of the sects who closed it, so that the scholars can reach a satisfied answer and a safe, lawful position. Surely, the scholarly differences based, on safe foundations, should not be considered as a main cause for social and political difference nor to isolate the Muslims who are one single nation and who, altogether, agree that the Book of Allah and the traditions of His noble Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) are the origin and main source for Islamic knowledge, law, and thought.

Here under are examples of the jurists opinions, showing their points of agreement and disagreement in spite of whether they belong to the Sunnis or the Shi'as:

Both the Imamiya and the Hanbalis say that the 'First Testimony' (in the prayer) is compulsory, whereas the Hanafis, the Shafi'is and the Malikis say that it is recommended, and not compulsory. The 'Last Testimony' is said by the Shafi'is, the Imamiya and the Hanbalis to be compulsory, whereas, the Malikis and the Hanafis say that it is recommended, and not compulsory.⁽⁶⁴⁾

The Shafi'is, the Malikis and the Hanbalis say. The Taslim (submission in the prayer) is compulsory. the Hanafis say: It is not compulsory, while the Imamiya differ among themselves: some say: It is compulsory, whereas, others say: It is

recommended. Among those who regard it as recommended was Mufid, Sheikh Tusi and Allama Hilli.⁽⁶⁵⁾

In respect to collective prayer, the Hanbalis say: It is compulsory on every able person, and if one left it and prayed as an individual, one would be a sinner, although his prayer is correct. On the other hand, the Imamiya, the Hanafis, the Malikis and the majority of the Shafi'is regard it as not compulsory on everyone, nor on a few, but, nonetheless, highly recommended.

Concerning those who deserve the poor-rate (zakat), the Shafi'is and the Hanbalis say that whoever gets half of his requirements is not regarded as poor, and deserves not zakat (poor-rate). The Imamiya and the Malikis say that the poor, according to the religion, is the one who does not have a year's provisions for himself and his household; so, whoever had a farm, a property or cattle, that was insufficient to sustain him and his family for a whole year, deserved to receive a portion of the zakat. The Imamiya, the Shafi'is and the Hanbalis say that whoever was able to earn his bread is not allowed to receive the zakat, whereas, the Hanafis and the Malikis say: He is allowed to receive the zakat and it should be paid to him. Concerning staying overnight in Muzdalifa during the hajj rites, the Hanafis, the Shafi'is and the Hanbalis say that it is compulsory, and whoever does not stay there will have to offer a sacrifice - as in 'al-Mughni', whereas the Imamiya and the Malikis say: it is not compulsory but recommended.

Regarding the pelting in Jamrah al-Aqaba - (it is the largest symbol of the devil which is situated on the outskirts of Mina towards Mecca, and seven pebbles on the tenth day should be thrown at it, and is considered among the obligations of the pilgrimage (hajj)), - the Malikis, the Hanafis, the Hanbalis and the Imamiya say: It is not allowed to pelt the Jamrah al-Aqaba before dawn, but, if the pilgrim throws before dawn without having an excuse, he should repeat it, again, whereas, they allowed the pilgrims to do so if they have excuses, such as, elderliness, sickness and fear, whereas, the Shafi'is say. It is allowed to do so because the above-mentioned time is recommended and not obligatory.

Concerning the contract of marriage, the Imamiya, the Hanbalis, and the Shafi'is say. The contract cannot be correct

through correspondence, whereas the Hanafis say that it is correct to do so if both sides engaged in marriage are in one place.

The Shafi'is and the Malikis say that the guardian is the sole authority who has the right of consent to the marriage of a mentally sane grown, mature girl if she is virgin, but if she is a widow, he shares in her marriage consent, and neither of them has the sole right of consent. Moreover, it is he who concludes the marriage contract, as it can never be concluded by the girl's words alone, although her content is necessary.

The Hanafis say that a mature, sane girl has the right to choose her husband and to conduct the marriage contract herself, irrespective of whether she is virgin or widow, and no one has authority upon her, nor the right to object, provided that she chooses a worthy suitor.

Most of the Imamiya jurist say that the mature, sane girl has the right to conduct all kinds of procedures and deals, including marriage contracts, both as a virgin and a widow. She has, thus, the right to conclude contracts, on her own behalf and on behalf of other than herself, both directly and through agency, in consent and acceptance, similar to the man, without the least difference.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Concerning divorce, Abu Zuhra says:

"According to the Hanafi sect, the divorce of everybody is valid, except of the child, the insane and the idiot. So, the divorce is legal even if done jokingly, or by a drunkard, or unwillingly and by the one wearing the ihram (pilgrim robes) for hajj rites."⁽⁶⁷⁾ He adds: "According to the Hanafi sect, the divorce done even by mistake or unintentionally and by the forgetful is valid."⁽⁶⁸⁾

Of the same books he says:

"Malik and Shafi' agreed with Abu Hanifa and his followers in respect to the validity of divorce even in jest, while Ahmad (bin Hanbal) did not agree, regarding such a divorce as incorrect."⁽⁶⁹⁾ The Imamiya, on the authority of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.), say:

"No divorce (is valid) except for the one who wants it." These were some examples of comparative jurisprudence, selected to show the reader the real scholarly controversy in the Islamic sects, and how these sects meet in some instances and differ in some other matters, regardless of their Shi'ism or Sunnism.

We have already seen the Hanafi and the Shafi'i agreeing in some cases with the Imamiya, and differing from the Hanbali, and the Maliki, or the Maliki agreeing with the Imamiya and differing from other Sunni sects. This is an explicit fact observed in all the subjects of jurisprudence and its different branches. The jurisprudential dispute cannot be termed a discord between the Shi'ites and the Sunnites. It is a scientific, methodical dispute among the five schools of jurisprudence. We have to look for the legal religious proofs, and commence a scientific discussion until we get to the core of the truth regarding the correctness of the school, as Allah has only a single, practical verdict for every case.

Those who try to illustrate the dispute between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis as if they were against one another, or two contradictory sects, are but falsifying the truth, getting away from the method of sound scientific objectivity, and attempting to serve the enemies of the Islamic Ummah, by sowing the seeds of disunity.

But, the neutral, doctrinal, scholarly method is the one able to unify all the Muslims and to bring them all together. Sheikh Muhammad Shaltut, the rector of Al-Azhar Theological University (Cairo) had issued a verdict allowing the followers of different Islamic sects - the Hanafis, the Hanbalis, the Malikis and the Shafi'is - to act according to the Imamiya (Shi'a) sect, as well as, according to other Islamic sects, as this, he said, was lawful and correct. He was followed, in his opinion, by the next rector of al-Azhar, Dr. Muhammad Fahham.

It is worthwhile to state the texts of the verdicts issued by them in this respect. The following verdict is issued by Al-Sayyid, His honour, the rector of Al-Azhar Theological University about the legality to worship according to the Imamiya Shi'a Sect:

Sheikh Shaltut was asked that:

"Some people say that if a Muslim is to conduct his worship and other deals correctly, he must follow one of the four Islamic sects, among which are not the sects of the Imamiya Shi'a nor the Zaidi Shi'a. So, does your honour accept this idea in its generality, and forbid following, for example, the Twelvers (Imamiya Shi'ites)?"

The Sheikh replied:

"1. Islam does not compel any of its followers to follow a particular sect, but we say: Every Muslim has the right to 'imitate' first and foremost, any sect that has correctly been quoted and whose relevant precepts have been recorded in its particular books. Whoever follows one of these sects may move to any other, whichever of them, without any restrictions."

2. The Ja'fari School known as the Imamiya school of Twelvers Shi'ites, is a school according to which it is lawful to worship, the same as the other Sunnite sects. It is necessary for the Muslims to know that, and to get rid of unjust prejudice towards particular sects- Because, neither Allah's religion nor His Shari'ah (Islamic laws) are related to a particular sect or restricted to a school, so all of them are able to discover Islamic rules and codes from the Qur'an and the sunnah and are acceptable before Allah, the Almighty; therefore, it is lawful for those who are not able to give opinions, nor to do ijtiḥād to follow them and practise what they decide in their jurisprudence and there is no difference concerning this in worship and dealings."

The late Dr. Muhammad Muhammad Fahham, the rector of al-Azhar commenting on Shaltut's verdict, said:

"May Allah have mercy on Sheikh Shaltut who perceived this significance, and in his explicit verdict, displayed courage, as he allowed acting according to the Imamiya Shi'a School, considering it an Islamic juristic school, founded on the Book, the sunnah and the most correct proof I pray to Allah to grant success to those who act upon this sound course of introduction among the brethren. "

And say: Act! Allah will behold your actions, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers. Our last invocation is: Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds."

It is obvious, then, that the road to the unification of the nation is wide open before the faithful believers of Islam. They have to unite their ranks, to discard their petty controversies and prejudices, to uproot the causes of division, and to subject the scientific points of view to research and discussion. We ask Muslims, everywhere, to comprehend the critical, political and social situation through which the ummah is passing, and to look at one another with affection and brotherhood, and to identify those who instigate bigotry, and to put their scientific

view points for scientific dialogues and research without any instigation and fanaticism, lest the enemies of Islam, in particular, misuse them while we face Zionism and imperialism and their agents.

Finally, we implore Allah, the High, the Omnipotent, for His help to unify the ranks of this nation, to keep away the elements who agitate commotion amongst the Muslims and who prevent the application of divine laws. Weakening the ranks of the Muslims, and causing division among them, cannot be but a support to the enemies of Allah, and a service to the tyrants and superpowers. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

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IGNORANCE IS A CHOICE

*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)