



Ramaḍān with the Qur'ān

Thirty Lessons in Thirty Days

Based on Ḥujjat al-Islām Muhsen Qara'ati's

Tafsīr-i Nūr

Compiled and Edited by:
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Translated into English by:
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Ramaḍān with the Qur'ān: Thirty Lessons in Thirty Days / Compiled and Edited by: 'Ali Muhammad Mutewasseli, Translated into English by: Ahmad Rezwani. – Mashhad: Islamic Research Foundation, Department of Propagation and Islamic Relations The Management of Foreign Pilgrims' 1395=2016.

ISBN 978-600-06-0067-9

P ۱۸۰

کتاب حاضر برگزیده‌ای از «تفسیر نور» تألیف محسن قرائتی است.

تفاسیر شیعه - قرن ۱۴. رمضان - جنبه‌های قرآنی

Ahmad Rezwani translator.

297 / 179

4203651

۴ ق ۳۹۸ BP

کتابخانه ملی ایران



Title: Ramaḍān with the Qur'ān: Thirty Lessons in Thirty Days

Translated into English by: Ahmad Rezwani

Edited by: Ali Muhammad Mutewasseli

Circulation: 5000

First Edition: 2016 / 1395

Price: 68000 Rls

Printed by: The A.Q.R. Printing and Publishing institute

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**In the Name of Allah, the Most
Compassionate, the Most Merciful**

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the two Worlds.
O' Allah! Send Your Peace and Blessings upon
Muḥammad and his Household

Author's Preface

Dear Readers,

Salāmun 'Alaykum

On the threshold of Ramaḍān 1437/June 2013, our friends came across the idea to extract from *Tafsīr-i Nūr* a brief, fluent, and slightly altered pamphlet full of varied material, required by everyone, and suitable for the Month of Ramaḍān, and to prepare it for the Qur'ānic competitions of the Month of the Qur'ān.

A combination of the Qur'ānic and exegetical words and some remarks from the narrations of the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.) has been arranged for thirty days of Ramaḍān in the thirty lessons and discourses of this pamphlet. It is hoped that this selection and summarization would be a step forward for familiarity with the Qur'ān and the narrations as well as a step toward saving time in your precious life.

I beseech the Almighty Allah to grant you sincerity, blessing, acceptance of religious duties and endeavors in the month of Ramaḍān and other months and hope that these words and attempts are of interest to you and I beg all of you for prayer.

Muhsen Qara'ati

Publisher's Preface

We are thankful to the Almighty Allah, who bestowed upon us the opportunity to once again enjoy the graceful and blessed month of Ramaḍān. Praised be the Lord, who opened up to us the doors of repentance for the soul-refreshing breeze of His forgiveness to revive our spirit and soul; a chance specific to the fasting people.

He revealed the Qur'ān in this blessed month and bestowed in it enormous excellence on its recitation and contemplation. He made Ramaḍān as the springtime of the Qur'ān for the buds of faith to sprout out from our hearts by its sacred tune and be fully watered from the fountainhead of esoteric knowledge.

We hope to get the favor of enjoying Allah's bounteous table spread in this dearest month.

What is hereby presented to you is a heavenly gift from the Holy Qur'ān's esoteric knowledge that is artistically compiled and edited by the servants of the Qur'ān in the Lessons from the Qur'an Cultural Center. This writing has been fruitfully completed under supervision of the revered master, Ḥujjat al-Islām Qara'ati, for whom we request from the Almighty Allah sustained success in serving the Holy Qur'ān and the blessed *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.).

The Islamic Propagation and Relations Department of Āstān Quds Raḍavī presents this precious work to the followers of the Qur'ān and the Household of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) with the aim of dissemination of the Qur'ānic doctrinal knowledge and holding the Great Qur'ānic Competitions in the month of Ramaḍān.

Islamic Propagation and Relations Department
Ramaḍān 1436/2014

Lesson 1

Ramaḍān

The Month of Divine Banquet

﴿شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

﴿The month of Ramaḍān is one in which the Qurʾān was sent down as guidance to mankind, with manifest proofs of guidance and the Criterion. So let those of you who witness it fast [in] it, and as for someone who is sick or on a journey, let it be a [similar] number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you, and so that you may complete the number, and magnify Allah for guiding you, and that you may give thanks.﴾ (Al-Baqara, 185)

Ramaḍān is from the root *ramaḍa* meaning to burn; albeit a burning without smoke and ashes. The reason why this month is called so is because in the month of Ramaḍān, one's sins are burned down and annihilated.

The month of Ramaḍān is the month of Revelation of the Qurʾān and the only month whose name has been mentioned in the Qurʾān; *Laylat al-Qadr* (the night of power) is also set

in this month. The holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “All the Revealed Books have been descended in the month of Ramaḍān. The month of Ramaḍān is the best month of Allah.”¹ His Holiness delivered a detailed sermon about the greatness of the month of Ramaḍān on the last Friday of the month of Sha‘bān, which is quoted in some interpretations and books of *ḥadīth*. Similarly, Imam al-Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) has welcomed the month of Ramaḍān with a supplication in *Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyya* and has a heart-rending sincere supplication to bid farewell to it.

In the month of Ramaḍān, the believers have been invited to the Divine Banquet by the verse,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ﴾

﴿O’ you who have faith! Prescribed for you is fasting﴾, and this banquet has certain features:

1. The Host is Allah, who has personally invited the guests.
2. The means of reception are *Laylat al-Qadr*, Revelation of the Qur’ān, descent of the angels, fulfillment of supplications, purity of the soul, and distance from Hell.
3. The time of reception is the month of Ramaḍān, which, according to the narrations, its beginning is mercy, its middle is forgiveness, and its end is reward.
4. The reception at *Laylat al-Qadr* is in such a way that the guests’ needs for one year are provided for and the earth is ornamented with the descent of the angels at *Laylat al-Qadr*.
5. The food in this month is the food for the soul, which is essential for spiritual growth, rather than the food for the body. The flavor of food in this month is the verses of the Qur’ān, which the recitation of one verse is like the recitation of the whole Qur’ān in other months.

This banquet is by no means similar to the worldly banquets; the All-knowing, the Self-sufficing, the Creator, the Everlasting, the Mighty, and the Majestic Allah is the Host to the ignorant, destitute, perishing, created, abased, and needful human beings.

We read in a detailed *ḥadīth* in *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*² concerning the ethics of the fasting people, "The fasting person must avoid lies, sins, dispute, jealousy, backbiting, opposition to the truth, curses, reproach, anger, impugning, oppressing and persecuting people, heedlessness, association with the corrupt people, slandering, and eating up wrongfully and be patient and sincere in their prayer and be specially attentive to remember the Resurrection."

The condition for attending this banquet is not simply tolerating hunger. We read in the *ḥadīth*, "Those who disobey the Heavenly Commanders, or mistreat their spouse and are unkind to them in personal and familial issues or shun fulfilling their legitimate wishes, or their parents are discontent with them, their fasting is not accepted and have not fulfilled the conditions for this banquet."

The value of Ramaḍān is in Revelation of the Qur'ān. The value of human beings is in the degree to which the Qur'ān has permeated in them.

Sha'bāniyya Sermon

It is quoted from Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) that the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) delivered a sermon on the last Friday of the month of Sha'bān and after praising and glorifying Allah, said, "O' people! Month of Allah has come toward you bringing divine blessing, mercy and forgiveness;

this month is the best month, its days are the best days, its nights are the best nights and its hours are the best hours. This is the month in which you have been invited to the banquet of Allah. Your breaths in it are glorification (of Allah) and your sleep in it is worship; your deeds are accepted by Him and your supplications to Him are fulfilled. Ask Allah with sincere intentions to help you succeed in His fasting and reciting the Qur'ān. Whoever gets deprived of God's forgiveness in this month is at a real loss.

Remember the thirst and hunger of the Resurrection Day by experiencing this thirst and hunger. Give charity to your poor and indigent ones; respect your elder ones; be kind with the younger ones; visit your relations of kin; watch your tongues; lower your eyes from what your eyes are forbidden to look at; and guard your ears from what your ears are forbidden to hear. Be kind to other people's orphans so that others may be kind to your orphans. Repent to Allah for your sins and raise up your hands towards Him in supplication at the times of saying your prayers. These times are the noblest of the hours during which the Exalted Allah looks upon His servants with Mercy, responds when they make supplications, replies to them when they call Him, and fulfills for them what they ask for.

O' people! You are tied down by your deeds. Free yourselves with your supplications. Your backs are overburdened with your sins. Make them lighter with extended prostrations. Know that the Almighty Allah has sworn by His Honor that He will not punish or throw into the Fire those who pray and fall in prostration.

O' people! The reward with Allah for whoever provides for

the breaking of the fast of any believer in this month is like that of freeing a servant and the forgiveness of all past sins.” The people said, “O’ Apostle of Allah! Not all of us are able to do that.” Then the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Be wary of Allah even if it is with half a date or a sip of water.”

Whoever is good-tempered in this month will easily cross the Bridge on the Day (of Judgment) on which everyone’s steps are not firm. God will ease the reckoning of whoever takes it easy with those whom his right hand possesses (slaves) in this month. On the Day one meets God, God will withhold His Wrath from whoever controls his wickedness in this month. On the Day one meets God, God will honor whoever honors an orphan in this month. On the Day one meets God, He will shower His Mercy upon whoever maintains family ties in this month. God will deprive from His Mercy whoever breaks off his family ties in this month. God will record freedom from the Fire for whoever says one unit of recommendable prayers. The reward of whoever performs an obligatory deed in this month is seventy times that of one who performs the same deed in other months. The Balance of Deeds of whoever sends blessings upon me a lot will be more positive on the (Judgment) Day on which the Balance of Deeds are negative. The reward of whoever recites one verse of the Qur’ān in this month is like the reward of one who recites the whole Qur’ān in other months.

O’ people! The gates of Paradise are open in this month. Then ask your Lord not to close them on you. And the gates of the Fire are closed. Then ask your Lord not to open them up to you. Devils are chained down. Then ask your Lord not to let them overcome you.

The Commander of the Faithful (Imam ‘Alī) (P.B.U.H.) said, “I stood up and said, ‘O’ Apostle of Allah! What are the noblest of the deeds in this month?’ The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “O’ Abū al-Ḥasan! The noblest of the deeds in this month are abstaining from what Allah has forbidden.” Then the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) cried. I asked him, “O’ Apostle of Allah! Why did you cry?” The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “O’ ‘Alī! I cried for what will be done to you in this month. It is as if I see you while you are praying to your Lord and the nastiest of the people - as nasty as he who killed the she-camel of Thamūd - will stand up and deliver such a blow to your head that your beard will get stained (with blood).” The Commander of the Faithful (P.B.U.H.) said, “Will my religion remain intact in this situation?” The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Your religion is intact.” The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) then added, “O’ Alī! Whoever kills you has indeed killed me. Whoever infuriates you has indeed infuriated me. Whoever swears at you has indeed sworn at me. This is because you are from me and just like myself. Your spirit is from my spirit.”³

Of course, we have to watch out that we may not only – God forbid – deprive ourselves of any reward but also make the burden of our sins heavier by the way we supplicate and worship, by being ill-tempered to the people around us and to our family, or by wastefulness and profligacy in our feasts and fasting banquets.

Lesson 2

Fasting

The Outcomes and Blessings of Fasting

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

﴿O' you who have faith! Prescribed for you is fasting as it was prescribed for those who were before you, so that you may be God-wary.﴾ (Al-Baqara, 183)

God-wariness (*taqwā*) means restraining oneself from sin. Most of sins originate from two sources of anger and lust. Fasting prevents the harshness of these two instincts, hence decreases depravity and increases of God-wariness.⁴

Fasting is the only hidden devotional act. Prayer, *Hajj*, holy strife (*jihād*), legal alms (*zakāt*), and one fifth levy (*khums*) are seen by people, but fasting is not visible. Fasting reinforces human will. The one who sets aside one's bread and water and spouse for one month, can restrain oneself against others' property and reputation. Fasting reinforces affection. The one who has tasted hunger for one month, becomes acquainted with the pain of hunger and feels the suffering of the hungry.

The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "Fasting is half the patience."⁵

The ordinary people's fasting is just avoiding bread and water and spouse; but in the fasting of the elite, besides avoiding *muffirāt* (things breaking the fast), the heart is emptied of other than God.⁶

Fasting makes man like angels, the angels who are away from eating, drinking, and lust.

The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "Whoever fasts in the month of Ramaḍān for the sake of Allah, all their sins will be forgiven. As it is related in a Divine *ḥadīth*, quoting Allah as saying, "Fasting is for Me, and I reward it."⁷

Fasting is so important that in traditions, the reward for fasting has been equaled to the reward of fasting. Although fasting had been obligatory to earlier communities, the fasting of the month of Ramaḍān has been specified for the Prophets, and in the Muslim community, fasting of the Ramaḍān has become obligatory to all.⁸

It is related from the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) who said, "There is *zakat* for everything, and the *zakat* for the body is fasting."⁹

Manners and Conditions for Fasting

﴿أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ
طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

﴿That (fasting is obligatory) for known days. But should any of you be sick or on a journey, let it be a [similar] number of other days. Those who find it straining (like the sick and the elderly) shall be liable to atonement by feeding a needy person. Should anyone do good of his own accord (feed more than what is obligatory), that is better for him, and to fast is better for you, should you know (the effects). (And you would

never envy those who were excused for not fasting) ﴿ (Al-Baqara, 184)

Islam has a suitable law for everyone in every condition. In this verse, the ruling for traveler, the sick, and the elderly are stated. If a person cannot fast in certain conditions, they should make up for it on other days in order to enjoy the benefits of fasting.

Surrendering to Allah's command is a value. If He commanded fasting, we must fast and if He commanded breaking the fast, we must break it. It is related in *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān*, "A group of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) companions used to fast even during travel and did not desire to break their fast. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) called them sinners." Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "If someone fasts while on a trip, I would not perform funeral prayer on their corpse."

Anyhow, if a traveler or a sick person fasts, their fasting is invalid and must make up for their missing fast.¹⁰ Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "Even if a mother is worried about her fetus or breast-feeding her baby, she must break her fast and this is a sign of Allah's clemency."¹¹

***Iffār* (Fast-Breaking Feast)**

The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "Whoever gives someone *iffār* with food or water by means of lawful income, every hour the angels and on the *Laylat al-Qadr* Gabriel salute them."¹²

Iffār is an act of devotion, provided that it is done with sincerity and the intention of drawing close to God. ﴿ We feed you only for the sake of Allah. ﴾¹³

Iffār is feeding the faithful, which, according to Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.), like mid-night prayer is a source of salvation and creating felicity. (One of the salvations is to give food).¹⁴

Iffār is a kind of honoring and rejoicing the faithful.

Iffār brings hearts together, and visiting one's relatives removes hatred and hypocrisy.

Iffār causes forgiveness of oneself and one's family and is doing benevolence and good to one's parents.

Iffār is means for guidance.

Iffār should not be intended for boasting and showing off.

One should not invite only the wealthy and those possessing high ranks and positions.

It should not be a feast of sin, humiliation, backbiting, and conspiracy.

It should not be offensive and humiliating to the guests.

It should not be along with affectation, luxury, personal rivalry, and envy.

It should not be accompanied by bullying and persecuting the spouse, family and others.

It is related in a *ḥadīth* that the reward for the one who gives *iffār* to fasting person is like the reward of fasting.

Lesson 3

The Contemplation of the Qur'ān

Complaint of the Forsakenness of the Qur'ān

﴿وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا﴾

﴿And the Apostle will say, “O’ my Lord! Indeed my people consigned this Qur’ān to oblivion.﴾ (Al-Furqān, 30)

Hijr includes separation with action, tongue, and the heart. Then, the relation between man and the Qur’ān must be perpetual and in all aspects, because the word *hijr* is used where there is separation between man and that object. Therefore, we should have an inclusive effort to take the Qur’ān out of forsakenness and oblivion and make it a focal point in all our life dimensions so that we may obtain the Holy Prophet of Islam’s pleasure.

Not reading the Qur’ān, preferring non-Qur’ānic material to the Qur’ān, not regarding it as pivotal, not contemplating on it, not instructing it to others, and not acting on it, are all evidences of forsaking the Qur’ān. Even if one learns the Qur’ān and puts it aside, not looking at it and having no commitment to it, they have also forsaken the Qur’ān.

The above verse talks about the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. &

H.H.) complaint and since His Holiness is “a mercy to all the nations”, he does not curse. Indeed, one of the complainers on the Resurrection Day will be the Holy Prophet (S.A.). Thus, the Qur’ān’s forsakenness, the Prophet’s complaint, and our responsibility is definite and superficial recitation is not sufficient; rather, it is necessary to salvage it from forsakenness.

Imam al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) said, “The reason we recite the Qur’ān in prayers is to salvage it from forsakenness.”

It is related in traditions that, “Every day, read fifty verses of the Qur’ān and do not aim at reaching the end of the chapter; recite it slowly and humble and soften your heart with recitation of the Qur’ān, and whenever calamities strike you like a dark night, take refuge in it.”¹⁵

Here we quote the confessions of some of some noble figures about forsakenness of the Qur’ān:

A. Mullā Ṣadra says in his introduction to the exegesis of Sūrat al-Wāqī’a, “I did so much study in the books of the metaphysicians that I thought I have become someone of importance; but as soon as I got a little insight, I saw myself empty of real knowledge. In the end of my life, I thought I should engage in contemplation on the Qur’ān and the traditions of Muḥammad and the household of Muḥammad - peace be upon them. I made sure my task had been baseless, since all my life I had stood in shadow instead of light. Sorrow set my soul on fire and my heart aflame until Divine mercy took my hand and made me familiar with the secrets of the Qur’ān, and I started to contemplate on the Qur’ān, knocked on the Revelation door, the doors opened, the curtains were lifted, and I saw angels greeting me, ﴿Peace be to you! You are welcome! Enter it to remain [forever].﴾”¹⁶

B. Fayḍ Kāshānī says, “I wrote many books and treatises, made researches, but in no science I found any remedy to relieve my pain and no water to quench my thirst. I was scared; I escaped to Allah and repented to Him, until Allah guided me through deep reflection on the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*.”¹⁷

C. In a speech, Imam Khomeini expresses his regret for not having spent his whole life on the Qur’ān and advises the seminary schools and universities to set the Qur’ān and its different dimensions in all fields as their supreme goal, lest they would regret for their youth at the end of their life.¹⁸

The necessity for Contemplation on the Qur’ān

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

﴿[It is] a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs, and that those who possess intellect may take admonition.﴾ (Sād, 29)

The visage of the Qur’ān is portrayed in this verse:

- A. Its text is written. ﴿Book﴾
- B. It originates from the infinite fountainhead of Divine Revelation and knowledge. ﴿sent down﴾
- C. Its receiver is an infallible person. ﴿to you﴾
- D. Its content is blessed. ﴿blessed﴾
- E. The purpose for its Revelation is contemplating it. ﴿that they may contemplate﴾
- F. Knowledge and awareness of its points and doctrinal knowledge is a prelude to the spiritual movement and proximity to God. ﴿take admonition﴾
- G. Those who possess intellect will have this opportunity. Therefore, contemplating the Qur’ān is of a great

importance, because the one who does not contemplate the Qur'ān deserves Divine humiliation. ﴿Do they not contemplate the Qur'ān, or are there locks on the hearts?﴾, as from the perspective of the Qur'ān the Godly scholar is the one who deals with learning and teaching. ﴿...Be a Godly people, because of your teaching the Book and because of your studying it.﴾

Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) has said about the boundlessness of the concepts of the Qur'ān, "It is a sea, whose depth could not be fathomed."

Usually there would occur evolutions and contemplations in the writings and words of human beings in the long run. However, the reason why the Qur'ān has not had suffered from any discrepancies and contradictions over 23 years of its Revelation in various conditions of war and peace, popularity and banishment, strength and weakness, and in the vicissitudes of time is because it is the Word of Allah, rather than a human learning. Thus, the Qur'ān warns:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾

﴿Do they not contemplate the Qur'ān? Had it been from [someone] other than Allah, they would have surely found much discrepancy in it.﴾ (Al-Nisā, 82)

The secret of commanding all people and any age and generation to contemplate the Qur'ān is that any thinker at any time will perceive a point of their own.

With some close attention to the verse, beautiful points may be found out, including:

1. Not deliberating on the Qur'ān would be reprimanded by Allah.

2. Contemplation on the Qur'ān is a healing remedy for hypocrisy.

3. The path to inclination toward Islam and the Qur'ān is thinking and contemplation, not imitation.

4. The Qur'ān calls all people to contemplation and human beings can grasp its doctrinal teachings.

5. Assuming that there is contradiction and discrepancy in the Qur'ān is the result of superficial attitude and lack of contemplation and deliberation on the Qur'ān.

6. Consistency and lack of difference in the verses indicates that its origin is an invariable existence; because everything that is from God is true, consistent, and away from contradiction and dispersion.

Lesson 4

Advantages of the Qur'ān

A Blessed Book

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ﴾

﴿Indeed We sent it down on a blessed night, and indeed We have been warning [mankind].﴾ (Al-Dukhān, 3)

The Qur'ān is blessed in all its aspects:

A. In respect of its Revealer. ﴿Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion﴾

B. In respect of the place of Revelation. ﴿At the blessed Bakka﴾

C. In respect of the time of Revelation. ﴿On the Night of Ordainment﴾

D. In respect of the text and content. ﴿Blessed is this Book which We have sent down﴾

A Book of Nobility and Generosity

﴿إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾﴾

﴿This is indeed a noble Qur'ān, in a guarded Book. No one touches it except the pure ones; gradually sent down from the Lord of all the worlds﴾ (Al-Wāqī'a, 77-80)

In the Qur'ān, Allah and everything related to Him are described as *karīm* (generous, noble)

1. Allah is Generous. ﴿What has deceived you about your generous Lord?﴾

2. The Qur'ān is noble. ﴿This is indeed a noble Qur'ān﴾

3. The Apostle of Allah is noble. ﴿When a noble apostle came to them﴾

4. The Mediator of the Revelation (Gabriel) is noble. ﴿It is indeed the speech of a noble messenger﴾

Man is also honored as the most superior creature of God. ﴿Certainly We have honored the Children of Adam﴾. In sermon 152 of *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) calls the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) as the "Nobles of the Qur'ān". Indeed, the Qur'ān is the key to nobility and honor of the individual and society. Looking at it, reciting and memorizing it, contemplating it and taking admonition from it are sources of man's growth and nobility. ﴿This is indeed a noble Qur'ān﴾

A part of the advantages of the Qur'ān, this eternal Divine miracle, is stated in the interpretation under verse 38 of Sūrat al-Nūr as follows:

1. Inclusion of sublime teachings in short statements: for instance, it phrases men and women as, ﴿they are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them﴾. In order to state the infirmity of the non-Divine powers, it likens them to spider web. Or, it views them as unable to create even a gnat. ﴿... will never create [even] a fly﴾.

2. The sweetness of the words and their influence: if it is read a thousand times, it would not become stale; rather any time it is read a new point is learned.

3. The melody and tone of the words: the resonance and tone of its words are specific and if a verse of the Qur'ān is among the words of any Arab speakers or it is among the traditions, it stands out.

4. Inclusiveness of the Qur'ān: consisting of proof to parable, this world to the Hereafter, as well as familial, legal, political, military, ethical, historical issues and so forth.

5. Realism: its content is not based on conjectures. Even its stories are documented and real.

6. Universality: people from any stratum and everywhere, would benefit from it; the Qur'ān is not a book for the specialists only.

7. Eternal and everlasting: the more time passes on man and science, the more mysteries of the Qur'ān are discovered.

8. Increasing growth: despite having the most enemies and receiving many blows, it has had the most growth during its life.

9. A miracle in hand: this miracle is in everyone's hand and is of speech and word type at everyone's disposal.

10. It is both a book of miracle and a book of command and law.

11. It is from someone illiterate and from a region deprived of literacy.

12. Nothing has been added to it or subtracted from it, and it is free from distortion.

13. It is a source of healing and mercy. The Physician of this medicine both knows us and loves us, and His prescription is everlasting and unpatrolled.

The Miracle of the Qur'ān

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَاذْعُوا مَن اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِيْنَ﴾

﴿Do they say, “He has fabricated it?” Say, “Then bring ten sūras like it, fabricated, and invoke whomever you can, besides Allah, should you be truthful.﴾ (Hūd, 13)

The Qur'ān is not a miracle only in terms of eloquence and rhetoric, it is miracle in terms of its teachings, admonitions, proofs, oracular information, and laws as well, because the statement, ﴿and invoke whomever you can﴾ is invoking all people, and not only the Arabs who understand the eloquence and rhetoric of the Qur'ān; as it is stated in another verse, ﴿Say [O' Messenger!]: “If all mankind and Jinns should get together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not Produce its like, though they receive Assistance from one another.﴾

There are many aspects to the miracle of the Qur'ān: the delight and sweetness of its words in recitation; consistency of its content while having been revealed in 23 years; stating sciences with no precedence until then; prediction of events that happened later; reports of the past folks that had left no trace whatsoever; stating inclusive and perfect regulations in all individual and social dimensions of human life; remaining free from any distortion, alteration, getting old and being left to oblivion over many centuries.

Despite all these reductions and all those instigations, man is still incapable. The Qur'ān says somewhere, ﴿produce the like of this Qur'ān﴾; in another part, it says to produce ten sūras; yet in another part it further reduces the number and says, ﴿Bring then a Surah like it﴾. In addition to these

reductions, it has also used different kinds of stimulations. Somewhere it says if all mankind and Jinns should get together, they could not. Somewhere else, it says invite all the brains of the planet Earth, but they could not produce the like of the Qur'an.

History has also proved that the enemies that have waged many wars against Islam and plotted many intrigues, could not produce even a single *sūra* like the Qur'an; is miracle other than this?

Advantages of the Stories of the Qur'an

﴿مَعْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِن كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ﴾

﴿We will recount to you the best of narratives in what We have revealed to you of this Qur'an, and indeed prior to it you were among those who are unaware [of it].﴾ (Yūsof, 3)

The advantage of the stories of the Qur'an over other stories:

1. The Story Teller is Allah. ﴿We will recount﴾
2. It is purposeful. ﴿We recount all these stories of the Messengers in Order that by this, We may make your Heart feel strong﴾
3. It is fact, not fiction. ﴿We relate to you [O' Messenger] their true story﴾
4. It is based on science, not on assumption. ﴿Then certainly We shall recount to them [their whole story] out of Our Embracing knowledge﴾
5. It is a means of thinking, not stupefaction. So, [O' Messenger] relate these Allegorical stories [to the people], Perhaps they may think﴾

6. It is a means of taking lessons. ﴿In this stories [of the Messengers], surely there are lessons﴾

Different Types of Reciters

﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾

﴿When the Qur’ān is recited, listen to it and be silent, maybe you will receive [Allah’s] mercy.﴾ (Al-A‘rāf, 204)

Imam al-Bāqir (P.B.U.H.) said, “Reciters of the Qur’ān are three groups:

One group take the Qur’ān as a means of business and livelihood and are imposed on people; another group only speak the words of the Qur’ān without acting on its ordinances; and the other group recite the Qur’ān, regard it as medicine for their pain, and are always sincere to the Qur’ān. It is for this group that Allah takes away torment and sends down the rain; these people are very rare.¹⁹”

Lesson 5

Supplication (*Dū‘ā*)

The Importance of Supplication

﴿قُلْ مَا يَتَعَبَأُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا﴾

﴿Say, “What store my Lord would set by you were it not for your supplication? But you impugned [me and my advice], so that will continue to haunt you.﴾ (Al-Furqān, 77)

The word, (عَبَأً) means weight and heaviness and the statement (مَا يَتَعَبَأُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي) means that my Lord does not place any value on you, unless in light of your supplication and prayer.

Of course, the word (دَعَائِكُمْ) has been given two meanings: one is wailing, beseeching, and supplicating, which causes Allah’s favor; as we read in a *ḥadīth*, “The one who is devoted to supplication, will never perish.”²⁰ Therefore, they complain of those who are not devoted to supplication that, “you impugned the Truth and instead of invocation, you went toward idols, carnal desires, and false deities; thus you will be punished.” The other means Allah’s calling and inviting the people; because Allah’s precedent is calling people to the Truth and giving them an ultimatum. What makes man a superior and valuable creature is the very acceptance of Allah’s

invitation, but you did not accept the invitation and impugned it; then, no good is expected from you and you will be punished for your actions.

Allah says, ﴿I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me.﴾²¹ He states in this verse that were it not for humans' supplication, they had no worth. Therefore, supplication is the core of worship.

Indeed, although Allah knows everything, supplicating is our duty. Wherever and whenever we are, supplication is helpful; since Allah says, ﴿فانى قريب﴾ (I am indeed near). If His wrath sometimes overtakes us, it is because of our distance from Him and due to our sins.

Allah's Favor to the Supplicant

﴿وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ﴾

﴿When My servants ask you about Me, [tell them that] I am indeed near. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me. So let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me, so that they may fare rightly.﴾ (Al-Baqara, 186)

The supplicants are so much favored by Allah that He uses Me, My, and I seven times in this verse to show His favor to them. This affectionate relationship is held in case man wants to supplicate to Allah.

Question: Why isn't sometimes our supplication answered?

Answer: We read in *Tafsir al-Mizān* that in this verse Allah says, ﴿I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me.﴾ That is, I (Allah) Myself answer the supplicant's call if they only calls Me and asks Me goodness with full sincerity. So, if the supplication is not answered, it is either because we have not

asked Allah for goodness and indeed it has evil for us, or if it has really been goodness, we have not asked it from Allah with sincerity and honesty and it has been along asking it from someone else, too. Or else, the fulfilling of our request is not to our interest, in which case, according to the traditions, a calamity would be kept away from us instead, or it would be saved for our own future or for our generation, or it would be made for in our life Hereafter.

We read in *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, “Whoever eats unlawful (*ḥarām*) food or does not command right or forbid wrong, or supplicates out of negligence and heedlessness their supplication would not be answered.

Perhaps, joining supplication verse with the verses of fasting is because the Month of Allah is more proportionate with supplication.

Question: As Allah’s actions are systematic and based on constant precedents, what is the function of supplication, then?

Answer: Just as one’s rulings for prayer and fasting is different on travel than while at home, the supplicant is also different from the one who is negligent of Allah; and Allah’s precedent is favoring the former rather than the latter. Supplication and conversing with Allah would increase one’s capacity for receiving Divine favors; just as resorting to and visiting the Friends of Allah would change man’s conditions. Like when a child goes to a banquet with his father, he will be received more warmly than when going alone. Thus, supplication, pilgrimage, and *tawassul* (pleading with the Infallibles [P.B.U.T.]) would change conditions, rather than disrupt definite Divine precedents.

Manners of Supplication

﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ﴾

﴿Your Lord has said, “Call Me, and I will hear you!”

Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.﴾ (Al-Ghāfir, 60)

Supplication has its own manners and conditions, including:

1. Supplication should be along with faith and righteous deed. ﴿And He answers those who have faith and do righteous deeds﴾

2. It should be with sincere devotion. ﴿So supplicate Allah, putting exclusive faith in Him﴾

3. It Should be with lamentation and in secret. ﴿Supplicate your Lord, beseechingly and secretly﴾

4. It should be with fear and hope. ﴿and supplicate Him with fear and hope﴾

5. It should be at specific time. ﴿those who supplicate their Lord morning and evening﴾

6. The supplicant should employ Divine names. ﴿To Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate Him by them﴾

Of course, it should be noted that some actions like sins, oppression, and not forgiving those who apologize to us would obstruct answering the supplication. Or, sometimes answering our supplication would disrupt the order of creation; like a student who in geography examination had mistakenly answered the question is the mountain is higher than the sea level” that the sea level is higher! Then, he had asked God to replace these two so that he could get a passing grade! Nevertheless, as God is All-wise He is Almighty, as well.

Answering is reciprocal; that is, if people expect answering from Allah, they have to answer His call, ﴿Answer Allah and the Apostle when he summons you to that which will give you life.﴾²²

The Best Names of Allah

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا...﴾

﴿To Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate to Him by them....﴾ (Al-A‘rāf, 180)

Although all names and attributes of Allah are beautiful and He has all the perfections that are innumerable, 99 names are emphasized in traditions and whoever calls Allah by them, their supplication will be answered. These 99 names are:

Allāh, Ilāh, Al-Wāḥid (The One), Al-Ṣamad (The Eternal), Al-Awwal (The First), Al-Ākhir (The Last), AL-Samī‘ (The All-Hearing), Al-Baṣīr (The All-Seeing), Al-Qadīr (The Absolute Ordainer), Al-Qāḥir (The All-Dominant), Al-‘Alī (The Most High), Al-Bāqī (The Everlasting), Al-Badī‘ (The Absolute Cause), Al-Bārr (The Doer of Good), Al-Akram (The Most Generous), Al-Zāḥir (The Manifest), Al-Bāṭin (The Hidden), Al-Ḥayy (The Living), Al-Ḥakīm (The Wise), Al-‘Alīm (The Omniscient), Al-Ḥalīm (The Indulgent), Al-Ḥafīz (The All-Preserver), Al-Ḥaqq (The Truth), Al-Ḥasīb (The Reckoner), Al-Ḥamīd (The Praised), Al-Ḥafī (The Most Caring), Al-Rabb (The Lord), Al-Raḥmān (The Most Compassionate), Al-Raḥīm (The Most Merciful), Al-Dhārri’ (The Creator), Al-Razzāq (The Provider), Al-Raqīb (The All-Observant), Al-Ra’ūf (The All-Pitying), Al-Rā’ī (The Seeing), Al-Salām (The Flawless), Al-Mu’min (The Faithful), Al-Muhaymin (The Guardian), Al-‘Azīz (The Eminent), Al-Jabbār (The

Compeller), Al-Mutakabbir (the Proud), Al-Sayyid (The Lord), Al-Subbuḥ (The All-Glorious), Al-Shahīd (The Universal Witness), Al-Ṣādiq (The Truthful), Al-Ṣāni‘ (The Maker), Al-Ṭāhir (The Pure), Al-‘Adl (The Justice), Al-Afuww (The Effacer of Sins), Al-Ghanī (The Rich), Al-Ghiyāth (The Assistance), Al-Fāṭir (The Creator), Al-Fard (The Singular), Al-Fattāh (The Opener), Al-Fāliq (The Splitter), Al-Qadīm (The Eternal), Al-Malik (The Sovereign), Al-Quddūs (The Most Holy), Al-Qarīb (The Very Near), Al-Qayyūm (The Self-Existing), Al-Qābiḍ (The Restrainer), Al-Bāsiṭ (The Extender), Qāḍī al-Ḥājāt (The Provider of Needs), Al-Majīd (The All-Glorious), Al-Mawlā (The Master), Al-Mannān (The Benevolent), Al-Muḥīṭ (The All-Encompassing), Al-Mubīn (The Clarifier), Al-Muqīt (The Nourisher), Al-Muṣawwir (The Fashioner), Al-Karīm (The Generous), Al-Kabīr (The Great), Al-Kāfi (The Sufficient), Kāshif al-ḍurr (The Healer of injury), Al-Watr (The Single), Al-Nūr (The Light), Al-Wahhāb (The All-Bestower), Al-Nāṣir (The Helper), Al-Wāsi‘ (The All-Embracing), Al-Wadūd (The All-Loving), Al-Hādī (The Guide), Al-Wafīyy (The Faithful), Al-Wakīl (The Guardian), Al-Wārith (The Inheritor), Al-Barr (The Righteous), Al-Bā’ith (The Resurrector), Al-Tawwāb (The Relenting), Al-Jalīl (The Majestic), Al-Jawād (The Munificent), Al-Khabīr (The Aware), Al-Khāliq (The Creator), Khayr al-Nāṣirīn (The Best of the Helpers), Al-Dayyān (The Retriber), Al-Shakūr (The Grateful), Al-‘Azīm (The All-Glorious), Al-Laṭīf (The Gracious), Al-Shāfi (The Healer).²³

In the Qur’ān, up to 145 names of God have been mentioned and the number 99 in the traditions is either because some names are combinable and comparable with

others, or it is intended to assert that these names are also in the Qur'ān, rather than they are only limited to this number. There are other names stated for Allah in some traditions and supplications such as *Jawshan Kabīr*. Some of the Best Names have special effects, blessings, and advantages.

Imam al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) said, “We, *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) are the Best names of Allah as no one’s acts [of devotion] would be accepted without knowing us.”²⁴

He also said, “Whenever adversities befall you, ask Allah for help through us.” Then he said, “And to Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate to Him by them.”²⁵

His Holiness has been quoted as saying, “The Creator is not described except by what He has described Himself by.” That means, one cannot give a name to Allah on one’s own; for instance, call Him, chaste, brave, and so forth.²⁶

Lesson 6

The Importance of Prayer (*Ṣalāt*)

Luqmān's Recommendation

﴿يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزِيمِ الْأُمُورِ﴾

﴿O' my son! Maintain the prayer and command right and forbid wrong, and be patient through whatever may visit you. That is indeed the steadiest of courses.﴾ (Luqmān, 17)

Pertinent to the Luqmān's recommendation to his son concerning prayer and commanding right, we briefly explain these two obligations:

✦ Prayer is the simplest, deepest, and most beautiful relation of man to God that has existed in all Revealed religions.

✦ Prayer is the only act of devotion, before which it is advised that the most sweet-voiced person go upon a high place to loudly utter the motto, "Hasten toward prayer! Hasten toward salvation! Hasten toward the best of acts!" to break the silence with their voice, announce a course of pure Islamic thoughts, and awaken the negligent.

✦ Prayer is so important that the Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) announces his purpose of settling his wife and son

in the barren desert of Makka to be maintaining prayer, not performing *Hajj* ritual.

✽ At ‘Ashūrā noon, Imam al-Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.) shielded his chest against the enemy’s arrows for performing a two *rak‘a* prayer.

✽ The Qur’ān commands Prophet Abraham and Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) to prepare and purify the Holy Mosque for the prayer performers. Indeed, prayer is so important that Zechariah, Mary, Abraham, and Ishmael (peace be upon them) were attendants of mosques and places for performing prayer.

✽ Prayer is manifest since birth, when *adhān* and *iqāma* are recited into the infant’s ear, until death, when in the graveyard funeral prayer is performed over the dead body.

✽ Prayer is the key to the acceptance of all other actions. Amīr al-Mu’minīn – ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) says to his governor, “Set the best of your time for prayer and be aware that all your actions are accepted in light of your prayer.”

✽ Prayer is remembrance of Allah, and only the remembrance of Allah brings peace to hearts.

✽ Prayer is brought up in most *sūras*, from the largest (Al-Baqara) to the smallest (Al-Kawthar).

✽ *Āyāt* (signs) prayer has become obligatory to perform both for earthly incidents such as earthquake and frightening winds and for heavenly incidents like eclipses; even there is prayer for appealing for rain (*ṣalāt al-istisqā*).

✽ Prayer prevents man from engaging in many unlawful and indecent conducts.

In prayer, attention and tendency towards all perfections are noticed, including:

- Cleanliness and hygiene in brushing teeth, *wuḍū* (minor ablution), *ghusl* (major ablution), and cleanliness of both body and clothes.

- We learn courage, assertiveness, and shouting from *adhān* (call to prayer).

- We learn presence in society from the gathering in mosques.

- We learn paying attention to justice in selecting a just prayer leader.

- We learn heeding the values and perfections from those standing in the first row.

- We feel the independent orientation in *qibla*. The Jews do their worships in one direction and the Christians in another; and the Muslims must be independent. Thus, by the Qur'ān's order Ka'ba becomes the Muslims' Qibla so that independence is preserved in their orientation.

- We observe maintenance of others' rights in that not even a single usurped thread should be found in the clothes of the prayer performers.

- We feel attention to politics where we read in the traditions: "The prayer that is not along with acceptance of the *Wilāya* (guardianship) of the Infallible Imam is not accepted."

- We see caring about order in the orderly rows of the mass prayer, caring about the martyrs in the soil of Karbalā, and caring about environmental hygiene in the commands given about cleanliness of mosques and those attending the mosques.

- We notice attention to Allah in, ﴿All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds﴾; attention to selection of the

path in, ﴿Guide us on the straight path﴾; selection of the companions in, ﴿the path of those whom You have blessed﴾; avoiding those gone astray and angered at, ﴿such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray﴾; attention to the Prophetic Mission and *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (P.B.U.T.) in *tashahhud* (testification of faith); and attention to the pious and the righteous in, “Peace be upon us and upon righteous servants of Allah.”

- We see attention to the healthy eating in the *ḥadīth* warning, “If someone consumes alcoholic drink, their prayer would not be accepted up to forty days.”

- We see the neatness of appearance where we are recommended to use our best clothes, perfume, and ornament in prayer, and even the women are advised to have their ornaments on them in prayer.

- We notice caring about the spouse in the *ḥadīth* that says, “If there is dispute between the husband and the wife, or they annoy one another and use offensive language, the prayer of neither of them is accepted.”

In some verses of the Qur’ān, prayer and “commanding right and forbidding wrong” are stated together and affecting each other, including:

A: ﴿Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrong.﴾

B: ﴿Indeed good deeds efface misdeeds.﴾

C: ﴿Maintain the prayer and command right and forbid wrong.﴾

D: ﴿Those who, if We granted them power in the land, maintain the prayer, give the *zakāt*, and command right and forbid wrong.﴾

Lesson 7

Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong

Luqmān's Recommendation

﴿وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

﴿There should be from among you a Group who call [mankind] to virtue and command right and forbid wrong; and they are those who shall receive salvation.﴾ (Āl-i ‘Imrān, 104)

Commanding right means recommending the good qualities and forbidding wrong means preventing from evils. Undertaking these two important tasks does not require a particular age, since Luqmān says to his son, ﴿O’ my son! Maintain the prayer and command right and forbid wrong...﴾

Commanding what is right is an indication of loving one’s school of thought, loving the people, interest in a healthy society; it is a sign of freedom of speech, religious zeal, friendly relationship among people, a sign of an awake conscience, public supervision, and societal presence.

Commanding right and forbidding wrong causes encouragement of the benevolent, making the ignorant aware,

warning against mischief, and creating a type of social discipline. The Qur'ān says, "You, [Muslims] are the best of peoples; you command [people] to do right and forbid [them] from wrong."²⁷

Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) says, "Commanding right and forbidding wrong is in the public interest."²⁸ As we read in another *ḥadīth*, "The one who does not prevent an evildoing is like the one who leaves an injured person on the road to die."²⁹

Prophets David and Jesus (P.B.U.T.) cursed those who do not forbid evildoing.³⁰

The uprising of Imam al-Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.) was for commanding right and forbidding wrong.³¹

Silence and indifference towards sins causes committing sin to normalize, the sinners become emboldened, we become hard-hearted, the Satan is satisfied, and Allah becomes angry at us.

The Qur'ān tells us if in a gathering Divine verses are being offended, leave the gathering in protest to divert the course of discussion.

If we call someone to something good, we share the reward of their good deeds, too; but if we keep silent toward corruption, deviation, and sins, corruption would gradually grow and corrupt people would become dominant over people.

Man must be averse of committing sin both in their heart and through their tongue and prevent it by enforcing the law.

Commanding right and forbidding wrong are two Divine duties, which we cannot shun by such false imaginations as sins of others have nothing to do with us; let's not deprive

people of their freedom; I am a fearful and shy person; one swallow does not make a summer; let Jesus have his religion and Moses have his; we will not be placed in the same grave; there are other people too, why should I forbid wrong? I will lose my friends and customers by forbidding wrong, and so forth.

Manners and Conditions

Commanding right and forbidding wrong should be done consciously, compassionately, wisely, and if possible, secretly. Sometimes we have to say it ourselves; but when our words are not effective, our duty is not relinquished; rather, we should ask others to involve. Even if we can prevent corruption for a short while, we should do it; and if we can manage by repetition we should repeat it.

Commanding right and forbidding wrong is done in two ways:

1. As a public duty, which everyone can contribute as much as possible.

2. A duty undertaken by an organized and coherent group, who would pursue it powerfully. This way, if a driver violates the regulations, the other drivers should protest by honking their horns and blinking their lights and the police should interfere by encountering decisively.

Commanding Good, the Sign of the Best Nation (*Umma*)

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ﴾

﴿You are the best nation [ever] brought forth for mankind: you command right and forbid wrong, and have faith in Allah.﴾ (Āl-i ‘Imrān, 110)

In this verse, the public stage of “commanding right and forbidding wrong” is pointed out, which include some conditions and tips, such as:

1. To be the best nation is not possible with empty slogans; it should be accompanied with faith, commanding right, and forbidding wrong. ﴿You are the best nation... you command right...﴾

2. There is no goodness in the silent and fearful nation. ﴿the best nation... command wrong... forbid wrong.﴾

3. Commanding right and forbidding wrong is so important, practicing which is a standard advantage of nations. ﴿You are the best nation.﴾

4. Commanding right and forbidding wrong is actualized in case the Muslims are integrated into a nation, that is, when they have sovereignty. ﴿You are the best nation.﴾

5. Muslims are responsible for improvement of all human communities. ﴿[ever] brought forth for mankind.﴾

6. Commanding good qualities without struggling against corruption is of little result. ﴿you command right and forbid wrong.﴾

7. Every individual from among the nation should command right and forbid wrong. (A nine-year-old girl has also the right to command the president to do right and forbid him from doing wrong)

8. In commanding right, the age, region, race, education, and economic and political conditions have no function. ﴿the best nation... command right... forbid wrong﴾

9. Muslims should command and forbid out of strength and not weakness and begging. ﴿command wrong﴾

10. Commanding right precedes forbidding wrong.

﴿command wrong... forbid wrong﴾

11. That commanding and forbidding are effective originates from faith. ﴿command..., forbid..., have faith﴾

The Effects and Blessings

A part of the effects and blessings of commanding right and forbidding wrong, even if ineffective, are listed below:

1. Sometimes it does not have any effect today, but it affects the history, inner nature, and judgment of others. Just as Imam al-Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.) was martyred in the way of commanding right and forbidding wrong to awaken the slumbering conscience of people throughout history.

2. Sometimes commanding right and forbidding wrong preserve the space for others. As such, shouting in *adhān* is preferable (*muṣtaḥab*), even though there is no listener around; stopping behind the red light is obligatory, even though there is no other car passing, because obeying and respecting the law is obligatory.

3. Sometimes it does not prevent the sinners from committing sins, but warning over and over makes the pleasure of sin bitter to them and at least they do not commit sin restfully; it will one day awaken their conscience and will make its impact.

4. Preserving freedom requires commanding right and forbidding wrong, since not doing so will turn society into a climate of suffocation, apprehension, and silence.

5. Commanding right and forbidding wrong create high standing for oneself, even though others would not listen. The Qur'ān says, ﴿Who has a better call than him who summons to Allah ...?﴾³²

6. If it does not affect others, it is at least a kind of proximity to God, practicing bravery, and a manifestation of compassion and commitment.

7. When Divine wrath befalls, the commanders of right and forbidders of wrong will be rescued.

8. Commanding and forbidding will make human conscience calm; one says to oneself, “I fulfilled my duty; this calmness of conscience is valuable, although others would not listen.”

Commanding right and forbidding wrong is the *sīra* of the Prophets, although others would not listen. The Qur’ān repeatedly says that the people did not listen to the Prophets’ sayings and admonitions and turned their back to them. They were martyred in the way of their religious duty of commanding right and forbidding wrong so that truth would not be suppressed and lost.

Lesson 8

Interpretation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥa

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ
نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾﴾

﴿In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. (1) All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, (2) the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, (3) Master of the Day of Retribution. (4) You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help. (5) Guide us on the straight path, (6) the path of those whom You have blessed such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray. (7)﴾ (Al-Fātiḥa)

﴿All praise belongs to Allah﴾, is the best kind of thanking God. Wherever, in whatever language, and however one praises perfection and beauty, they actually praise its Source. However, praising God does not contradict praising a creature, provided that it is by God's command and in His direction.

God has made mercy incumbent upon Himself³³, and His mercy embraces all things.³⁴ The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and His Book are also mercy to all the nations.³⁵ His creation

and nourishment are based on mercy, and if He punishes, it actually *is* a favor.

Forgiving the sins, accepting the servant's repentance, covering their faults, and giving them chances for making up their mistakes are all manifestations of His mercy and beneficence.

Although God is the real master of everything, His mastership has a different manifestation on the Resurrection Day.

The statement, ﴿we worship﴾ both implies that prayer is performed in congregation and indicates that Muslims are all brothers and in one line. In prayer, the prayer performer seems to be saying on behalf of all monotheists, "O' Allah! Not only me, but all of us are your servants; and not only me, but all of us are in need of your favor."

Sūrat al-Fātiḥa introduces the straight path as the path of those whom Allah has blessed and include, the Prophets, the righteous ones, the martyrs, and the pious.³⁶ Paying attention to the path of these noble figures, wishing to fare it, and inculcating this wish into our souls would prevent us from dangers of misguidance and deviation. Following this request, the prayer performers ask God not to place them on the path of those incurred His wrath or gone astray.

What is meant by blessing in ﴿whom You have blessed﴾ is the blessing of guidance. Because, in a previous verse mentioned was made about guidance. Furthermore, material blessings are possessed by the infidels, the deviated, and others too.

The guided ones are also in danger and must perpetually ask Allah to keep them from being led to wrath and misguidance.

Educative Lessons of Sūrat al-Fātiḥa

1. With ﴿In the Name of Allah﴾ they [the guided ones] give up hope in other than God.

2. With ﴿Lord of all the worlds﴾ and ﴿Master of the Day of Retribution﴾ they feel they are nourished by and subject to Allah, and accordingly must abandon selfishness and proud.

3. With ﴿all the worlds﴾ they see themselves in relation to the universe and avoid isolation and individualistic action.

4. With ﴿Lord of all the worlds﴾ their negligence of the future is dispelled.

5. By saying ﴿You [alone] do we worship﴾, they efface hypocrisy and seeking popularity

6. By saying ﴿to You [alone] do we turn for help﴾ they refuse to turn for help from any of the non-Divine powers.

7. By saying ﴿You have blessed﴾ they know all blessings belonging to Him.

8. By saying ﴿Guide us﴾ they ask for guidance on the straight path of truth.

10. With ﴿the path of those whom You have blessed﴾ they proclaim their solidarity with the advocates of Truth.

11. By saying ﴿such as have not incurred Your wrath﴾ and ﴿nor are astray﴾ they express their aversion of and acquittal from falsehood and its followers.

The Importance of “*Bism Allāh*”

Bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm (In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful) has not only been at the beginning of the Qur’ān, but at the beginning of all the Revealed Books, as well.

Bism Allāh had been uttered atop the works and actions of

all Prophets. When the Prophet Solomon (P.B.U.H.) called Queen of Sheba to faith, he started his statement with *Bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*.

Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, *Bism Allāh* is the source of blessing for actions and abandoning it causes inconclusiveness. It is recommended to utter *Bism Allāh* at the beginning of any action; when eating, sleeping, writing, riding, traveling, and many other actions; even if an animal is slaughtered without uttering the Name of Allah, it is unlawful to eat it.

Bism Allāh is the logo of being a Muslim and all works of any Muslim must have a Divine tone; just as the products of a factory have the logo and trade mark of that factory, whether retail or wholesale; or as the flag of any country is both atop the offices, schools, and military bases of that country and atop the ships of that country in the seas and on the desks of their employees.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) is quoted as saying, “*Bism Allāh* is the crown of all the *sūras*. In the Qur’ān, only Sūrat al-Tawba does not have *Bism Allāh*; and this, according to Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.), is because *Bism Allāh* is the phrase of safety, mercy, and acquittal from the infidels and polytheists and is not compatible with expressing affection.”³⁷

Bism Allāh puts Satan to flight. The one who is in the company of Allah, Satan would not have any effect on them.

Straight Path

Ṣirāṭ (path) is the name of a bridge, over which all the people have to pass on the Resurrection.

Straight path is the only request that every Muslim makes

to Allah in prayer; even the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and the purified Imams (P.B.U.T.) request Allah for remaining stable on the straight path.

Straight path has its levels and stages, ﴿As for those who are [rightly] guided, He enhances their guidance.﴾³⁸ Even those who are on the path of Truth need to supplicate for remaining on the path and enhancement of their light of guidance.

Straight path means moderation and avoidance of any extremism, either in ideology or in action.

The Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.) said, “We are the straight path.”³⁹ That is, the objective and practical paradigms for the straight path and paragons for taking step on it are the heavenly leaders. They have recommended acting according to their instructions concerning all the matters of life such as work, entertainment, studies, feeding, alms-giving, criticism, revulsion, peace, interest in one’s child, and so forth and advised us on moderation.⁴⁰ Interestingly enough, Satan would also lie in wait on [lie in ambush] this very straight path; ﴿I will surely lie in wait for them on Your straight path.﴾⁴¹

There are many examples in the Qur’ān and traditions, in which moderation, that is the straight path, has been emphasized and extremism prohibited. Indeed, Islam is not a one-dimensional religion that would heed one aspect and abandon other aspects; rather, it recommends moderation and straight path in any action.

***Maghḍūbīn* (Those Incurred Allah’s Wrath) in the Qur’ān**

In the Qur’ān, such people as Pharaoh, Korah, Abūlahab, and communities such as the People of ‘Ād, People of

Thamūd, and the Children of Israel are introduced as those incurred Allah's wrath and the names of some have been mentioned as misleaders, such as Satan, Pharaoh, Sāmirī, bad friends, and deviated chiefs and ancestors. In various verses, the characteristics of the misguided and *maghdūbīn* and their referents are stated.

In every prayer, we beseech Allah not to let us be among *maghdūbīn*; that is, neither among those distorting the verses of the Qur'ān, nor the hypocrites, or those shunning the holy strive (*Jihād*). And not to be among the misguided, either; that is, those who have abandoned the Truth and turned to falsehood, have practiced extremism in their religion and beliefs, or follow their carnal desires or those of others.

The grounds for deviation are delineated in the Qur'ān as follows:

1. Desires. ﴿...who has taken his desire to be his god and whom Allah has led astray﴾

2. Idols. ﴿They have set up equals to Allah, to lead [people] astray from His way﴾

3. Sins. ﴿He leads no one astray thereby except the transgressors﴾

4. Acceptance of false guardianship. ﴿...should anyone take him for a friend, he will lead him astray﴾

5. Ignorance. ﴿...and earlier you were indeed among the astray.﴾

In this *sūra* [al-Fātiḥa], one expresses one's love and fondness in, and solidarity with the Prophets, martyrs, and the righteous and their path and acquits oneself from the *maghdūbīn* and the misguided throughout the history; this is the evidence of solidarity and dissociation.

Lesson 9

Ṣalāt al-Layl (Mid-Night Prayer)

﴿وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا﴾

﴿And keep vigil for a part of the night, as a supererogatory [devotion] for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station.﴾ (Al-Isrā', 79)

Hajūd means sleeping and *tahajjud* means stay awake in devotion (‘*ibāda*). There is splendor in the word ﴿*maqāman* = station﴾ (because of its *tanwīn* = nunnation) and it is narrated in traditions that ﴿a praiseworthy station﴾ is the same as intercession.

Three things were obligatory to the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and optional to others: *ṣalāt al-layl*, brushing, and rising early.

Ṣalāt al-layl is among the very rewarding prayers and is emphatically recommended in Sūrat al-Muzzammil and Muddaththar, ﴿Stand vigil through the night, except a little.﴾

More than 30 excellences have been enumerated in traditions about *ṣalāt al-layl*, some of which are pointed out as follows:

﴿All the Prophets had *ṣalāt al-layl*. *Ṣalāt al-layl* is the

secret of body's health and light of the grave. It is effective in disposition, sustenance and livelihood, disposing of sorrow, paying off one's debt, luminosity of the face, and brilliance of the eyes.

✽ *Ṣalāt al-layl* removes the sins of the day, and it is the light of the Resurrection.

✽ Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "The reward of *ṣalāt al-layl* is so much that Allah says, ﴿No one knows what has been kept hidden for them of comfort as a reward for what they used to do.﴾"

✽ Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, the nobility of the faithful is in *ṣalāt al-layl* and their honor in not persecuting the people,

We read in a *ḥadīth* that, "Destitute is the one who is deprived of *ṣalāt al-layl*."

✽ Abū Dhar was giving advice to people next to Ka'ba, "For [being freed from] the terror and loneliness of the grave, perform two *rak'as* of prayer in the dead of night."

✽ The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "The best of you is the one whose words are good, feeds the hungry, and when people are asleep, performs *ṣalāt al-layl*."

His Holiness said to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (P.B.U.H.) three times, "It is upon you to perform *ṣalāt al-layl*."

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "The believer's adornment and honor is to perform *ṣalāt al-layl*."

Someone said to 'Alī (P.B.U.H.), "I am deprived of the honor of performing *ṣalāt al-layl*!" The Imam said, "Your sins have prevented you."

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) repented seventy times while performing

the *witr* (or *watr* prayer (odd or single-*rak‘a* prayer performed at *ṣalāt al-layl*).”⁴²

Early Rising and Keeping Night Vigil

﴿إِنَّ تَابِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ وَبَالًا﴾

﴿Indeed the vigil of the night [for *‘ibāda*] is firmer in tread and more upright in respect to speech.﴾ (Al-Muzzammil, 6)

Allah has sworn to all the parts of time. For instance: ﴿By the night﴾, ﴿By the morning﴾, ﴿By the day﴾, ﴿by the time﴾; but dawn has been sworn to three times: ﴿by the night when it departs﴾, ﴿by the night as it approaches﴾, ﴿By the night when it recedes.﴾

And there are two verses concerning pleading for forgiveness at dawn by the early risers: ﴿and at dawns they would plead for forgiveness﴾, ﴿and [those] pleading [Allah’s] forgiveness at dawn﴾.

Allah addressed Prophet Moses (P.B.U.H.), “He is telling lies the one who imagines he loves me but when the night falls, goes to sleep instead of conversing with me.”

The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Two *rak‘as* of prayer at the dead of night is more favorable to me than the world and what is in it.”

Lesson 10

Two Forgotten Obligations

Legal Alms (*Zakāt*)

﴿إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمَوْلَىٰ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

﴿The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and [for] the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.﴾ (Al-Tawba, 60)

The ruling on *zakāt* was revealed in Makka; however, due to the small number of Muslims and scarcity of the *zakāt* money, the people used to pay it themselves. After the establishment of the Islamic state in Madīna, collecting *zakāt* from people, depositing it in the public treasury, and its integration by the Islamic ruler was brought up. ﴿Take charity from their possessions﴾⁴³

Zakāt is not specific to Islam; rather, it has been practiced in previous religions as well. Prophet Jesus (P.B.U.H.) spoke in cradle and said, ﴿He has enjoined me to [perform] the prayer and to [pay] the *zakāt*.﴾⁴⁴ And the Prophet Moses

(P.B.U.H.) addressed Children of Israel, saying, ﴿And perform the prayer and give the *zakāt*.﴾⁴⁵ And we read about all the Prophets, ﴿We made them imams, guiding by Our command, and We revealed to them to do good deeds, to perform prayers, and the give *zakāt*.﴾⁴⁶

Four phrasings have been employed in the Qur'ān for *zakāt*:

1. Giving away property. ﴿and who give their wealth, for the love of Him, to relatives﴾
2. Charity. ﴿Take charity from their possessions﴾
3. Alms-giving. ﴿they perform the prayer, and give alms﴾
4. *Zakāt*. ﴿who perform the prayer and pay *zakāt*﴾

The Importance of *Zakāt*

In the Qur'ān, *zakāt* is usually mentioned with *ṣalāt* (prayer) and none of the religious obligation has been so closely associated with *zakāt* and according to the traditions, the precondition for the acceptance of prayer is the payment of *zakāt*. This association implies the relation to Allah and the relation to people.

Accepting *zakāt* is unlawful for the *sādāt* (pl. *sayyid*, the descendants of the Prophet – P.B.U.H. & H.H.). A group of the Hashemite asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) to let them be in charge of collecting the *zakāt* of animals and this way a share of *zakāt* be given to them as administrators of *zakāt*. His Holiness said, *zakāt* is unlawful for me and you, unless both the giver and receiver of *zakāt* are *sayyid*.

The law of *zakāt* does not mean that Islam desires there to be a class of the poor who receive *zakāt* and a class of the rich who give *zakāt*; rather, it is a solution for an external reality of

society. The wealthy may also encounter some incidents such as robbery, fire, accidents, war, and captivity and there must be some budget for social security in an Islamic state.

It is related in traditions that Allah has set a right for the needy in the properties of the wealthy so much as solving their problems, and if He knew it would not be sufficient, He would increase it. If people paid the poor their due right, all would enjoy a good life, and if the rich paid their *zakāt*, there were no poor.⁴⁷

Contrary to what some believe concerning preventing the increase of people's income and limiting it, Islam maintains that man must be given relative freedom to be able to grow financially through striving, innovation, and utilization of nature, albeit to pay tax, too.

The precondition for expenditure of *zakāt* "in the way of Allah" is not poverty; rather, it can be expended wherever it may help the sovereignty of the line of Islam.

Zakāt can be used to rescue the society from the evils of the wicked people, and this also includes ﴿for those whose hearts are to be reconciled﴾.

If it is proved that someone must pay blood money (*diyya*) but is not able to pay off, they are included in ﴿the debtors﴾ (*wa al-ghārimīn*) and they can be helped by *zakāt*.

Perhaps the phrase, ﴿and for [the freedom of] the slaves﴾ "*wa fi al-riqāb*" could be included in spending *zakāt* for freeing the prisoners of providing for their expenditure.

Distribution of *zakāt* in eight cases does not need to be equal; rather, it is distributed under the supervision of the Islamic ruler and as much as needed and necessary.

Zakāt is an element of modification of wealth.

Zakāt is practical gratitude of Divine bounties.

Zakāt cuts short class differences, removes the hatred between the poor and the rich.

Zakāt is a support for the social security of the deprived. It says to the poor, "Do not worry!" It says to the bankrupt, "Try again!" It says to the traveler, "Do not fear of being stranded on your trip!" It says to the employee, "Your share is preserved." It gives promise of freedom to the slave; it gives prosperity to the Divine service forum; and attracts others' hearts to Islam.

Negligence of remembering God, exploiting people, hard-heartedness, rebellion and sensuality are the byproducts of piling up wealth; and *zakāt* is the medicine for these illnesses.

Besides eliminating deprivation, *zakāt* increases tendency toward Islam or at least makes people abandon cooperating with the enemies of Islam. It is related in the traditions that sometimes the people who are weak in their faith, will strengthen in their faith by means of financial help and getting close to Islam.

As a symbol of Islamic order, *zakāt* paves the ground for social justice, removing poverty, provision for the employees, international popularity, freedom of slaves and those in captivity, setting forces to move, preserving the doctrine and sovereignty of Muslims, and development of public services.

***Khums* (One Fifth Tax)**

According to the Shi'a belief, verse 41 of Sūrat al-Anfāl includes any income, whether from business or trading. One instance of *khums* is mentioned in this verse and other instances have been mentioned in traditions. ﴿Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth of it is for Allah and the Apostle﴾.

Khums is of special importance in traditions. For instance:

whoever does not pay the *khums* of his property, their property would not become purified and they cannot take possession of it; and the prayer with clothes whose *khums* has not been paid is open to doubt.⁴⁸

The jurists have made *khums* obligatory on five things: 1. Annual profits of business and income, 2. Treasure, 3. Mines, 4. Pearls acquired by diving, 5. Lawful property mingled by the unlawful, 6. Land that a non-Muslim citizen buys from a Muslim, 7. Spoils of war.

It is obviously clear that Allah does not need *khums*; therefore, His share is for the sovereignty of Divine Law and guardianship of His Apostle, propagation of the call of Islam and having it heard by the people of the world, rescue of Muslims, and preventing the agents of corruption.⁴⁹

According to the traditions, Allah's share is at the disposal of His Apostle and the Apostle's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) share is at the disposal of the Imams after him. During the occultation of the [twelfth] Imam, these three shares are at the disposal of his special deputies or general deputies, that is, the fully-qualified master jurist and supreme legal authority (*marja' taqlid*).⁵⁰

Of other expenditures of *khums* propounded in traditions is to spend it for the needy and those stranded on their trip from among the *sādāt*, as it is unlawful for them to receive *zakāt*; thus, their needs must be fulfilled through *khums*.⁵¹ In fact, to eliminate deprivation from society, Islam has made two things obligatory: *zakāt*, which belongs to all the poor of the society, and *khums*, part of which is dedicated to the poor *sādāt*. *Khums* and *zakāt* are paid to the poor to meet their annual expenditure, and no more.

Lesson 11

Parents

Benevolence (*Ihsān*) to Parents

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٍ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٣٢﴾﴾

﴿Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] benevolence to parents. Should they reach old age at your side one of them or both do not say to them, “Fie!” And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words. Lower the wing of humility to them, out of mercy, and say, “My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they raised me up when I was little!”﴾ " (Al-Isrā', 23-24)

Benevolence to parents is recommended in traditions and their persecuting is reprimanded:

The reward for looking at parents with compassion is equal to an accepted *Hajj*. Their pleasure is God's pleasure, and their wrath is God's wrath. Benevolence to parents elongates one's life and causes our children do benevolence to us.

It is related in traditions that if they beat you, you should not say to them, “Fie!” Do not even stare at them; do not raise

your hand; do not walk ahead of them; do not call them by name; beware of doing something to instigate people curse them; do not sit before they do; and help them before they ask you to.

A man was carrying his mother doing *ṭawāf* (circumambulating around Ka'ba); in the meantime, he saw the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and asked him, "Did I pay my mother her due?" He answered, "You haven't even paid for one of her pains of childbirth."

It is related in a *ḥadīth*, "Even if the parents beat their child, the child should say, 'May God forgive you', as this is the very ﴿noble words﴾.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was asked, "Is there benevolence to the parents after their death too?" He answered, "Yes, by way of performing prayer for them, asking God for their forgiveness, fulfilling their commitments, paying their debts, and respecting their friends."

A man complained of his father to the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). His Holiness asked for the father and questioned him. The old father said, "Once I was strong and rich and helped my son; but today he has become rich and does not help me." The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) wept and said, "There is no stone and object that would hear this story and not to weep!" Then, he said to that son, "You and your property belong to your father."

Benevolence to the parents is a characteristic of the Prophets; as the Prophet Jesus (P.B.U.H.) is characterized in the verse, ﴿to be good to my mother⁵²﴾ and John (Yaḥyā) in the verse, ﴿good to his parents⁵³﴾.

If the parents realize that they are mentioned second to

Monotheism, they will be more motivated to call their children to Monotheism.

Therefore, it can be concluded from the above verse that:

1. Serving and doing good to the parents is an attribute of the real Monotheist. ﴿you shall not worship anyone except Him, and benevolence to parents﴾

2. Commanding benevolence to the parents is the command of Monotheism and cannot be abrogated. ﴿has decreed﴾

3. Benevolence to the parents has come along with Monotheism and obedience to Allah to show that this is also rationally obligatory and a human duty and legally obligatory. ﴿Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and benevolence to parents﴾

4. The new generation should, in light of faith, have a strong connection with the old generation. ﴿you shall not worship anyone except Him, and benevolence to parents﴾

5. Doing benevolence to the parents does not require them to be Muslim. ﴿benevolence to parents﴾

6. There is no difference between the parents in doing benevolence to them. ﴿benevolence to parents﴾

7. We should do benevolence to the parents directly with our own hands. ﴿benevolence to parents﴾.

8. Benevolence is higher than alms-giving and includes affection, courtesy, teaching, consultation, obedience, gratitude, and so on. ﴿benevolence to parents﴾

9. Benevolence to parents has no limitation. ﴿benevolence to parents﴾ (not like beggars until they become satiated, nor like *jihād* until the elimination of sedition, nor like fasting until it is broken at *iftār*)

10. The Qur'ān's enjoining benevolence is directed towards the youth, not the parents. ﴿and benevolence to parents﴾ because parents do not need to be enjoined since they naturally do benevolence to their children.

11. The more the parents are in physical psychological needs, the more it is necessary to do the benevolence. ﴿Should they reach old age at your side﴾

12. We should not take the old parents to the retired house; rather, we should keep them with us. ﴿at your side﴾

13. It is necessary both to do them good and to speak to them nobly. ﴿Benevolence ... speak to them noble words﴾

14. No reciprocal condition is enjoined for doing benevolence to parents and speaking nobly to them. That is, even if they do not treat you reverently, you should treat them nobly.

15. In whatever position, the child should be humble and not to show off their position to their parents. ﴿Lower the wing of humility to them﴾

16. Humbleness to parents should be out of kindness rather than pretended and fabricated, or for seizing their properties. ﴿Lower ... to them, out of mercy﴾

17. The child should both be humble to the parents and ask Allah to have mercy on them. ﴿Lower ... and say, "My Lord! Have mercy on them﴾

18. The child's prayer for the parents is answered, otherwise, Allah would not have command [the child] to pray for them. ﴿and say, "My Lord! Have mercy on them﴾

19. Prayer for the parents is Allah's command and a sign of giving thanks to them. ﴿say, "My Lord! Have mercy on them﴾

20. Divine mercy is the recompense for the parents' efforts in raising up children. ﴿My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they raised me up﴾ As if Allah says to the child, "You do not withhold your mercy and ask for Allah's help, since you will not succeed in paying them their due."

21. Do not forget your past, the bitterness and difficulties of your infancy and childhood imposed on your parents. ﴿just as they raised me up when I was little﴾

22. Parents should raise up children by mercy. ﴿Have mercy on them, just as they raised me up﴾

23. One should thank and appreciate their trainers. ﴿Have mercy on them, just as they raised me up﴾

In verses 83 of Sūrat al-Baqara, 36 of Sūrat al-Nisā, 151 of Sūrat al-An'ām, and 23 of Sūrat al-Isrā' benevolence to the parents is recommended; however, in the verse 14 of Sūrat Lughmān, benevolence to parents is enjoined as a Divine commandment (*waṣīyya*). ﴿And We have charged man concerning his parent...﴾

Indeed, respecting the parents is among the human rights and not among the Islamic rights; it is among the permanent rights and not among the temporary or seasonal rights.

We read in traditions that benevolence to parents is obligatory in all conditions, whether they are good or evil, living or dead.

They saw the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) being more respectful to his foster-sister than his foster-brother. They asked him for the reason, His Holiness answered, "Because this sister is more respectful to her parents."⁵⁴

We read in the Qur'an that Prophet John and Prophet Jesus (P.B.U.T.) were both commissioned to respect their parents.⁵⁵

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Second to the on-time prayer, there is nothing better than respecting parents.”⁵⁶

The Widespread Meaning of Parents

In the culture of Islam, the Divine Leader, the teacher, the trainer, and the spouse’s father are also called father. In some traditions, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and Amīr al-Mu’minīn - ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) are counted as the father of the *umma*. “I and ‘Alī are the father of this *umma*”; as Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) was counted as the father of the Arab. ﴿... the creed of your father Abraham﴾

In the latter days of the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) life, when he was in his deathbed, he said to Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.), “Go among the people and tell them in a loud voice:

“May the curse of Allah be upon whoever is disinherited (*‘āqq*) by their parents;”

“May the curse of Allah be upon the servant who escapes from their master;”

“May the curse of Allah be upon whoever does not pay the wage of the hired workers.”

Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) went among the people, told them these statements, and returned. Some of the companions took this message as naïve and asked, “We have already heard such words about respecting the parents and paying the wage of the hired worker; this was not a new message that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) sent us from his deathbed.” Having noticed that the people did not understand the depth of his message, His Holiness sent Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) once

again and said, "Tell people:

'What I mean by being disinherited by their parents is being disinherited by the Divine Leader. O' 'Ali! I and you are the father of this *umma* and the one who is not obedient to us is disinherited by us'."

"I and you are the masters of these people and those who run away from us are subject to the wrath of Allah."

"I and you are appointed to guide these people, and those who do not pay the hired worker's wage, are cursed by Allah."

You see in this story that although benevolence to and obedience of the people have a familiar and formal meaning, they have much wider meaning in the culture of Islam.

Lesson 12

Thankfulness and Gratitude

How to Thank

﴿وَاذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ﴾

﴿And when your Lord proclaimed, If you are thankful, surely I will enhance you [in blessing] but if you are thankless My chastisement is surely terrible.﴾ (Ibrāhīm, 7)

Imam al-Şādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, “Thankfulness for blessings is bewareing of sins.” He further said, “Thankfulness is that man knows the blessings to be from Allah (rather than from his own cleverness, knowledge, intellect, and efforts or from others) and be content with what Allah has given him, not making Divine blessings a means for committing sins. The real thankfulness is that man use Divine blessings in the way of Allah.”

Thankfulness for Divine blessings is very scanty and unmentionable; according to Sa’dī:

“It is best for the servant to confess his weakness, and
implore forgiveness at the court of Heaven,
Since no one is able to fulfil his duty towards God as He
deserves it.”

We read in the *ḥadīth* that God inspired Moses to give Him His due thankfulness. Moses said, “This is impossible, as whatever word I utter to thank you, it necessitates another thanking.” It was inspired that, “This very confession of you and as you know whatever there is belongs to me is the best thankfulness to me.”⁵⁷

Thankfulness to people is equal to thankfulness to God. As it is related in the *ḥadīth*, “Whoever is not thankful to people, is not indeed thankful to God.”⁵⁸

If we spend God’s blessings in the way of other than God, it is thanklessness and a ground for infidelity. ﴿...if you are thankless﴾, or another verse, ﴿...those who have changed Allah’s blessing with ingratitude.﴾⁵⁹

Thankfulness to Allah

Allah does not need our worship and thankfulness; the Qur’ān has frequently referred to this point and stated, ﴿Allah is indeed All-Sufficient.﴾⁶⁰ However, our attention to Him is a source of our own honor and growth, just as the sun does not need us; it is we who will use its light and warmth if we build our houses facing it.

One of the reasons for God’s praising the Prophets is their spirit of thankfulness. For instance, concerning Prophet Noah (P.B.U.H.), for all his patience and perseverance he tolerated against his unfaithful wife, children, and people, God pointed out his gratitude and called him grateful. ﴿Indeed he was a grateful servant.﴾⁶¹

Allah has, time and again, complained of people’s ingratitude.

Actually, the success for being thankful to Allah has to be begged from Him, just as the Prophet Solomon (P.B.U.H.) besought Him so, ﴿My Lord! Inspire me to give thanks for Your blessing with which You have blessed me.﴾⁶² (﴿inspire me﴾ means bless me with inspiration, love, and fondness for thanking Your blessings.) We mostly pay attention to the blessings that we are dealing with every day and are negligent of many other blessings, including what we have inherited from our ancestors, or thousands of calamities that are being repelled from us at any moment; or the spiritual blessings such as faith in God and His Friends, or despise of transgression and sins, which Allah has referred to in the Qur'ān as follows, ﴿He has made hateful to you faithlessness, transgression, and disobedience.﴾⁶³

Besides what was said above, a part of the supplications of the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.H.) is to pay attentions to Divine blessings and being thankful and grateful for them, so as to revive and reinforce the spirit of thankfulness in man.

Thankfulness to Allah is sometimes by tongue and sometimes by actions and behavior.

We read in the *ḥadīth*, “Whenever you remember a blessing of Divine blessings, touch your forehead to the ground in prostration and even if you are riding a horse, dismount it and do the prostration, and if you can't, put your forehead on the top part of the saddle of horse; and even you can't do this, either, put your face on your palm and thank God.”⁶⁴

Examples of Practical Thankfulness

1. Prayer is the best example for being thankful to Allah.

Allah said to His Messenger, perform prayer as an expression of thanks for My granting you the “*Kawthar*” and abundant goodness. ﴿Surely We have given you abundance; so pray to your Lord and sacrifice.﴾

2. Fasting; as the Divine Prophets used to fast as an expression of thanks for God’s Blessings.⁶⁵

3. Serving people. The Qur’ān says if an illiterate person asks a literate one to write for him, the former should not refuse and write it for him as an expression of thanks for literacy. ﴿... and let not any writer refuse to write it down, as God has taught him...﴾⁶⁶ Here writing a letter, which is serving people, is regarded as a kind of thanks for the blessing of literacy.

4. Contentment. The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Be content, so that you may be the most thankful of all people.”⁶⁷

5. Kindness to orphans. Allah says to His Messenger, “As an expression of thankfulness for being orphan and We gave you shelter, do not oppress the orphans.” ﴿As for the orphan, do not oppress him.﴾⁶⁸

6. Helping the underprivileged and the needy. Allah says to His Messenger (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), “As an expression of thanks for being needy and We enriched you, do not chide the beggar who comes to you.” ﴿and as for the beggar, do not chide him﴾⁶⁹

7. Thanking people. Allah says to His Messenger, “As thanking and encouragement of those giving *zakāt*, pray for them, because your praying gives them comfort.” ﴿and pray for them, your prayers are a comfort for them﴾⁷⁰

Thankfulness for Hardships

The Qur'ān says, ﴿Yet it may happen that you will hate a thing which is better for you and it may happen that you will love a thing which is worse for you.﴾⁷¹

If we know; others have more problems.

If we know; problems draw our attention to Allah.

If we know; problems break down our pride and remove hard-heartedness.

If we know; problems remind us of those suffering from pain.

If we know; problems prompt us to defend and innovate.

If we know; problems remind us of the value of the past blessings.

If we know; problems are the atonements for our sins.

If we know; problems lead to receiving Otherworldly reward.

If we know; problems are warnings and alarm clock for the Resurrection.

If we know; problems cause recognition of our patience or recognition of our friends.

And if we know that more or harder problems might have happened to us, then we would find out that the apparent hardships are sweet in their own right.

Indeed, to a child a candy is sweet and onions and pepper are hot and distasteful; but to the parents who are much more grown up, sour and sweet are both tasteful.

In the battle of Uḥud, Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, "Taking part in the battlefield is an instance, for which we should be thankful."⁷² And his daughter, Zaynab (P.B.U.H.), said in response to the Umayyad criminals, "I saw nothing but beauty [in Karbalā]."⁷³

Lesson 13

Divine Agents

Animals are Divine Agents

﴿فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ عَلَى مَوْتِهِ إِلَّا دَابَّةُ الْأَرْضِ تَأْكُلُ مِنْسَأَتَهُ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنَّ أَنْ لَوْ كَانَُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ﴾

﴿And when We decreed death for him, nothing apprised them of his death except a worm which gnawed away at his staff. And when he fell down the jinn realized that had they known the Unseen, they would not have remained in a humiliating torment.﴾ (Sūrat Sabā', 14)

The role and function of animals have frequently been mentioned in the Qur'ān, including:

1. A piece of a cow's body (Banī Isrā'il's cow), brought a murdered person to life to introduce his murderer. ﴿... indeed Allah commands you to slaughter a cow...﴾⁷⁴

2. The spider safeguards the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) in the cave. ﴿If you do not help him, then Allah has already helped him.﴾⁷⁵

3. The raven becomes humankind's teacher. ﴿Then God sent forth a raven.﴾⁷⁶

4. The hoopoe is commissioned to deliver Prophet

Solomon's (P.B.U.H.) letter to Queen of Shebā. ﴿Take this letter of mine...﴾⁷⁷

5. Flocks of birds (*abābīl*) are commissioned to suppress the elephant riders. ﴿And He sent against them flocks of birds.﴾⁷⁸

6. A Serpent turns into a means to prove the righteousness of Moses. ﴿and behold, it was a serpent manifest.﴾⁷⁹

7. The fish (whale) is commissioned to punish Prophet Jonah (P.B.U.H.). ﴿Then the fish swallowed him.﴾⁸⁰

8. The termite becomes a means for revealing Solomon's (P.B.U.H.) death. ﴿a worm which gnawed away at his staff.﴾⁸¹

9. The dog of the Companions of the Cave is commissioned to be a guard. ﴿and their dog [lies] stretching its forelegs at the threshold.﴾⁸²

10. Four birds (peacock, pigeon, rooster, and crow) cause Abraham (P.B.U.H.) to reassure. ﴿Take four of the birds.﴾⁸³

11. A donkey reassures Ezra of the Resurrection. ﴿Then look at your ass.﴾⁸⁴

12. Camel, cow, and sheep become Divine sacraments in *Hajj*. ﴿We have appointed for you the [sacrificial] camels as one of Allah's sacraments.﴾⁸⁵

13. An animal becomes a means for knowledge on God. ﴿What, do they not consider how the camel was created.﴾⁸⁶

14. An animal becomes a means for testing humans. ﴿Allah will surely test you with some of the game within the reach of your hands and spears.﴾⁸⁷

15. An animal becomes Divine miracle. ﴿This is the she-camel of Allah.﴾⁸⁸

16. An animal becomes a means of Divine wrath and torment. ﴿the locusts, the lice, and the frogs.﴾⁸⁹

Lesson 14

The Sanctities in Islam

Respect for the Sanctities

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾

﴿O' you who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak aloud to him as you shout to one another, lest your works should fail without your being aware.﴾ (Al-Hujurat, 2)

Despite their difference of opinions, all countries of the world have special respect for their dignitaries. The cities, streets, universities, airports, schools, and institutes are named after them. Similarly, in Islam some people and even some plants and inanimate objects similarly have sanctity.

In Islam, the sacredness and dignity of everything are rooted in their attachment to the most Sacred Essence of Allah. The more this attachment, the more its sanctity, and we should preserve its special reverence. As for the sanctities:

1. Allah is the fountainhead of sacredness; and the polytheists, who take Allah as equal to others, will acknowledge their deviation on the Resurrection and will tell

their imaginative idols, “The secret of our wretchedness is that ﴿we equated you with the Lord of all the worlds!﴾⁹⁰”

There is much talk of the glorification and praise of Allah in the Qur’ān; that is to say, we must accept a kind of reverence and sacredness for Allah that not any type of defect and deficiency can be imagined for Him. Not only His Essence, but His Name should also be glorified. ﴿Glorify the Name of your Lord the Most High.﴾⁹¹

2. The Book of Allah also enjoys a special sacredness. When Allah views the Qur’ān as great and mighty (‘*‘azīm*’),⁹² we must venerate and glorify too. When Allah views the Qur’ān as noble (*karīm*),⁹³ we must dignify it, too; and since Allah views the Qur’ān as glorious and sublime (*majīd*)⁹⁴, we must glorify and praise it, too.

3. Divine leaders, all the Prophets, and the successors of those noble ones, especially His Holiness, Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his Household, have a special position that in this *sūra* a part of manners of treating His Holiness is stated: do not take precedence over them; do not speak aloud to them; and in other verses it is commanded to bless the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.).⁹⁵

Of course, we have to notice that after the demise of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), it is upon us to go on a pilgrimage to him and to his successors and household, and to all those who are somehow related to His Holiness, especially the Divinely endowed scholars, equitable jurists, and the sources of emulation (*marāji‘ taqlīd*), who, according to the traditions, are successors of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). We read in the traditions, “The one who rejects the words of the equitable jurist is like the one who has rejected the words of the

Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.), and the one who rejects their words is like the one who has rejected God's words."⁹⁶

Not only the Prophets themselves, but also whatever related to them has sacredness and nobility. We read in the Qur'an that the Ark which Moses (P.B.U.H.) had been laid in when he was an infant and left in the sea and later on, the relics of Moses (P.B.U.H.) and the House of Moses were kept in it was so sanctified that the angels would carry it around and bring victory over the enemies.⁹⁷

4. In Islam, parents enjoy a special dignity and nobility. In the Qur'an, after enjoining Monotheism, benevolence to parents and thanking them is mentioned five times along with giving thanks to Allah.⁹⁸

Respecting parents is recommended to the extent that looking at them is worship; and we are advised not to raise our voice above theirs; the trip that bothers them is unlawful, and the prayer on such trip has to be performed in full mode.

5. In Islam, some time-periods, such as *Laylat al-Qadr*, some places such as mosques, some stones such as *Hajar al-Aswad*, some waters such as *Zamzam*, some soils such as the soil of Imam al-Husayn's (P.B.U.H.) grave, and some garments such as pilgrimage garbs are sacred and should be especially revered.

Prophet Moses (P.B.U.H.) took off his shoes out of respect for the sacred valley when he entered there. ﴿So take off your sandals. You are indeed in the sacred valley of Tuwa.﴾⁹⁹

The Holy Mosque is a sacred place, into which the polytheists are not allowed to enter. ﴿The polytheists are indeed unclean: so let them not approach the Holy Mosque.﴾¹⁰⁰

Places of worship and mosques are sacred and when you

go to the mosques, take your beautiful adornments and be clean. ﴿take your adornment at every place of worship.﴾¹⁰¹
 The ritually impure and unclean person does not have the right to stop in mosques. ﴿[do not enter mosques] in the state of ritual impurity except while passing through.﴾¹⁰²

A mosque is so honored that people such as Abraham, Ishmael, Zechariah, and Mary (P.B.U.T.) were in charge of cleaning it. ﴿Purify My House.﴾¹⁰³

Even Mary's mother, who thought her child was a boy, made a vow to make him an attendant to the Farthest Mosque (Masjid al-Aqṣā). ﴿I have vowed to You, in dedication, what is within my womb.﴾¹⁰⁴

6. A faithful person also possesses sacredness and dignity, to the extent that the reputation of the faithful is more important than the Ka'ba and it is unlawful to persecute and backbite him and it is obligatory to defend their right and even his exhumation after his death is unlawful.

Insulting the Prophet, Allah's Defense

﴿إِنَّا أَنْعَمْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۖ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ۗ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

﴿Indeed We have given you abundance. So pray to your Lord, and sacrifice. Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity.﴾ (Al-Kawthar, 1-3)

However harsher are the strikes on the religion and the religious sanctities, the defense has to be stronger, too. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was offended a lot and was called sorcerer, soothsayer, and a poet possessed, which have all been somehow recompensed in the Qur'an; the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was told, ﴿you are indeed possessed.﴾, but Allah said, ﴿you are not, by the blessing of your Lord, a man possessed.﴾ It was said to His Holiness, ﴿You have not been

sent [by Allah].﴾ Allah said, ﴿you are indeed one of the apostles.﴾ His Holiness was accused of being a fanciful poet, ﴿a poet possessed.﴾ Allah said, ﴿We have not taught him poetry; it is not seemly for him.﴾

They called His Holiness without posterity (*abtar*); Allah said, ﴿Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity.﴾

Indeed, the answer to the one who calls the most noble of all creation as *abtar*, is that Allah grant him an abundance (*kawthar*) that may dazzle all eyes and awaken admiration in all minds.

It is implied from the last verse of Sūrat al-Kawthar, ﴿Indeed it is your enemy who is without posterity﴾ that what is meant by *kawthar* is something opposite to *abtar*, and as the Arabs call *abtar* the person who is without posterity and childless, and who has no sons and by dying his generation becomes extinct, the best evidence for *kawthar* is the household of the Prophet, from whose daughter's generation are the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.).

Of course, *kawthar* has a general meaning, which includes any abundance, but any abundance is not *kawthar*. The Qur'ān says, ﴿So let not their possessions or their children impress you, God only desires thereby to chastise them in this present life.﴾¹⁰⁵

In the incidence of the conquest of Makka, during which the polytheists embracing Islam in scores, Allah only commands glorification, ﴿and you see the people entering Allah's religion in throngs. Then glorify your Lord.﴾ but for granting *kawthar* to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), He says, ﴿So worship your Lord.﴾ It seems *kawthar* is more important to Islam than embracing Islam by the polytheists.

Lesson 15

Migration

Migration for Religious Studies

﴿وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ﴾

﴿It is not for the believers to go forth totally but why should not a party of every section of them go forth, to become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware [of sins and rebellion]?﴾ (Al-Tawba, 122)

Becoming learned in religion, (lit. study jurisprudence) [*Tafaqquh fi Dīn*] means attempting to acquire deep knowledge in religion and Islamic rulings. Becoming learned in religion may sometimes be for the sake of the worldly gains, positions, and love of studies, discussion, entertainment, and competition with friends and sometimes it may be for the sake of God, Paradise, and salvation of the *umma*. The above verse considers the latter of value; that is to warn people and call them to Allah. ﴿to warn their people﴾

Amīr al-Mu'minīn - 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) enjoins his son, "Study jurisprudence, indeed, the jurists (*fuqahā*) are

inheritors of the Prophets.”¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Imam al-Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.) praises Allah at the night of ‘Āshūrā with the following words, “Praise be Allah who made us expert (*faqīh*) in religion.”¹⁰⁷

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) was asked, “What should people do if something happens to the Imam?” The Imam recited the above verse [advising] that from every city and clan [a party] should go forth to learn about the religion.”¹⁰⁸

From every region, a group of people should go to religious centers to learn about Islam and return to their regions so that a sufficient number of clergymen be present in every region. Indeed, migration is inherent to faith. Migrate either for defending religion or for learning about religion. Therefore, becoming learned in religion and then teaching religion to others, especially to the people of one’s country and hometown is a collective obligation. Then, two migrations are necessary for the *ḥawza* (Islamic seminary) students: one toward *ḥawzas*, and the other from *ḥawzas* toward cities. Thus, remaining in the *ḥawzas* is not permissible except for the instructors.

Actually, jurisprudence is not learning religious rulings; rather, all religious knowledge is researchable, and apt to be scrutinized and delved into. ﴿to become learned in religion﴾

Becoming learned in religion is valuable only when the learned or jurisprudent is knowledgeable about his time and aware of the mischief and penetrative policies of the enemy, so that he can warn against them. Then, the words of an Islamologist jurisprudent can be trusted. ﴿to become learned ... and to warn﴾ (There may be one person in the region; so, the isolated tradition has authenticity)

Scholars should go to people and do not wait for their invitation. ﴿they return to them﴾ And should not expect absolute obedience of all people, since a group of people never join the way of religion and God. ﴿they may beware﴾

The Historical Migration of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.)

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا...﴾

﴿Indeed those who have believed and migrated and waged *jihād* with their possessions and persons in the way of Allah, and those who gave [them] shelter and help they are heirs of one another. As for those who have believed but did not migrate, you have no duty of friendship in relation to them whatsoever until they migrate...﴾ (Al-Anfāl, 72)

In the thirteenth year of the Prophetic Mission (*Bi'that*) and after ten years of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) open invitation to Islam, the polytheists of Makka had not yet stopped persecuting the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and the Muslims and even stepped up their pressure until they plotted to murder the Prophet with a calculated and collective attempt and to eradicate Islam.

With the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) being informed of the plot and 'Alī's (P.B.U.H.) self-sacrifice, the preliminary steps for migration were taken overnight and His Holiness first went to Ghār al-Thawr [cave of the bull] on the first of Rabi' al-Awwal and miraculously hid there for three days, during which only Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) prepared food and brought it along with the outside news to the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). Finally, on Imam 'Alī's recommendation

to proclaim migration to Yathrib and by bringing along the household of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) with him, His Holiness set off for Yathrib and after covering a distance of 400 km, they reached Qubā quarter on twelfth of Rabi' al-Awwal and the other emigrants joined them.

The people of Yathrib gave the emigrants a warm welcome and received them with open arms and changed the name of Yathrib to “Madīnat al-Nabi” and “Madīnat al-Rasūl”. Then, in order to prevent disunity among the Emigrants (*Muhājirān*) and Helpers (*Anṣār*), who were about three hundred, he made brotherhood contract between them two by two and built the Qubā Mosque.

The Emigrants are those who professed faith in the Prophet in Makka and since they were under pressure there, they abandoned their household and emigrated to Madīna with the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.); and the Helpers are Muslims of Madīna who received and assisted the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and the Emigrants among themselves.

The nations usually set the most important and the greatest event that happens in their social, scientific, and religious life and know it to be a turning point in their national incidents as the beginning of their calendar; for example, Christian calendar begins with the birth of Jesus Christ and the Arabian Calendar with Year of the Elephant (the year in which Abraha's Army attacked Makka and was destroyed).

Since Islam is the most complete Revealed Religion and at the same time independent of other religions, Muslims did not set the birth of Jesus Christ (P.B.U.H.) as the beginning

of their calendar, neither the Year of the Elephant, although it was the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) birth year, nor even the day of *Bi'that* of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). However, with the migration of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) to Madīna, where an independent rule was established and Muslims could freely act, the Prophet personally set up the Hijri Calendar. As the foundation of the Hijri year can be implied from the phrase, ﴿from the first day﴾ in the verse, ﴿A mosque founded on God wariness from the first day is worthier that you stand in it [for prayer].﴾¹⁰⁹ which is about the construction of Qubā Mosque, because the first step the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) took after migration to Madīna was to build Qubā Mosque. Indeed, if there had been no migration, most probably Islam would have been limited and destroyed there.

Actually, two migrations took place in the early Islam: in the fifth year of *Bi'that*, the migration of a group of Muslims to Abyssinia and the other one in the thirteenth year of *Bi'that*, the migration from Makka to Madīna.

Effects and Blessings

Most of our calamities originate from drowning in welfare and abandoning constructive migrations. If all the Muslim intellectuals, experts, and specialists living in Western countries migrated back to their own countries they would both deliver a blow on the enemy and strengthen Islam and the Islamic countries.

Migration is not exclusive to the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H. & H.H.); rather, migration from the land of polytheism, infidelity, and sins for safeguarding one's religion

and faith or for returning from disobedience of God is essential, as in response to those who accused the unhealthy environment for their own impurity and committing sins, saying, ﴿We were abased in the earth﴾ God says, ﴿But was not God's earth wide, so that you might have emigrated in it?﴾¹¹⁰ Given the phrase ﴿abased﴾, it is obvious that if there is the ability to command right and forbid wrong, this crucial task should be carried out, not leaving the society and trying to improve it.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, “When there is disobedience of God and committing sins in a land, migrate to another place.”¹¹¹

Migration for learning science and knowledge and for instructing one's knowledge to others is also necessary.¹¹²

Lesson 16

Interpretation of Sūrat al-Qadr

Migration for Religious Studies

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾﴾

﴿Indeed We sent it down on the Night of Ordainment (*Laylat al-Qadr*). What will show you what is the Night of Ordainment? The Night of Ordainment is better than a thousand months. In it the angels and the Spirit descend, by the leave of their Lord, with every command. It is peaceful until the rising of the dawn.﴾ (Al-Qadr, 1-5)

The word “*qadr*” is used in several meanings in the Qur’an:

A. The values and measure, as in the verse 74 of Sūrat al-*Hajj*: ﴿They measure not God with His true measure﴾

B. Being ordained, as in the verse 40 of Sūrat Ṭā Hā: ﴿Then you turned up as ordained, O’ Moses!﴾

C. Restriction and tightness, as in the verse 7 of Sūrat al-*Talāq*: ﴿he whose provision has been tightened﴾

The first two meanings befit *Laylat al-Qadr*, because the night of *Qadr* is both a night of value and the night of ordainment and fate.

Allah ordains affairs of one year on the night of *Qadr*, as the Qur'ān says in another verse, ﴿In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom.﴾¹¹³ Therefore, the night of *Qadr* is not restricted to the night of the Revelation of the Qur'ān and the era of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.); rather, there is a night of *Qadr* in every Ramaḍān, in which the affairs of the following year until the next night of *Qadr* are ordained and made distinct.

Staying awake on the night of *Qadr* and being engaged in supplication, prayer, and reciting the Qur'ān, is recommended by the Prophet and his Ahl al-Byat (P.B.U.T.), and the 23rd night has been emphasized most of all the three nights. As such, someone asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), “Our house is far from Madīna, tell me which night to come to town.” The Prophet answered, “Enter Madīna on the twenty third night.”¹¹⁴

While being sick, Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) asked to be taken to the mosque on the twenty third night.¹¹⁵ On this night, *Hadrat Zahrā* (P.B.U.H.) sprinkled water on the face of her children to keep them awake.¹¹⁶

It is related in a *ḥadīth* that the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) packed up his bed during the last ten days of Ramaḍān and stayed awake all those ten nights.¹¹⁷

We read in a long *ḥadīth* from the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.): “Prophet Moses (P.B.U.H.) said to God, ‘O’ Allah! I want Your status of proximity.’ The answer came, ‘My proximity is in staying awake on *Laylat al-Qadr*.’

He said, ‘I want Your mercy.’

The answer came, ‘My mercy is in being merciful to the poor on *Laylat al-Qadr*.’

He said, 'I want Your permission to pass over the *Ṣirāṭ* (the bridge over Hell leading to Paradise).'

The answer came, 'That belongs to one giving alms on *Laylat al-Qadr*.'

He said, 'I want Paradise and its blessings.'

The answer came, 'That belongs to the one glorifying on *Laylat al-Qadr*.'

He said, 'I want release from the Hellfire.' "The answer came, 'That belongs to the one glorifying on *Laylat al-Qadr*.'

In the end, he said, 'O' Allah! I am resigned to Your pleasure.' The answer came, 'My pleasure belongs to the one performing prayers on *Laylat al-Qadr*.'¹¹⁸

Of the amazing historical incidents is Imam 'Alī's (P.B.U.H.) being struck on the head in his prayer niche on *Laylat al-Qadr* while performing his morning prayer. Indeed, the noblest of Allah's creatures, was martyred in the noblest of places, on the noblest of the time, and in the noblest of positions.

The length of *Laylat al-Qadr* is a whole night of the globe that is 24 hours, rather than being restricted to a specific place like Makka and to only 8 hours of the night of that region.

The simultaneity of the night of ordaining humankind's destiny with the Revelation of the Qur'ān is perhaps the secret that man's destiny is dependent upon the Qur'ān. If they follow the Qur'ān, happiness and salvation are ordained for them and if they distance from it, mishap and misery are their destiny.

Abū Dhar says, "I asked the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) whether *Laylat al-Qadr* had existed in the time of the Prophets and the command (*amr*) revealed on them and when

they died, the revelation of the command on that night would have stopped.” He answered, ‘*Laylat al-Qadr* will exist until the Resurrection’.”

Perhaps the secrecy of *Laylat al-Qadr* being hidden is for the people to get engaged in worship on various nights, lest those who enjoyed one of its nights would not be proud and those who did not enjoy it would not become disappointed.

It is related in traditions, “The good deeds on the night of *Qadr* is better than the good deeds in a thousand months without a night of *Qadr*.¹¹⁹”

The preordainment of affairs on the night of *Qadr* takes place with descend and presence of the angels. ﴿the angels ... descent, ... with every command﴾

What is meant by *salām* in this verse is the special favor and blessing of Allah to His servants on this night that is followed by peace and mercy and blessing and closes the door of mishap and torment, since the Satan’s deception and plotting will have no effect on that night. On the night of *Qadr* the angels descend on the earth and say *salām* to every man and woman who is worshipping. So also on the Resurrection, they [the angels] welcome the people of Paradise by saying *salām*: ﴿Peace be upon you! Well you have fared; enter in, to dwell forever﴾

The Visage of Angels in the Qur’ān

1. The angels are honored servants. ﴿but they are honored servants﴾

2. They are infallible and obedient. ﴿who disobey not Allah in what He commands them and do what they are commanded﴾

3. The directing of affairs is handled by them. ﴿by those that direct an affair﴾; ﴿And those that distribute the affair﴾

4. They watch over man's words and utterances. ﴿not a word he utters﴾

5. They write down the deeds of the people of the world. ﴿And with them are Our messengers, writing down﴾

6. They give good tidings to warriors in battles and *jihād*, ﴿with forces you did not see﴾; answering to supplication and having a child, ﴿we give thee good tidings of a boy, whose name is John﴾; and giving good tidings at the moment of the death of the faithful, ﴿Do not fear, nor be grieved!﴾

7. They are commissioned to torment the criminals. ﴿When Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed on their account﴾

8. They are protectors of humankind. ﴿He sends guards to [protect] you﴾

9. They pray and ask for forgiveness for the faithful. ﴿and they plead for forgiveness for the faithful﴾

10. They intercede. ﴿How many an angel there is in the heavens whose intercession is of no avail in any way except after Allah grants permission to whomever He wishes and approves of!﴾

11. They curse the infidels. ﴿there shall be upon them the curse of Allah, the angels, and all mankind.﴾

12. They are aid workers of the battle fields. ﴿if you are steadfast and God-wary... your Lord will aid you with five thousand marked angels.﴾

13. They torment the criminals at their death. ﴿when the angels take them away, striking their faces and their back.﴾

14. They welcome the people of Paradise. ﴿Peace be to

you, for your patience. ﴿﴾

15. They are in charge of tormenting in the Hell. ﴿There are nineteen [keepers] over it.﴾

16. They are in charge of taking the souls. ﴿Our messengers take him away﴾

17. They have ranks and positions. ﴿None of us is there, but has a known station.﴾

18. They are in charge of Revelation. ﴿He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His Command.﴾

19. Sometimes they appear in the form of man. ﴿presented himself to her a man without fault﴾

20. They do not get tired of worship. ﴿They glorify Him... and grow not weary.﴾

21. They converse with other humans, too. ﴿I am only a messenger of your Lord that I may give you a pure son.﴾

22. Some of them are the chosen angels. ﴿Allah chooses messengers from angels﴾

23. Faith in angels is essential. ﴿and the faithful, each one believes in Allah and His angels, and in His Scriptures and His Apostles﴾, ﴿Whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels, His Books and His apostles and the Last Day, has certainly strayed into far error.﴾

It is advised in traditions to debate with the opponents of Imamate by *Sūrat al-Qadr*. Because, according to this *sūra*, the angels descend every night at the night of *Qadr*. During the lifetime of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), they descended upon his noble presence. Whom do they descend after his demise?

It is obvious that not everyone can host the Divine angels and the host must, like a prophet, be infallible and able to

undertake the guardianship of man's affairs; and that person is no one but the Infallible Imam, who is Imam Mahdī (P.B.U.H.) in our time and the angels seek audience with his noble presence.

Lesson 17

Divine Decrees

Different Types of Divine Decrees

﴿يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ﴾

﴿Allah effaces and confirms whatever He wishes and with Him is the Mother Book.﴾ (Al-Ra'd, 39)

Based on the verses and traditions, there are two types of Divine decrees:

A. Affairs that have permanent expedience, therefore their law is also permanent. Like verses, ﴿The Word changes not with Me﴾, ﴿Every single thing is with Him, in [due] proportion.﴾ These kinds of decrees are recorded in the Guarded Tablet¹²⁰ and only those brought near to Allah can become aware of them. ﴿It is a written record, witnessed by those brought near [to Allah].﴾

B. Affairs that are dispensable and their expediencies are subject to people's actions and behaviors, like people's repenting of sin which is followed by expedience of forgiveness; or giving alms, which is followed by the expedience of repelling calamities; or tyranny and oppression, which due to its being evil is followed by Divine wrath. That

is to say, the Almighty Allah's hand is not tied up in administering the order of creation; and with His infinite wisdom and knowledge, He can bring about changes in creation and its laws by changing the circumstances. It is obvious that these changes are not a sign of the Almighty Allah's ignorance or His change of opinion and regret; rather, these changes are based on wisdom and change of circumstances and the end of that command's period.

The Qur'ān has many examples in this field, including:

1. ﴿Call Me, and I will answer you﴾. Man can achieve his expediencies and change his destiny by lamentation and supplication.

2. ﴿maybe Allah will bring about something new later on﴾; Divine law is not the same everywhere, maybe by emergence of the required conditions, Allah creates a new plan.

3. ﴿Every day He is engaged in some work﴾.

4. ﴿When they swerved, God caused their hearts to swerve﴾.

5. ﴿If the people of the towns had been faithful and God-wary, We would have opened to them blessings﴾; by faithfulness and God-wariness Allah's wrath turns into favor and blessings.

6. ﴿Indeed Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their souls﴾.

7. ﴿save him who repents, and believes, and does righteous work, for those, Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds﴾.

8. ﴿if you return [to disobedience], We shall return [to punishment]﴾.

Of course, Allah's knowledge is based on the cause and

effect system, that is, He has the knowledge that if this means is used, this result will be achieved and if that other means is used, that result will come up.

What is *Badā'*

What Shī'a means by *badā'* (modification) is the happening of something that we, human beings, presumed it otherwise, but it does not mean an alteration in Divine knowledge and discovering something opposite to God's decree. Thus, *badā'* means our ignorance, rather than God's.

Badā' in creation is like abrogation in law; like, when we imagine from the appearance of a law that it is permanent, but later on we find out it has changed. Actually, this is not due to the law-maker's repentance or ignorance; rather, circumstances have caused this change in the law, just like a prescription that the physician gives a patient according to their current state, but as soon as their state changes, he gives them a new prescription.

Following are some examples of *badā'* in the Qur'ān.

1. We imagined when Allah commanded Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) to slaughter his son, He wanted to have Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) killed and his blood shed, but later on it was revealed that Allah had willed to test the father, rather than to kill the son.

2. We imagined from the appointment of Allah with Prophet Moses (P.B.U.H.) that the period for the intimate supplication was thirty nights, ﴿And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights﴾; but later on it was revealed that from the beginning it was forty nights but Allah had announced it in two stages for trial, first thirty nights and

then ten more nights.

3. We thought the Muslims' *qibla* would always be Jerusalem, but the verses about change of *qibla* revealed to us that the permanent *qibla* had been Ka'ba.

4. When the signs of Allah's wrath appeared, even Prophet Jonah (P.B.U.H.) was reassured that Divine chastisement would descend and his infidel folk would be destroyed. Thus, he left people, but people believed and Divine wrath was removed. ﴿Except the people of Jonah; when they believed, We removed from them the chastisement﴾

Anyhow, the meaning of *badā'* is not Allah's ignorance and the change of His knowledge, since from the beginning Allah knew that the blood of Ishmael (P.B.U.H.) would not be shed, Moses would fast forty nights and forty nights when he went up to the mount Sinai, the Muslims' permanent *qibla* would be Ka'ba, and the folk of Jonah would be the people of salvation, but the commands and events appeared in such a way that one imagined otherwise. Then, no change has been made in Allah's knowledge; it is us who have found a new vision.

In this meaning, *badā'* is of many educational effects, including the fact that to the end of his life man remains hopeful of the change of conditions; the spirit of trust revives in him, he is not captivated by superficialities, and his faith in the unseen and in the power of the Almighty Allah increases. With repentance, alms, supplication, and prayer, he tries to change the course of events and Divine wrath.

Lesson 18

People of the Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*)

Verse of Purification

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

﴿Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O' People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.﴾ (Al-Aḥzāb, 33)

The word ﴿Indeed﴾ indicates that the noble verse is talking about an exceptional blessing in respect to the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.).

What is meant by ﴿desires﴾ is a creational volition, because Allah's legislative volition is purity for all people rather than just for the Prophet's Household (P.B.U.T.).

What is meant by ﴿impurity﴾ is any kind of external and internal impurity.

What is meant by ﴿*Ahl al-Bayt*﴾ is not all the household of the Prophet; rather, it is some members of it, whose names are mentioned in both Sunnī and Shī'a traditions. This group includes: 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn (P.B.U.T.).

Question: What is the reason for this selectiveness? And why is this part of the verse not about all the wives of the

Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) or all his household?

Answer: 1. There are traditions narrated from the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) wives, even from Ā'isha and Umm Salama that they asked the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), "Are we among the *Ahl al-Bayt*?" The Prophet said, "No."

2. We read in various traditions that the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) placed a mantle over the heads of these five persons (one of whom was himself) and said, "These are people of my household," and did not permit others to enter.

3. In order to prove the restriction of *Ahl al-Bayt* to five people, for six months (or eight or nine months), when the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) passed by the house of Fātima (P.B.U.H.) at the morning prayer time, he would say, "It is prayer time O *Ahl al-Bayt*! Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O' People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification."

In *Iḥqāq al-Ḥaq*, more than seventy *ḥadīths* are mentioned from Sunnī sources about the exclusion of the noble verse to five people; and in *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, one of renowned Sunnī books, over one hundred and thirty traditions are related in this regard.¹²¹

In any case, this verse does not include the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) wives, because:

They sometimes committed sins. We read in Sūrat al-Taḥrīm: The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) entrusted a secret to one of his wives, she did not keep it a secret and told it to another. The Qur'ān called this action a sin, saying, ﴿If the two of you repent to Allah... for your hearts have certainly swerved.﴾¹²²

Being the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) wife, Ā'isha started

the battle of Jamal against Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) and then repented; nevertheless, a great number of Muslims were killed in this battle.

Answering Misconceptions

1. Doesn't ﴿purify you﴾ mean that the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) had been impure and Allah has purified them?

Answer: impurity is not a precondition for purification, because the Qur’ān has used the term ﴿purified﴾ for the houris of Paradise, whereas they have no impurity whatsoever. In other words, ﴿purify you﴾ means keeping purified, rather than purifying from previous impurity.

2. If the *Ahl al-Bayt* are only five in number, why is this verse between the verses in relation to the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.)?

Answer: A. The statement, ﴿Indeed Allah desires to ...﴾ is revealed separately but when compiling the Qur’ān, it had been placed here.

B. According to *Tafsīr Majma‘ al-Bayān*, the Arab rhetoricians, poets, and literati had the custom to bring up a new and important subject amidst the ordinary matters to increase its impact. Like for instance, if in the middle of the news, all of a sudden the anchorperson says, “Listen to the news that we just received”, this kind of speech creates a kind of psychological and publicity shock.

Similar to this verse is the third verse of Sūrat al-Mā’ida, in which the subject about *Wilāya*, Imamate, perfection of religion, completion of blessing, despair of the faithless, and Divine approval is revealed along with the rulings about the flesh of swine and blood and this kind of incorporation is the

secret of preserving the Qur’ān from the manipulation of the incompetent. Just as when leaving home, women hide their jewelry amidst the cotton of their pillows! Although the gold and cotton have no relation, this is done to preserve it from the burglars!

C. Amid the recommendations made to the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), all of a sudden the Qur’ān says, “O’ Wives of the Prophet! You are in the same house as are the Infallibles (P.B.U.T.) and you have to be more God-wary.

D. The plural masculine pronoun is used about the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.), which indicates the majority of men, contrary to the statements about the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), in which the plural feminine pronouns have been used. ﴿يُؤْتِكُمْ أَقْرَبَ - عَنكُمْ، بِطَهْرِكُمْ﴾

Belonging to the Family or not

In the verse 46 of Sūrat Hūd, Allah states the Noah’s (P.B.U.H.) son not belonging to his family, ﴿Said He, “O’ Noah! Indeed He is not of your family. Indeed he is [personification of] unrighteous conduct...”﴾ There are many traditions related to us from the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and Imams (P.B.U.T.) that begin with this phrase, “He is not of us”. For instance, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Anyone who betrays a Muslim is not of us.” Or, he said, “The one whom people respect out of fear is not of me. Yet, in another tradition, he is quoted as saying, “Whoever is not thinking of serving Muslims every morning is not a Muslim.”

We read in traditions, “Verily, the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) friend is the one who is obedient to Allah, although he

has no relation to His Holiness; the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) enemy is the one who is disobedient to Allah, although he is one of the close relatives of His Holiness.”

Lesson 19

Love of the *Ahl al-Bayt*

Reward for the Prophetic Message (*Risāla*)

﴿قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَمَن يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ﴾

﴿Say, “I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.” Whoever performs a good deed, We shall enhance for him its goodness. Indeed Allah is all-forgiving, all-appreciative.﴾ (Al-Shūrā, 23)

It is frequently mentioned in the Qur’ān that the Prophets did not ask people for any reward; in Sūrat al-Shūrā, from verse 100 to 180 this issue is quoted from various Prophets. The Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), did not ask any reward from people either, but was tasked twice by Allah with the word “say” to ask people for the spiritual reward that was to their own benefit.

This spiritual reward has also been phrased in two ways; once he says, ﴿“I do not ask you any reward for it, except that anyone who wishes should take the way to his Lord,”¹²³﴾ and once again he says, ﴿I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.﴾ And in verse 47 of Sūrat Saba’

considers the outcome and benefit of asking for *mawidda* (love) to be for the good of the people themselves, ﴿Say, “Whatever reward I may have asked you is for your own good. My [true] reward lies only with Allah, and He is witness to all things.﴾

Thus, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) declares, “If I ask you for reward and say love my *Ahl al-Bayt*, it is because the benefit of this goes back to yourselves.” ﴿It is for your own good﴾ because anyone who loves the Infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), will follow them, and whoever follows the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.), has indeed followed Allah. ﴿Except that anyone who wishes should take the way to his Lord﴾, like a teacher who tells his students, “I do not want any reward from you, except that you study my lessons well,” the benefit of which will go to the students themselves. Therefore, the reward for *Risāla* is twofold: one is choosing the Path of Allah and the other is love of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.). Interestingly enough, in both phrases the word “except” is used, meaning my reward is just in this.

With a little deliberation, we find out that the Path of Allah and love of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) must be the same, because if they are two, they are contradictive; that is, we cannot say, “I only study in summer” and once again say, “I only study in winter.” Because, the limitation has to be the same.

The Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was once commissioned by Allah to say to people, “My reward is only choosing the Path of Allah;” and once again was commissioned to say, “My reward is the love of my relatives.” In fact, these two requests have to be the same; that is, the

Path of Allah is the same as love of my relatives.

On the other hand, love (*mawadda*) is concomitant with two things: one is cognition and knowledge, because so far as one does not know someone, one cannot love them. The second is obedience and following; because love without obedience is a kind of pretention, hypocrisy, lie, and flattery. Thus, those who receive commands from other than the Prophet's *Ahl al-Bayt*, (P.B.U.T.), have not taken the Path of Allah. This is the Qur'an's perspective.

As from the reason's perspective, reward has to be coordinate with and proportionate to the action. *Risāla* has no coordinate other than Imamate, which is its continuation; the reward for *Risāla* is to continue the guidance; the reward of an Imam is to relegate his task to another Imam; the reward of a just person is to entrust the outcome of his efforts to another just person.

The reason says, "As long as there is favor, there must be thanks too." And if today we enjoy the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) favor and we are guided to Islam, we should pay for his *Risāla*; and if the reward for the *Risāla* is love of his relatives, there must be a relative today too, toward whom to have love and obedience. Indeed, today we have to have *mawadda* toward Imam Mahdī (P.B.U.H.) and to be obedient to him. Is it possible to say that the Muslims of the early Islam were tasked to pay for *Risāla* and have *mawadda* toward the relatives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), but the Muslims of today do not have this duty or there is no relative to have *mawadda* toward and pay for the *Risāla* to? Of course, *mawadda* toward Imam Mahdī (P.B.U.H.) during his occultation is acting on his messages and walking on the path

of those to whom we are entrusted, that is, the just and selfless jurists.

From the fact that love of *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) is the reward of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) who has caused hundreds of million people to receive guidance, happiness, and Divine grace, the human reason understands that the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (P.B.U.T.) and those who are to be loved are the best of humankind and innocence. Because, love of the sinful, would never be declared as reward for the Infallible Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). It cannot be believed that the *mawadda* of sinful people to be incumbent upon the Muslims of the world throughout history; and not any sect of the Muslims (other than the Shī'a) consider their leaders as infallible and not a single person or group have so far mentioned any sin for the Infallible Imams, nor have they mentioned a master for those noble figures.

The reason says, "Putting the hands of man in the hand of the non-infallible is not only wronging to the humanity, but wronging the whole realm of being, too." Because the realm of being has been created for the sake of man (all the verses asserting ﴿created for you﴾, ﴿subjected to you﴾, ﴿a provision for you﴾ indicate that the realm of being is for man) and man for real, spiritual, and Godly evolution. So, isn't entrusting this man with all those sublime goals to non-infallible leaders, wronging him and the realm of being?

If in the traditions, the Infallible Imam and his *Wilāya* is known as the substructure and basis of religion, "Islam is based on five... *al-Wilāya*;"¹²⁴ if Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) is introduced as the "divider of people among Paradise and Hell;"¹²⁵ if the prayer without *Wilāya* is not accepted;¹²⁶ if the

love of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) is a noble virtue;¹²⁷ and if their pilgrimage and appealing to them are recommended, it is all because of that alchemical essence of *mawadda*.

Zamakhsharī and Fakhr Rāzī, the great Sunnī figures, have related in their interpretations that the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said,

❖ “Whoever dies while in love of the household of Muḥammad, dies as a martyr.”

❖ “Whoever dies while in love of the household of Muḥammad, dies as repentant.”

❖ “Whoever dies while in love of the household of Muḥammad, dies in perfect faith.”

❖ “Whoever dies while in love of the household of Muḥammad, dies according to the Prophet’s *sunna* and *sīra*.”

Now, the question arises as to whether *mawadda* without obedience can be parallel to martyrdom, forgiveness, and perfect faith?

There is a *ḥadīth* in these interpretations and under this verse quoting the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) as saying, “Verily, whoever dies despising the household of Muḥammad, will enter the Resurrection while it is written between his eyes, ‘he is disappointed and deprived of Allah’s mercy’.”

“Verily, whoever dies despising the household of Muḥammad, dies infidel.”

“Verily, whoever dies despising the household of Muḥammad, dies while not smelling the fragrance of Paradise.”

Fakhr Rāzī has related in his interpretation, “As soon as the verse of *mawadda* was revealed, the Holy Prophet

(P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was asked, ‘Who are the relatives, whose love is obligatory to us?’ His Holiness said, “Alī, Fāṭima, and her children.’ Then he adds that His Holiness said, “Fāṭima is a part of me, whoever torments her, has tormented me.” And the punishment of those who torment the Apostle of Allah is described in the Qur’ān as, ﴿Indeed those who torment Allah and His Apostle are cursed by Allah in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them.﴾¹²⁸

We read in a *ḥadīth* that under the statement, ﴿Whoever performs a good deed, We shall enhance for him its goodness.﴾ Imam al-Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.), said, “Performing a good deed is the love of us, *Ahl al-Bayt*.”¹²⁹

Lesson 20

Imamate and *Wilāya*

The Last Message of the Prophet of Islam

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

﴿O' Messenger! Deliver that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have delivered His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot.﴾ (Al-Mā'ida, 67)

All through the Qur'ān, it is only in this verse that the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) has been warned against hiding the message, that if you do not, all that you have said in your 23 years of *Risāla* will be wasted.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said to Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.), “If I do not communicate to people what is [revealed to me] about your *Wilāya*, all my actions will be effaced.

In this verse, several points clarify its contextual orientation:

1. Sūrat al-Mā'ida was revealed toward the end of the Prophet's noble life.

2. Instead of “O' Prophet”, the phrase ﴿O' Messenger﴾ (O'

Rasūl) is used, which indicates an important *Risāla*.

3. Instead of *ablagh*, the stressed wording *balligh* (deliver) is used, which indicates an important formal announcement.

4. The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) is threatened for not delivering an important message that if he fails to deliver, all his efforts will be useless.

5. The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) is not afraid of his life; because he was not afraid of dangers during his lonely battle against the idols and while he was in war with the polytheists (when he was being stoned, and his companions were being tortured. Should he fear now at the end of his life and among so many companion?!).

6. The message of the verse is not about Monotheism, Prophethood, and Resurrection, since these principles were stated in the early days of *Bi'that* in Makka and does not need so much emphasis at the end of his holy life.

7. The message of the verse is not even about prayer, fasting, *Hajj*, *zakāt*, *khums*, and *jihād*; since these were stated during 23 years of the Prophet's calling and the people have acted on them, no fear being involved.

All Shī'a interpreters, and some Sunnī interpreters have known one of the referents of this verse related to the *Wilāya* and Imamate of Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) on the 18th of Dhu'l Hijja, 10 A.H./16 March, 632 C.E. during the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) "Farewell Pilgrimage" and the *ḥadīth*, "Whoever I am the master of, Ali is also the master of" and have released us from bewilderment and shown us the way.

Imam al-Bāqir (P.B.U.H.) said, "Islam is founded on five things: prayer, *zakāt*, fasting, *Hajj*, and *Wilāya* of *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.); and nothing has been as more emphasized than

Wilāya; but people adopted the other four and abandoned the fifth, the *Wilāya*!”

Wilāya; The Perfection of Religion and Completion of Risāla

﴿الْيَوْمَ يَبْسُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاَحْسِنُوا الْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَاَقَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْاِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

﴿Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion. (Al-Mā’ida, 3)

According to the traditions of the Shi‘a and Sunnī, this part of the verse: ﴿Today I have perfected...﴾ has been revealed after the appointment of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (P.B.U.H.) to Imamate in Ghadīr al-Khum.

Without considering the traditional evidences, the intellectual analysis would confirm it too, because four significant reasons have been stated for it: 1. The day of the faithless’ despair, 2. The day of the religion’s perfection, 3. The day of completion of Divine blessing upon people, 4. The day when Islam was approved by Allah as “Religion” and a perfect school. No other important days such as the *Bi’that*, *Hijra*, the conquest of Makka, victories in the battles, and so forth, with all their value are not included in these four significant features brought up in this verse. Therefore, it is only the day of Ghadīr al-Khum, with which the four features mentioned in the above verses are consistent:

✦ As for the despair of the faithless; it is because when accusations, wars, and attempt upon the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) life were unsuccessful, their only hope was the death

of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). The appointment of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (P.B.U.H.) made everyone understand that with his death his religion would not be effaced, because someone like ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (P.B.U.H.) would be the successor to the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and leader of the Muslim nation. It was here that all the faithless despaired.

✦ As for perfection of religion; it is because if perfect rules and regulations are devised but no infallible and perfect leader is appointed for the nation and society, the rules are incomplete.

✦ As for completion of blessing; it is because the Qur’ān has introduced the greatest blessing to be the blessing of leadership and guidance; if the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) departed from the world and left the people without a supervisor, he has indeed done something that even a shepherd doesn’t do to his herd.

✦ As for Allah’s approving; it is because whenever a perfect law and an executor of justice are tied together, Allah’s approval will be achieved.

For these reasons (perfection of religion, completion of blessing, God’s approval, and the despair of the faithless), ‘Īd al-Ghadīr is counted as one the greatest feasts in the traditions of *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.).

The effects of things are sometimes derived from the integration of all its components; like fasting, that if we break it even one moment before the prayer call, it is invalid. That is why the word “complete” is used, ﴿complete the fast until nightfall﴾; and sometimes it is in such a way that each component has its own effect; like recitation of the verses of the Qur’ān, whose perfection is in reciting all of it, but the

more it is recited, the more rewarded it is. Sometimes some components are in such a way that if they do not exist, a collection will be incomplete, although all other components are available, like a pilot and a driver without whom the plane and car are useless. The leadership and the *Wilāya* of the Truth are also like this, since they associate man to God and without them the creatures and the blessings turn into tribulations and do not take man to God.

Who does *Wilāya* Belong to?

﴿إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ﴾

☞ Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the *zakāt* while bowing down. ☞ (Al-Mā'ida, 55)

It is related from the Shī'a and Sunnī sources concerning the cause of Revelation of the above verse, "A beggar entered the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) Mosque and asked people for help. No one gave him anything. While praying and in *rukū'* (bending down prior to prostration), Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) gave his ring to that man. This verse was revealed to honor this donation."¹³⁰

For stating the status of 'Alī (P.B.U.H.), the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) recited this verse in Ghaldir al-Khum. Also, 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) himself frequently recited this verse for proving his rightfulness.

Indeed, the best introduction is the one that recounts the attributes and characteristics of someone and the addressees themselves find the evidence. (Without naming 'Alī (P.B.U.H.), the verse introduces his attributes and actions)

Wilāyat al-Faqīh (guardianship of the jurisprudent) is in

line with the *Wilāya* of the Infallible Imam. We read in an approved *ḥadīth* (*maqḅūla*) by ‘Umar b. al-Ḥanzala who has quoted Imam al-Ṣādiq’s (P.B.U.H.) as saying, “Look at the one who relates our *ḥadīth*, looks into our lawful and unlawful, and knows our rulings. Then, be content with his governance, as I appointed him governing you.”

Lesson 21

The Lord of the Time

Allah's Successors in the World

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

﴿Allah has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made those who were before them successors, and He will surely establish for them their religion which He has approved for them, and that He will surely change their state to security after their fear, while they worship Me, not ascribing any partners to Me. And whoever is ungrateful after that it is they who are the transgressors.﴾
(Al-Nūr, 55)

We read in many traditions from the Infallible Imams, “The full referent of this verse is government of Imam Mahdī (P.B.U.H.).”

The final rule of the pious is time and again asserted in the Qur’ān, including three times stating, ﴿that He may make it prevail over all religions﴾, that is, Islam will win over all

religions. It states in another verse, ﴿Indeed My righteous servants shall inherit the earth.﴾ Yet, we read in another verse, ﴿and the outcome will be in favor of the God-wary.﴾

What is meant by the faithful and righteous successors is either succession granted by Allah or succession to the perished corrupt folks.

In his interpretation, Qurṭubī relates several *ḥadīths* concerning the full victory of Islam and says, “There will be no house on the earth, except that Islam will enter it.”

In his last *Hajj* pilgrimage on the way back from Makka in Ghadīr al-Khum, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) made ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) his successor by the order of Allah; the verse was revealed, today ﴿I have approved Islam as your religion.﴾ In this verse, Allah’s promise is for the victory of the religion that He has approved; ﴿their religion for them that He has approved for them﴾ and the religion that Allah has approved and announced is the school of Ghadīr al-Khum.

The messages that are derived from this verse are:

1. Islam is the future religion of the world. The future of history is to the benefit of the faithful and failure of the dominance of the faithless. ﴿Allah has promised... He will surely establish for them their religion﴾

2. Give hope to the faithful oppressed that the pressures and hardships not to disappoint them. ﴿Allah has promised those of you who have faith﴾

3. The key and secret of the competence for holding the widespread rule of Truth is only faith and righteous deeds. ﴿those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds﴾ the promise for victory is given to those who have faith and do righteous deeds, not to those who only have faith.

4. Religion is not separate from politics; rather, politics and government are for preserving religion. ﴿He will surely make them successors... while they worship Me﴾

5. In propagation and guidance of people, stating examples of the past history is useful to make them believe. ﴿just as He made those who were before them successors﴾

6. The ultimate victory of the people of Truth is a Divine precedent. ﴿just as He made those who were before them successors﴾

7. The purpose for the victory and rule of the faithful is the establishment of Divine religion in the earth and achievement of full Monotheism and security. ﴿He will surely establish for them their religion – that He will surely change their state – not ascribing any partners﴾

8. Islam is the only religion approved by Allah. ﴿their religion which He has approved for them﴾

9. Real security is in the shadow of the rule of religion. ﴿and that He will surely change their state to security after their fear﴾

10. Even in the rule of the righteous, some will be deviated, too. ﴿Allah has promised... And whoever is ungrateful after that﴾

Allah's Remainder

In the traditions, any blessed being that will remain for humanity by Allah's will is called Allah's remainder (*Baqiyyat Allāh*); including the faithful soldiers who victoriously return from the battle front, because they have survived by Allah's will.

The Imam of the Time (May Allah hasten his noble

reappearance) is also called *Baqiyyat Allāh*, because his noble being is remained and preserved by the Allah's will for the guidance of people.

We read in the traditions that one of the blessed names of that holy presence is *Baqiyyat Allāh* and we salute him by this name of his: "Peace be Upon You O' Remainder of Allah in His Earth."

When His Holiness reappears in Makka, he will recite verse 86 of Sūrat Hūd, ﴿Allah's remainder is better for you, if you are believers﴾ and will say, "I am ﴿Allah's remainder﴾."

Of course, other Imams (P.B.U.H.) have also been called ﴿Allah's remainder﴾, as well.

Lesson 22

Intercession

Intercession and its Preconditions

﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا﴾

﴿On that Day shall no intercession avail except for those for whom permission has been granted by the Most Gracious and whose word is acceptable to Him.﴾ (Tā Hā, 109)

Since denying intercession is contrary to the Qur'ān and traditions and is a cause of disappointment for the faithful sinners, and the unconditional acceptance of intercession would also embolden the offenders and is contrary to the Divine justice, the Holy Qur'ān has considered certain preconditions and rules for intercession.

Form the Qur'ān's point of view, intercession is a ray of hope for the sinners and a means for their connection to the Friends of Allah and obeying them.

Intercession is Allah's permission and the ones enjoying intercession are only those who are in the circle of Monotheism, have sound logic, true beliefs; and their speech is accepted by Allah. That is, their two testimonies (professing faith and Prophethood) are not situational, seasonal, reluctant,

superficial, and based on ridicule and hypocrisy. In this case, if they are lacking in practice, they will be favored by intercession.

Thus, the Qur'an has considered the intercession of the idols for the idolaters invalid in this world and the Hereafter.

Intercession does not mean that Prophet Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was sacrificed for the clearance of his followers' sins or Imam al-Husayn was martyred for interceding for the Shi'as, although the Imam is among the great intercessors on the Resurrection Day. However, it should be known that his martyrdom has not been for interceding for his followers.

Imam al-Baqir (P.B.U.H.) said about this verse, "The Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) intercession is only for those who are approved in terms of practice and speech and have lived and died with the love of the Prophet's Household (P.B.U.T.)."¹³¹

Intercessors and those Interceded

﴿وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي سَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى﴾

﴿How many an angel there is in the heavens whose intercession avails not anything, save after that God gives permission to whomever He wishes and approves of.﴾ (Al-Najm, 26)

We read in the Qur'an and the traditions that Allah gives permission to some people to intercede for others.

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). We read in a tradition from the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) who said, "I am the first intercessor (for my *umma*)."¹³²

The Qur'an. Amīr al-Muminīn - 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, "On the Resurrection Day, the Qur'an is among the intercessors."¹³³

The Prophets. It is related in traditions that on the Resurrection Day, the Prophets will intercede.¹³⁴

The Infallible Imams (P.B.U.H.) and the true Shī'as. We read in a tradition from the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.) that, "On the Resurrection, intercession will belong to us and our Shī'as."¹³⁵

Angels and martyrs. On the Resurrection Day, the angels and martyrs are permitted to intercede (for whomever they wish)¹³⁶, "On the Resurrection, every martyr will intercede for seventy people from among his family."¹³⁷

Worship. Among the means of intercession will be the servants' worship. "Fasting and the Qur'an will be intercessor for the servants on the Resurrection Day."¹³⁸

The Qualifications of those Interceded

The Qur'an and traditions introduce those who have the following qualifications as included among the interceded:

A. Should be among the people of faith, prayer, giving alms in the way of Allah, and not having wasted their lives.

﴿Then will no intercession of (any) intercessors profit them.﴾

B. Allah should have permitted their being interceded.

﴿Who is it that may intercede with Him except with His permission?﴾¹³⁹

C. Should depart from the world in faith.

D. There should be a relation between the interceded and the intercessor. The one who is not in ideological relation with the intercessors is not included among the interceded.

Question: Is intercession a kind of favoritism?

Answer: No, never. Because:

A. Only those who have created the competence for

intercession by their thoughts and actions will be interceded. Therefore, contrary to favoritism, intercession has its rules and regulations.

B. No right is violated in intercession; but in favoritism the rights of others is violated.

C. The intercessor does not expect anything from the interceded; contrary to favoritism, in which the person who gets the job done will have expectations.

D. The intercessor's purpose is salvation for the interceded; but the purpose in favoritism is worldly prosperity.

E. Intercession is a means for education and growth, because the interceded makes a spiritual connection to the Friends of Allah, who are the intercessors.

Question: Does intercession encourages human beings to commit sins?

Answer: Never, because, first, it is not clear who is interceded; and second, does making medicine for detoxification encourages human beings to get poisoned and to take poison?!

Lesson 23

Sins and Disobedience

Different Kinds of Sins

﴿الَّذِينَ يَحْتَسِبُونَ كِبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ﴾

Those who avoid major sins and indecencies, except for minor [and occasional] offenses. Indeed your Lord is expansive in His forgiveness [toward them]. ﴿ (Al-Najm, 32)

Any sin is called indecency (*fāhisha*), like adultery.

Many meanings have been given for *lamam*, including:

1. A sin committed unwilling and not insisted.
2. A sin decided upon but not put into action.
3. A sin after which, there is apologizing and repenting.
4. A sin for which no punishment is promised.
5. A sin for committing of which no limit is set.

Disobedience to Allah's command, whatever it is, is gross; however, all sins are not the same. Some sins, such as lying and backbiting, are more disgusting and are more severely punished. In addition, the time, place, and purpose of sin; one's knowledge and ignorance of the sin, one's insistence and non-insistence of committing the sin are all effective on it.

Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, “The worst sin is that which one takes as light or small.”

Imam al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) has listed the major sins as follows: homicide, adultery, theft, drinking, dissatisfaction of and disobedience to one’s parents, fleeing the battlefield, tyrannical appropriation of the orphans’ property; eating carrion, blood, pork, and animals slaughtered not in the name of God; usury, bribery, gambling, using short weights and measures, slandering pious women (of adultery), sodomy, untrue witnessing, despairing of God’s mercy, considering oneself immune from Divine punishment, disappointment of Divine mercy, helping and relying on the tyrants, perjury, misappropriation and infringing others’ rights, lying, arrogance, extravagance, squandering, treason, negligence in performing *Hajj*, enmity with Friends of Allah, indulgence in play and diversion, and insisting on sins.

Some elements and conditions change the minor sins to major ones, including: insistence on minor sins, to make light of sins, rejoicing when committing sins, committing sins out of rebellion, become proud of Divine respites, committing sins openly, the sins by the noble and eminent people.

The Effects and Aftermaths of Sins

Sins and disobedience have many bad effects on the soul and psyche of the individual, family, and society; on place and time; and on one’s progeny, including: pangs of conscience, (the sin of opposing the intellect, inner nature, and conscience), hardness of the heart, depriving of blessings, rejection of supplication, alteration of sustenance, depriving of devotional acts such as mid-night prayer, sudden catastrophe,

cease of rainfall, destruction of the one's house, infamy and misery, shortening of life, earthquake, poverty, sorrow and illness, dominance of the mischievous, and so on, which are detailed in many verses and traditions.

The Ways of Compensating for Sins

1. Repentance and compensating for evils. ﴿Except for those who repent, come to faith, and act righteously. For such, Allah will replace their misdeeds with good deeds﴾

2. Faith and righteous deeds. ﴿As for those who have faith and do righteous deeds, We will absolve them of their misdeeds﴾

3. Asking forgiveness for oneself and others. ﴿...pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them﴾

4. Prayer. ﴿Perform the prayer... Indeed good deeds efface misdeeds﴾

5. Avoiding major sins. ﴿If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden, We will absolve you of your misdeeds﴾

6. Participation in *jihād* and martyrdom. ﴿and those who fought and were killed I will surely absolve them of their misdeeds﴾

7. Alms-giving and helping the poor. “Secret alms-giving absolves sins.”

8. Solving people's problems. “One of the atonements for the Major sins is seeing into people's problems.”

9-11. Saying *salām*, giving food, and mid-night prayer (*tahajjud*). “There are three atonements: saying *salām*, giving food, and saying mid-night prayers while people are asleep.

12. Reciting *ṣalawāt* (pronouncing a benediction upon the Holy Prophet – P.B.U.H. & H.H.). “This would eliminate any sin.”

Asking for Forgiveness

﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

﴿Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who were our forerunners in the faith.﴾ (Al-Ḥaṣhr, 10)

Asking for forgiveness (*istighfār*) is like coming out of a deep well and repentance is moving away from sins.

Asking for forgiveness is washing off the sins and repentance is a return to the purity of the heart.

The Divine Prophets were men of *istighfār* themselves and advised people to it too: ﴿Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then repent to Him﴾

We should ask for forgiveness and also ask the Friends of Allah to ask forgiveness for us. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “My death and life are both good for you; in my life, Allah removes torments from you; and after my death, by presenting your deeds to me, you will be granted goodness by my asking forgiveness for you.”

﴿Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful.﴾ (Al-Nisā’, 64)

As the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) pleading for the faithful is fulfilled, ﴿the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them﴾, the pleading of the good people and angels is also effective. On one occasion, the angels ask forgiveness for

people, ﴿the angels proclaim the praise of their Lord, and ask forgiveness for those on the earth﴾, and on another, for the faithful. ﴿and they ask for forgiveness for the faithful﴾

Pilgrimage to the Heavenly leaders and pleading and invoking Allah through them are confirmed by the Qur'ān.

Surely, the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) is not the forgiver of sins; he is actually the intermediary for Allah's forgiveness. Therefore, the wrongdoer should first repent and return to Allah and then ask the Messenger (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) to help for reinforcing their relation to Allah.

﴿But Allah will not punish them while you are in their midst, nor will Allah punish them while they plead for forgiveness. (Al-Anfāl, 33)﴾

What is meant by not punishing them in the above verse is removing the general punishment, like the punishment of the previous nations, from the Muslims with the blessing of the presence of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.); otherwise, some people in some special cases have been seized by Divine punishment.

Disobedience and committing some sins are among the causes of descending tragedies and Divine punishment, the way to compensate for it is repentance. ﴿nor will Allah punish them while they plead for forgiveness﴾ or ﴿Your Lord would never destroy the townships unjustly while their inhabitants were bringing about reform.﴾

It is related in *ḥadīths* that for the sake of some purified people and Divinely endowed men, Allah would remove hardships and punishment from others. As in the story of the destruction of the people of Lot, Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) told the angels in charge of punishment, ﴿Lot is indeed in it﴾;

that is, will you destroy it despite the presence of a man of God there?! The angels said, “We know that Lot is there; we have ordered him to leave the place.”

Similarly, Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said after the demise of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), “One of the two safeguards departed from us, preserve the other one that is *istighfār*.”

Furthermore, Imam al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) said to Zakariyya b. Ādam, “Stay in Qum, because as Allah removed calamity and punishment from Baghdad for the sake of Imam al-Kāzīm (P.B.U.H.), He will remove calamity from that city for your sake as well.”

Istighfār prevents calamities. Repentance and *istighfār* are of special importance with God, as it can alter the destiny of a nation, too. ﴿nor will Allah punish them while they plead for forgiveness﴾.

The sinners should not be disappointed; *istighfār*, repentance, and pilgrimage to the Friends of Allah is a means to their spiritual restoration. However, *istighfār* is of no effect for the polytheists and the hypocrites. ﴿It is the same for them whether you ask for forgiveness for them, or do not ask for forgiveness for them﴾.

Lesson 24

Repentance

Visage of Repentance in the Qur'an

﴿إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا﴾

﴿Except those who repent, believe, and act righteously. Such will enter paradise, and they will not be wronged in the least.﴾ (Maryam, 60)

Usually following the verses of punishment, the Qur'an brings the statement, ﴿Except those who repent﴾ or a similar phrase to say that the way toward reform is not closed to anyone.

✦ Repenting is obligatory, as it is Allah's order. ﴿Repent to Allah﴾¹⁴⁰

✦ Real repentance is definitely accepted, since it is improbable that we repent by His order and He does not accept it. ﴿It is He who accepts the repentance of His servants﴾, ﴿Indeed He is the All-clement, the All-merciful.﴾

✦ Allah both accepts repentance and loves those who repent to Him constantly. ﴿Allah loves the penitent.﴾

✦ Repentance should be accompanied by good deeds and compensation of sins. ﴿whoever repents and acts

righteously), ﴿But whoever repents after his wrongdoing, and reform﴾, ﴿Except those who repent and make amends and openly declare (the truth)﴾

✽ Repentance is the secret of prosperity. ﴿repent ... so you will prosper﴾

✽ Repentance is a means of turning misdeeds to good deeds. ﴿except those who repent, attain faith, and act righteously. For such, Allah will replace their misdeeds with good deeds﴾

✽ Repentance is the means for rainfall and blessings from the sky. ﴿then turn to Him penitently: He will send copious rains for you from the sky﴾

✽ Repentance is the means for good provision. ﴿turn to Him penitently. He will provide you with a good provision.﴾

✽ Repentance is not accepted at the time seeing the signs of death and punishment. ﴿when death approaches any of them, he says, " I repent now.﴾

✽ Besides accepting repentance, Allah has special favor, too. ﴿Allah is all-clement, all-merciful﴾, ﴿then repents after that and reforms, then He is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful﴾, ﴿Then He turned clemently to them indeed He is most kind and merciful to them﴾, ﴿then turn to Him penitently. My Lord is indeed all-merciful, all-affectionate.﴾ Besides repentance, the Divine mercy, clemency, and kindness are also mentioned.

✽ The Qur'ān has regarded abandoning repentance as tyranny and destruction: ﴿And whoever is not penitent such are the wrongdoers﴾, ﴿... and then have not repented, there awaits them the chastisement of the Hell﴾

The Qualifications for Accepting Repentance

Verse 17 of Sūrat al-Nisā' points out some aspects of the qualifications for accepting repentance: ﴿ [Acceptance of] repentance by Allah is only for those who commit evil out of ignorance, then repent promptly. It is such whose repentance Allah will accept, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise.﴾

A. When the sin is out of ignorance and negligence of the aftermaths of the sin, not out of faithlessness and enmity.

B. Should repent promptly, before the sin overwhelms them, or it turns into their character, or Divine wrath falls upon them.

Imam al-Şādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "Whatever sin humankind commits, although consciously, is out of ignorance, because they expose themselves to the Divine wrath."

Of course, the sinner who has repented is like the person who has not committed a sin or is totally pure, just like a newly born baby.

The Redemptive Repentance

﴿فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَوْمُهُ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ غَدَابَ الْغُزِيِّ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَنَعَّمْنَا بِهِمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ﴾

﴿Why has there not been any town that might believe, so that its belief might benefit it, except the people of Jonah? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in the life of this world, and We provided for them for a while.﴾ (Yūnus, 98)

It is related in the interpretations that Prophet Jonah (P.B.U.H.) called people to Monotheism for many years; but, from among them only two men believed in him, one was a devoted person and the other a wise scholar. The Prophet

Jonah (P.B.U.H.) cursed the people at the suggestion of the devoted person and left them. He did not know, however, that Allah would make life hard for him because of this.

That Prophet (P.B.U.H.) embarked a ship to go to another region. In the middle of the way, the ship encountered a giant whale and got into a tremendous tremble and all the passengers were about to drown. The ship's owners decided to drop one passenger into the sea so that they might be delivered from this calamity and when they drew lots among the passengers, and Prophet Jonah (P.B.U.H.) was chosen. So, they dropped him in the sea, and the whale devoured him right away, but was banned from eating and digesting him by Allah's command.

Amid the darkness of the belly of the whale deep in the sea, Jonah (P.B.U.H.) found out and confessed to his self-tyranny and untimely leaving the people. Allah answered his supplication and delivered him from that condition. From then on Jonah was given the name "Dhu'l Nūn", meaning "the One of the Whale. This is recounted in verses 87 and 88 of Sūrat al-Anbiyā'.

After a while, when Prophet Jonah was taken back there, he saw that the people have not been destroyed. He asked the reason. They told him that the faithful wise scholar, when noticed the curse and the signs of punishment, went upon a high land and warned people. The people were impressed and left the town to repent at his instructions, away from their children, and lamented and repented to Allah. Allah forgave them and delivered them from inevitable punishment.

Truly, one can rescue oneself even at the edge of a cliff and with timely repentance and faith, keep away from the Divine

punishment, and not only remove calamity but also become prosperous.

The story of the repentance of the people of Jonah is recounted in half a verse and just with a hint; but this *sūra* is named as *Sūrat Jonah* (*Yūnus*) because of the importance and sensitivity of the folk of Jonah, who repented at the last moment and Allah accepted their repentance.

Lesson 25

Resurrection

Reckoning on the Resurrection

﴿اَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ﴾

﴿The people's day of reckoning is drawing closer, yet they are heedlessly neglectful.﴾ (Al-Anbiyā')

What are implied from the above verse are:

1. All people will be questioned. ﴿We will surely question those to whom the apostles were sent, and We will surely question the apostles.﴾
2. All actions will be questioned about. ﴿and you will surely be questioned concerning what you used to do.﴾
3. All states will be brought to account. ﴿and whether you disclose what is in your hearts or hide it, Allah will bring you to account for it.﴾
4. All human organs will be questioned. ﴿Indeed the hearing, the eyesight, ... all of these are questioned.﴾
5. Divine blessing will be questioned about. ﴿Then, that day, you will surely be questioned concerning the blessing.﴾
6. All tasks wherever they were and to whatever measure, will be gathered. ﴿Even if it should be the weight of a mustard

seed, and [even though] it should be in a rock﴾

The first question will be asked about prayer and, then, such important matters as youth, life, the way to earn livelihood and how to spend it, and specially the issue of leadership and *wilāya* will be dealt with and it suffices that Allah will be the Reckoner. ﴿We suffice as reckoners.﴾

Different Types of Reckoning on the Resurrection

On the Resurrection, there will be several types of reckoning:

1. A group will have easy reckoning. ﴿he shall soon receive an easy reckoning﴾
2. Some will receive a severe reckoning. ﴿a terrible reckoning﴾
3. Some will go to Hell without reckoning, needing no trial and Balance. ﴿On the Day of Resurrection We will not set for them any weight.﴾
4. A group will go to Paradise without reckoning. ﴿Indeed the patient will be paid in full their reward without any reckoning.﴾

According to what is implied from various narrations, those who treat people with forgiveness and mercy, their reckoning will be easy and those whose behaving toward people is harsh and severe, their reckoning will be hard. The polytheist will go to Hell without reckoning and the patient will also go to Paradise without reckoning.¹⁴¹

Book of Deeds

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا﴾
﴿We have attached every person's actions to his neck, and

We shall bring it out for him on the Day of Resurrection as a wide open book that he will encounter. ﴿Al-Isrā', 13﴾

The Qur'an has frequently pointed out the Book of Deeds and many verses have brought up some points in this respect, including:

1. The Book of Deeds is for all. ﴿We have attached every person's actions...﴾

2. All actions are in it. ﴿It omits nothing, big or small﴾

3. The sinners are afraid of it. ﴿and you will see the sinners fearful at what is in it﴾

4. The man himself will judge by reading his own Book of Deeds. ﴿Read your book! Today your soul suffices as your own reckoner.﴾

5. The felicitous will be given their books in their right hand and the inmates of the Hell will be given their books in their left hand. ﴿given his book in his right hand... in his left hand.﴾

The Witnesses to Judgment Day Court

The Judgment Day Court will have many witnesses:

1. Allah, Who is witness to all our actions. ﴿Indeed Allah is witness to all things.﴾

2. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). ﴿So how shall it be, when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you as a witness to them?﴾

3. The Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.). ﴿Thus We have made you a middle nation [*Umma*] that you may be witnesses to the people﴾. According to the narrations, what is meant by nation is the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.), because other people of the nation will not have sufficient knowledge and

infallibility to witness on that Day.

4. Angels. ﴿Then every soul will come accompanied by a driver and a witness﴾ one driving it, the other is witness to it.

5. The earth. ﴿On that day she will relate her chronicle.﴾

6. Conscience. ﴿Read your book! Today your soul suffices as your own reckoner.﴾

7. Body organs. ﴿on the day when witness shall be given against them by their tongues, their hands, and their feet﴾

8. Time. In his sixth supplication of *Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyya*, Imam al-Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) said, “This is a fresh, new day, a ready witness to the actions we do in it”

9. Action. ﴿They will find present whatever they had done﴾; humans’ actions will materialize and be visible to them on the Resurrection.

Let’s Forgive to be Forgiven

There is one way to receive Allah’s favor, as Qur’ān says, ﴿let them pardon and forgive. Do you not wish that God should forgive you?﴾

Resurrection is the day of reckoning, punishing, and rewarding; it is a day of loneliness; one should think of oneself today. The way to receive Allah’s favor is to do favor to others today; if we do favor, we will receive favor as well. Many are the people who were alive last Ramaḍān, but they are not now, and perhaps this Ramaḍān is our last one!

Lesson 26

Spending out (*Infāq*)

Different Types of *Infāq*

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ﴾

﴿They ask you as to what they should spend. Say, “Whatever wealth you spend, let it be for parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and the traveller.” And whatever good that you may do, Allah indeed knows it.﴾ (Al-Baqara, 215)

There are five kinds of *infāq*:

1. Obligatory *infāq*; like: *khums*, *zakāt*, atonements, redemption money, and alimony (obligatory upon man).
2. Preferable *infāq*, like: helping the poor and the orphans, giving gift to friends.
3. Unlawful *infāq*, like: *infāq* with usurped property or in sinful ways.
4. Blameworthy *infāq*, like: *infāq* to others despite the existence of the needy among one’s relatives.
5. Permissible *infāq*, like: spending for others to improve their living condition, because *infāq* for elimination of poverty is obligatory or preferable.

Spending out the Best

﴿لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ﴾

﴿You will never attain piety until you spend (in the way of Allah) out of what you hold dear.﴾ (Āl-i Imrān, 92)

The word *birr* means goodness and blessing, and the land prepared for cultivation or residence; and given the lexical derivation of *birr* that means expansion in goodness, examples of *birr* are introduced in the Qurʾān to be faith, righteous act, piety, prayer, fulfilling pledge.

All have been advised to help each other in doing *birr*. ﴿Help one another to piety﴾ and the way to reach this precious pearl is through the above verse.

Examples of the Faithfull's *Infāq*

1. Abū Ṭalḥa Anṣārī had the greatest number of palm trees in Madīna in a beautiful garden with a large income. Having been located in front of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) Mosque, this garden had a river with limpid water. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) would enter that garden every now and then and drink from its fountain. When the verse ﴿You will never attain piety...﴾ was revealed, he went to the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and said, "The dearest thing to me is this garden; I want to spend it out in the way of God. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "It is a good trade. Blessing ever be on you! But I suggest you to give this garden to your poor relatives and near of kin." He agreed and divided the garden among them.

2. When Fāṭimat al-Zahrā (P.B.U.H.) was taken to her husband's house on her wedding night, a poor person asked

Her Holiness for a used dress. She changed her wedding dress and gave it away to that person, which is strongly reminiscent of ﴿You will never attain piety...﴾

3. Some guests arrived in Abū Dhar's house, the latter said, "As I am busy, you go ahead and slaughter one of my camels and prepare food." They chose a thin camel. Abū Dhar got disturbed and asked, "Why did you not bring the fat camel?" They said, "We left it for your future day of need." Abū Dhar said, "My future day of need is my burial day."

The Beggar's Hand, Allah's Hand

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, "Charity does not get in the beggar's hand, unless it first gets in the Hand of Allah." Then, he recited verse 104 of Sūrat al-Tawba, ﴿Do they not know that it is Allah who accepts the repentance of His servants and receives the charities...?﴾

Thus, now that the receiver of charities is Allah, let's spend for the needy more assuredly and give them the best quality and in the best way.

When spending property in the way of Allah is capable of growing seven-hundred fold and more, what can giving one's life in the way Allah be like?

Martyrdom, as *Infāq* of one's Life

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ﴾

﴿Do not suppose those who were slain in the way of Allah to be dead; rather they are living and provided for near their Lord.﴾

As the martyrs are known to be alive, we salute the martyrs, especially the martyrs of Karbalā, talk to them, and

plead with them.

Following are some remarks concerning the martyrs and martyrdom:

1. It is related in traditions, “There is a higher goodness than any goodness, except for martyrdom, as when a person is martyred, there is no higher goodness imaginable than that.”

3. On the Resurrection Day, martyrs have the position of intercession.

4. The *mujāhids* (the strugglers for the faith) enter Paradise from a special gate, arrive in Paradise earlier than others, and have a special station in Paradise.

5. Despite having tens of special excellences, only when he was at the threshold of martyrdom, Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, “I attained salvation, by the Lord of Ka‘ba (*Fuztu wa Rabb al-Ka‘ba*).” He was the first person who professed faith; he slept in place of the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.); he became the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) brother; only his house opened to the Prophet’s house; he was the father of the two next Imams and the husband of Fāṭimat al-Zahrā (P.B.U.H.); he was a breaker of idols; his stroke on the day of Khandaq was superior to the *ibāda* (act of devotion) of the *Thaqalayn* (the Qur’an and the *‘Itrat*). However, in none of the above did he say “I attained salvation”.

6. Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, “I swear by the One in Whose Hand lies the life Abū Ṭālib’s son that tolerating a thousand sword blows in the way of Allah is easier than dying in bed.”

The Best Work

﴿خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوْرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ﴾

﴿He created the heavens and the earth with reason, and

He formed you and perfected your forms, and toward Him is the destination. ﴿﴾ (Al-Taghābun, 3)

All works of Allah are the best:

1. His creation is the best: ﴿﴾ So blessed is Allah, the best of creators! ﴿﴾

2. His Book, the Qur'ān, is the best: ﴿﴾ the best of discourses ﴿﴾

3. His stories are the best: ﴿﴾ the best of narratives ﴿﴾

4. His Names are the best: ﴿﴾ To Allah belong the Best Names ﴿﴾

5. His rewards are the best: ﴿﴾ he shall have the best reward ﴿﴾

6. His promises are the best: ﴿﴾ Allah has promised the best reward ﴿﴾

7. His judgment is the best: ﴿﴾ But who is better than Allah in judgement ﴿﴾

Allah, too, has asked us to choose the best in all things we do. For instance:

1. In speech, say the best: ﴿﴾ speak in a manner which is the best ﴿﴾

2. In action, have the best actions: ﴿﴾ those who are good in deeds ﴿﴾

3. In treatment, have the best behavior: ﴿﴾ Repel evil with that which is best ﴿﴾

4. In dispute and dialogue, choose the best method: ﴿﴾ dispute with them in a manner that is the best ﴿﴾

5. In answering a greeting, choose the best way: ﴿﴾ greet with a better one than it ﴿﴾

6. From among the things you hear, choose the best and act on: ﴿﴾ listen to the Word and follow the best of it ﴿﴾

7. In treating the orphan's property act in the best of way. ﴿Do not approach the orphan's property, except in the best [possible] manner﴾

8. In motivation, give your actions a Godly color with the best intention, which is sincere devotion and intention to draw close to Allah. ﴿And who can give a better color than Allah?﴾

Lesson 27

The Mosque

The Importance of the Mosque

﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

﴿The places of worship belong to Allah, so do not invoke anyone along with Allah﴾. (Al-Jinn, 18)

1. The first building on the earth has been a mosque (a place of worship). ﴿Indeed the first house to be set up for mankind is the one at Bakkah, a place blessed﴾

2. The status of a mosque should be of a special holiness. As in the story of *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* (Companions of the Cave), the believers said, “We will build a place of worship over their graves, who left the welfare of their city and citizenship and resorted to the desert and cave to preserve their faith. ﴿We will set up a place of worship over them.﴾

3. The first thing the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) did after migration to Madīna was to build a mosque. ﴿A mosque founded on God wariness from the [very] first day﴾

4. More than ten times the name *Masjid al-Ḥarām* is mentioned in the Qur’ān.

5. Allah has considered the mosque as His House and appointed the best of people, namely the two great Prophets,

Abraham and Ishmael (P.B.U.T.), as its attendants. ﴿purify My House﴾

6. It is recommended to take one's best adornment when entering a mosque. ﴿Put on your adornment when attending the mosque﴾

7. If building a mosque is not based on God wariness and the mosque is a base for disunity among the Muslims, it should be destroyed. ﴿a mosque in opposition and unbelief﴾

8. The holiness of a mosque is so much as not everyone is entitled to repair it. ﴿The polytheists may not maintain Allah's mosques﴾; this important task is upon the pious and brave believers who are not afraid of anyone except Allah. ﴿Only those shall maintain Allah's mosques who believe in Allah... and fear no one except Allah﴾

9. Mosques and other worship centers of the Revealed religions, such as the Judaism and Christianity (monasteries, synagogues, and temples) are so valuable that one should give one's life to safeguard them. If Allah had not repulsed one group of [evil] people by the brave and faithful ones ﴿... ruin would have befallen the monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques﴾, and all the religions' places of worship would have been destroyed.

10. There are rules of conduct and preconditions regarding mosques and how to enter them, including: not speaking loudly in there; no vain talk to be exchanged; no talking of buying and selling; and idle matters to be avoided.

11. There is a reward for every step taken to go toward a mosque.

12. Sitting in a mosque and waiting for prayer to start is rewarded.

13. The mosque, in which no prayer is performed, will

complain to Allah.

14. The prayer of the mosque's neighbor, who does not perform their prayer in the mosque, is of no value.

15. Allah removes punishment from others for the sake of the people who go to mosques.

Many benefits are mentioned in traditions for those who frequently go to mosques, including: finding spiritual and religious friends; useful knowledge; distancing from sins; and enjoying Divine blessing and mercy. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "As soon as you see someone frequenting mosques, believe him."

Maintenance and Prosperity of the Mosque

﴿إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ﴾

﴿Only those shall maintain Allah's mosques who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and maintain the prayer and give the *zakāt*, and fear no one except Allah. They, hopefully, will be among the guided.﴾ (Al-Tawba, 18)

The mosques are the important devotional and social bases for the Muslims. Therefore, their custodians should be pious and pure, their programs should be constructive and educational, their budget should be legitimate and legal, and their participants should be God-wary and dignified. Otherwise, if the builders of mosques are the tyrants and monarchs, and the prayer leaders are illiterate and coward, and the attendants are lethargic and inactive, the mosque will naturally retreat from its goal, which is spiritual prosperity.

According to the late Fayḍ Kāshānī in his *Tafsīr Ṣāfi*, the maintenance of a mosque includes repairing, cleaning, carpeting, lighting, teaching, and propagating.

Adornment and the Mosque

﴿يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾
﴿O' Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but do not waste; indeed He does not like the wasteful.﴾ (Al-Tawba, 31)

Perhaps we can say: What is phrased in the Qur'an as "O' Children of Adam" is actually addressed to all human beings and all religions and common to them.

The Qur'an calls wealth and children as "adornment", ﴿Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of the world﴾, so, perhaps the verse states that take your wealth and children with you when you go to the mosque, so that you may solve the economical problems of Muslims with your wealth, and solve the educational problems of the next generation with the presence of your children in mosques and communities.

Among the instances of adornment enumerated in the traditions are: a just prayer leader, neatness of appearance, wearing perfume and beautiful clothes when performing prayer, raising one's hands [like when saying *takbīr*] just before bowing down and prostrating in prayer, and participating in 'Id and Friday prayers.

When performing prayer, Imam al-Mujtabā (P.B.U.H.) would put on his best clothes and say, "Allah is beautiful and loves beauty, so I put on my beautiful clothes for my Lord." He then would recite the above verse.

Allah loves beauty and ornament, otherwise he would not command, ﴿Put on your adornment﴾; since Islam is a natural religion and man naturally enjoys ornament.

Going to mosques with ornament is a reverence for the

servants of Allah and also encourages and attracts others to go there.

Although using food and ornament is normal and natural, in special situations like when the needy and the deprived are present, one should sympathize with them. Thus, we read in history that the type of the clothes that Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) used to wear, as in his time people relatively lived in comfort, was different from Imam ‘Alī’s (P.B.U.H.) clothes, in whose time people were poor, since the social conditions of each of them were different.

With a little attention and deliberation on verse, one can imply certain points and messages, including:

1. As the base for Muslims, the mosque should be ornamented, beautiful, and attractive. ﴿Take your adornment at every place of worship﴾

2. The best and most beautiful clothes are for best places. ﴿Take your adornment at every place of worship﴾

3. Islam pays attention to both the inner aspect of prayer, ﴿those who are humble in their prayers﴾ and its appearance, ﴿your adornment at every place of worship﴾; indeed, in Islam, the inner and outer, and the world and the Hereafter are intermixed.

4. Although ornament is a value in individual prayer, it is especially emphasized in society and mosques. ﴿at every place of worship﴾

5. First prayer, then eating food. ﴿at every place of worship, and eat and drink﴾. First attending to the soul and spirituality, then attending to the body.

Lesson 28

Social Etiquette

Who to Make Friends with

﴿وَيَوْمَ يَعْصُ الطَّالِبُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ﴿٢٩﴾﴾

﴿A day when the wrongdoer will bite his hands, saying, "I wish I had followed the Apostle's way! Woe to me! I wish I had not taken so and so as a friend! Certainly he led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me, and Satan is a deserter of man.﴾ (Al-Furqān, 27-29)

Islam has high recommendations concerning friendship and choosing friends, how to recognize friends, borders of friendship, rules of etiquette, and the rights of the friends; it also encourages friendship with some and prohibits friendship with others. For instance:

﴿ If you are doubtful in recognizing someone, look who their friends are. "See who he hangs around with."¹⁴²

﴿ Loneliness is better than bad friend.

﴿ They asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), "Who is the best friend?" He said, "The one whose meeting reminds you of Allah, their speech increases your knowledge, and their

conduct revives the memory of the Resurrection in you.”

❖ Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, “When your power was lost, your true friends will be distinguished from your enemies.”

❖ Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, “A good friend is the best relative.”

❖ It is related in a *ḥadīth*, “Try your friend in matters of anger, money, and travel. If they pass these trials, they are good friends.

Escape from a bad friend as far as you can,
A bad friend is worse than a bad snake;
A bad snake bites you in the body,
A bad friend bites you in the soul and the faith.

Brotherhood (*Ukhuwwat*)

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾

❖ The faithful are indeed brothers. Therefore make peace between your [contending] brothers and be wary of Allah, so that you may receive [His] mercy. ﴿ (Al-Ḥujurāt, 10)

Of the advantages of Islam is that it starts reforms from the roots. For instance, it asserts in this verse that in order to correct the behavior of the individual and the society one must correct their intellectual and ideological foundations. All the faithful people are brothers to one another; now that they are brothers, why should there be revulsion and dispute?

Establishing bonds of *ukhuwwat* is among the innovations of Islam.

In early Islam, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was present in Nakhīla region along with seven hundred and forty people, when Gabriel descended and said, “Allah has made bonds of brotherhood among the angels.” His Holiness

established bonds of *ukhuwwat* between his companions, each one of whom became a brother to another one. For instance, Abū Bakr made brothers with ‘Umar, Salmān with Abū Dhar, Ṭalḥa with Zubayr, Miqdād with ‘Ammār, ‘Ā’isha with Ḥafṣa, Umm Salama with Ṣafīyya, and the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) himself with ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.).¹⁴³

Bond of *ukhuwwat* is not exclusive to men; rather, this term is used about women, too. ﴿and if they be brethren, men and women¹⁴⁴﴾

What is more important than making brothers is maintaining brotherhood. It is related in the traditions that the people who leave their brothers in faith are severely criticized and it is recommended that if your brothers kept away from you, you associate with them. ‘Connect with the one who has broken off from you.’¹⁴⁵

Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) said, “The faithful is the brother of the faithful, like a body that if one part of it gets sick, all the body is upset.”

Rights of Brotherhood

The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “A Muslim has thirty rights upon his Muslim brother that each must abide by them, including:

1. To forgive and be kind to him, 2. To hide his secrets, 3. To compensate his mistakes, 4. To accept his excuse, 5. To defend him against his detractors, 6. To be benevolent to him, 7. To fulfill the promises he made to him, 8. To visit him when he is sick, 9. To attend his funeral, 10. To accept his invitations and gifts, 11. To make up for his gifts, 12. To thank him for his services, 13. To try to help him out, 14. To

preserve his reputation, 15. To fulfill his needs, 16. To mediate to solve his problems, 17. To guide his lost one, 18. To bless his sneezing, 19. To return his *salām*, 20. To respect his words and sayings, 21. To prepare a good gift for him, 22. To accept his swear, 23. To befriend his friend and not to be hostile to him, 24. Not to leave him alone in hardships, 25. To wish for him whatever he wishes for himself, and so on.”¹⁴⁶

Peace and Reconciliation

Islam pays attention to peace and serenity, and peaceful and happy life. One of the Divine blessings mentioned in the Qur’ān is bringing the Muslims’ hearts together. As Allah addresses Muslims in the Qur’ān: ﴿you were enemies, then He brought your hearts together﴾¹⁴⁷

Making peace and conciliation is regarded to cause receiving forgiveness and mercy from Allah. ﴿But if you are conciliatory and God-wary, Allah is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful.﴾ ﴿Whoever intercedes for a good cause shall receive a share of it﴾

Islam has set special ruling for conciliation among people, including:

1. Lying, which is among the major sins is not rated as a sin if used for conciliation and peace. “There is no lie [charged] for the peacemaker.”

2. Whispering secret talks, which is a Satan’s act and prohibited, is no problem if used for peacemaking and conciliation. ﴿There is no good in much of their secret talks, except for him who enjoins charity or what is right or conciliation between people﴾

3. Although fulfilling one’s oath is obligatory and breaking

it is unlawful, if someone takes an oath not to conciliate and make peace between two people, breaking this oath is permissible to Islam. ﴿Do not make Allah an obstacle, through your oaths... to making peace between people.﴾

4. Although acting to the testament is obligatory and ignoring it is unlawful, if acting to the testament brings trouble and annoyance among some people, Islam has permitted to give up the testament to make peace and serenity among people. ﴿But if someone fears deviance or sin from one making testament, and so makes things right amongst them [the parties concerned], then sin shall not rest upon him﴾

Religious Relations and Bonds

In verse 21 of Sūrat al-Ra'd, one of the signs of the wise people is their relations and bond to things that Allah has commanded making relation to. ﴿and those who maintain all the proper relations that God has commanded them to maintain﴾. It is related in traditions that what Allah has commanded to maintain relations to is keeping the ties of kinship, which means preserving family relations as well as maintaining religious bonds, that is establishing a permanent and deep relation with Heavenly leaders and following the footsteps of *Wilāya*.¹⁴⁸

The relations that Allah has commanded are many and various, including:

1. Cultural relation with the learned. ﴿Ask the People of the Remembrance if you do not know﴾

2. Social relation with people. ﴿O' You who have faith, have patience, help each other with patience, and establish

good relations with one another﴾

3. Emotional relations with the parents. ﴿and to be good to parents﴾

4. Financial relation to the needy. ﴿who is he that will lend God a good loan?﴾

5. Intellectual relation in managing an Islamic society. ﴿and consult them in the affairs﴾

6. Political relation with *Wilāya*. ﴿Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority among you﴾

7. Overall relation with the faithful. ﴿The faithful are indeed brothers.﴾

8. Spiritual relation to Friends of Allah. ﴿In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar﴾

Lesson 29

Family

Responsibility for the Marriage of the Youth

﴿وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَأَمَّا بَكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِمُهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

﴿Marry off the spouseless among you and the upright among your male slaves and your female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His grace, and Allah is all-bounteous, all-knowing.﴾ (Al-Nūr, 32)

Ayāmay is plural of *ayyam*, meaning spouseless, either male or female, virgin or widow.

Marriage is a sacred and emphatic matter in Islam, and the family and society are responsible for the marriage of the spouseless people. The marriage proposal does not need to be from a particular side; either of the marriage partners can initiate. Of course, Allah has promised the provision for the livelihood of the couple and has made the marriage a means for the prosperity and blessing of their life.

Islam views marriage as a sacred matter; contrary to Christianity, which views celibacy to be a value and thus the Pope and Christian priests are not allowed to marry.

We read in the traditions that marriage is half the faith. A two *rak'a* prayer of a married person is better than seventy *rak'as* of a single person. The sleep of a married person is better than the fasting of the unmarried awake people.

Contrary to those who consider marriage as an element of poverty, the Apostle of Allah said, "Marriage would increase one's daily provision." Imam al-Ṣādiq said, "Life's prosperity is in light of marriage." He also said, "Whoever evades marriage for the fear of poverty is not of us and is suspicious of God."

Marriage is a means for peace and comfort.¹⁴⁹ Through marriage, families get close to one another; hearts become kind, and the ground is provided for bringing up pure progeny and a spirit of cooperation.

The parents, who, despite having the means, do not marry off their children, if their children commit sins, they share their sins.

We read in the traditions, "Hurry in marriage. The girl who has reached the age of marriage is like a ripened fruit that if not picked gets rotten."¹⁵⁰

The best intercession and mediation is the mediation for marriage. According to some *ḥadīths*, "The one, who marries off a girl or a boy, is upon the Divine Throne."

We read in traditions, "The one, who takes a step in the marriage of his brothers in faith, will receive special favor from Allah on the Resurrection."

Of course, the next verse says, ﴿And let those who find not the means to marry be abstinent till Allah enriches them of His bounty﴾.

Indeed, the youth should safeguard their chastity and abstinence, ﴿be abstinent﴾; the family and the government

should rise up, ﴿Marry off the spouseless﴾; and the wealthy of the society should stand up, ﴿and give them out of the wealth of Allah﴾

However, one should not be overwhelmed by emotions when choosing a spouse. Do not be hasty; take action after giving it enough thought and having sufficient consultation. A major part of family differences originates from carelessness in choosing a spouse. A spouse is one's partner in life and the impression remains until the end of life and up to the Resurrection. Usually, the superficial marriages that occur on the buses or in parks will lead nowhere.

Different Types of Family in the Qur'ān

There are four types of family mentioned in the Qur'ān:

1. The wife and husband who are of the same opinion about and supportive of charities. (Like Imam 'Alī [A.S.] and Fāṭimat al-Zahrā (P.B.U.H.), whose example of sympathy and coordination are brought up in a sequence of verses in Sūrat al-Dahr, as they gave their breaking-fast food to the needy, the orphan, and the captive for three consecutive nights). ﴿they give food, for the love of Him...﴾

2. The wife and husband that are of the same opinion and sympathetic in meanness. (Abū Lahab and his wife) ﴿Perish the hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!... and his wife [too], the firewood carrier﴾ (Although being the Prophet's uncle, Abū Lahab cause obstructions to and his wife persecuted the Prophet by throwing thorns on the way of His Holiness.)

3. The family in which the husband is good and the wife is bad (the wife of Prophet Lot (P.B.U.H.) and the wife of Prophet Noah - P.B.U.H.) ﴿They were under [the care of] two

of our righteous servants, yet they betrayed them ﴿﴾

4. The family in which the husband is bad and the wife is good (the wife of Pharaoh) ﴿﴾ Allah draws an [other] example for those who have faith: the wife of Pharaoh ﴿﴾

Responsibility toward the Family

Many verses of the Qur'an have pointed out man's responsibility toward his family, including:

- ﴿﴾ Save yourselves and your families from a Fire ﴿﴾
- ﴿﴾ And bid your family to prayer and be steadfast in its maintenance ﴿﴾
- ﴿﴾ Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk ﴿﴾
- ﴿﴾ O' my son! Perform the prayer and command right ﴿﴾
- ﴿﴾ Indeed, aforetime, we used to be apprehensive about our families ﴿﴾, men of God are apprehensive about and not indifferent to their families.

- ﴿﴾ He used to bid his family to [perform] the prayer ﴿﴾, the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) constantly ordered his family to perform prayer.

Similarly, many traditions have pointed out this issue, such as:

- The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, "You are all responsible toward your subordinate; man is responsible for his family and the woman is responsible for her husband and children."¹⁵¹

- Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) said, "Teach goodness to yourselves and your families and train them in courtesy."¹⁵²

Lesson 30

The Feast of the Prosperous

The Prosperous in the Qur'ān

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾

﴿Certainly, the faithful have attained prosperity; those who are humble in their prayers.﴾ (Al-Mu'minūn, 1-2)

The prosperous and triumphant individuals and groups are introduced in the Qur'ān:

1. Worshippers. ﴿and worship your Lord, and do good, so that you may prosper﴾
2. Those whose deeds are precious and weighty. ﴿Then he whose scales are heavy, they are prosperous﴾
3. Those who avoid avarice. ﴿And whosoever is guarded against the avarice of his own soul, those are the prosperous﴾
4. Allah's Party. ﴿surely it is Allah's Party that are prosperous﴾
5. People of Remembrance. ﴿and remember Allah greatly so that you may prosper.﴾
6. The God-wary. ﴿So be wary of Allah, O, you who possess intellect, so that you prosper!﴾
7. Strugglers (*mujāhids*). ﴿and struggle (wage *jihād*) in His

Way; so that you may prosper. ﴿﴾

8. Repenters. ﴿﴾ Turn to Allah in repentance, O, faithful, so that you may prosper. ﴿﴾

‘Īd al-Fiṭr, the Divine Prize

Imam al-Bāqir (P.B.U.H.) said, “The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, ‘Whenever the first day of Shawwal dawned (*‘Īd al-Fiṭr*), a herald would call from Allah, ‘O’ Faithful! Come forth to your prizes.’” Then, the Imam faced Jābir and said, “O’ Jābir! Allah’s prizes are not like the kings’ prizes! ... Today is the day of prize!”

On the *‘Īd al-Fiṭr*, Imam al-Mujtabā (P.B.U.H.) encountered a group of people who were engaged in play and laughter; he said to his companions, “Allah made Ramaḍān a field for competition and achievement of His pleasure and mercy. In which some took the lead and won, and others were left behind and lost. It is surprising that on this day of reward, some are busy laughing and playing around...”

Imam al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) said, “Allah made the fast-breaking day a feast for the Muslims to have an assembly; a day on which the people would gather and glorify and praise Allah for His blessings and bounties. So, that day is a day of feast, assembly, *zakāt*, inclination, and invocation.

In this noble *ḥadīth*, the wisdom behind this *‘Īd* and *‘Īd* prayer is stated in the following axes:

1. Assembly and gathering
2. *Zakāt* and helping out the poor
3. Inclination and tendency toward Allah
4. Invocation and supplication to Allah

Recalling the Resurrection

One of the educational and constructive impacts of *Īd al-Fiṭr* prayer is that in the needful gathering and presence in the unroofed *muṣallā* (prayer place) one remembers God and the Resurrection, and one's need for the Divine mercy and the scene of the Resurrection come to mind. It is related in traditions that in a sermon he delivered on an *Īd al-Fiṭr*, Imam 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) addressed people:

“O' People! This day of yours is a day, when the good are rewarded. On this day, the evil-doers sustain a loss. This day is the most similar day to your Resurrection.”

“By your leaving home and going to *muṣallā*, remember your rising from your graves; and by returning home, remember your return to your houses in Paradise or Hell.”

In the *qunūt* (personal supplication) of *Īd al-Fiṭr* prayer and the invocation, “*Allāhumma ahl al-kibriyā wa al-‘azama...*” we know Allah by greatness, sovereignty, forgiveness, and mercy and beseech Him by the truth and status of this great day, which is the feast of Muslims and a source of honor and pride for the Prophet and his Household, to send peace and blessings upon Muḥammad and his Household (P.B.U.T.) and bestow His good and blessings upon us.

The statement used in this supplication is the most comprehensive request made from Allah. We ask Allah:

“O' Allah! In whatever good that You entered Muḥammad and his Household, enter me too; and out of every evil that you took Muḥammad and his Household (P.B.U.T.), take me out of, too.”

“O' Lord! I ask You the best of what Your pious servants have asked You and I seek refuge in You from what Your

sincere servants have sought refuge in You from!”

Recalling the Deceased

Of the good practices that is common among Muslims these days is attending the graves of the deceased and remembering and honoring them.

The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Visit the graves so that you would remember the Hereafter.”

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) said, “Whoever goes to visit their parents’ graves or the grave of each one of them every Friday, both their sins will be forgiven and they will be counted as benevolent children.”

We also read, “Supplication next to the graves of one’s parents is answered.”

Imam al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) said, “If Sūrat al-Qadr is recited seven times when visiting the grave of the faithful, both the deceased person and visitor will be forgiven by Allah.”

And it is related in the traditions that the deceased are informed of your visiting them and will be delighted and will get interested in and fond of you.

﴿All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the world.﴾

Book Reading Competition of Ramaḍān with the Qur'ān

Dear Readers!

You may take part in the competition in one of the following ways:

1. Sending SMS to 3000802222
2. Completing the answer sheet and handing it over to Pilgrim Guide Offices stationed in the Holy Shrine courtyards
3. Visiting AQR integrated portal at: www.razavi.aqr.ir

Explanations:

✽ Thirty questions are extracted from the book's text and anyone over 12 years old can participate.

✽ You may participate in the competition everyday and send your answers via SMS.

✽ In every SMS you may send the answer for one question as per the example.

✽ You may also send the answers to the questions of previous days by separate SMS's.

✽ The Participants are required to send the correct option via SMS No. **300080222** till the end of Ramaḍān.

For example: Ramaḍān 114 Husayn Jahani BS.

Announcement of the results:

✦ The draw will be made from the correct answers on a daily basis.

✦ The result will be sent to the winners via SMS.

Notice: Please send your suggestions and comment via SMS. Phone No.: 051 32002569

The Competition Questions

The first day question: Which of the following is true about the importance of the month of Ramaḍān?

1. The month of blessing, mercy, and forgiveness.
2. In it, breaths are equal to glorification (*tasbīḥ*) in reward; and supplications are answered.
3. Reciting one verse in this month is the same as reading the whole Qur'ān.
4. All of the above.

The second day question: In which verse has the Exalted Allah ordered fasting?

5. The blessed Sūrat al-Baqara verse 183.
6. The blessed Sūrat Āl-i 'Imrān, verse 8.
7. The blessed Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt, verse 2.
8. The blessed Sūrat Maryam, verse 60.

The third day question: According to the traditions, how many verses of the Holy Qur'ān is recommended each day?

9. Ten verses
10. Twenty verses
11. Forty verses
12. Fifty verses

The fourth day question: To what advantage of the Qur'ānic stories does the following Qur'ānic phrase refer?

﴿نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُنَبِّئُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ﴾

13. Scientism

14. Truth-seeking

15. Purposefulness

16. Learning a lesson

The fifth day question: Which manner of supplication does the following Qur'ānic phrase refer to?

﴿وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا﴾

17. It should be accompanied by faith and pious act.

18. It should be accompanied by sincerity.

19. It should be accompanied by fear and hope.

20. The supplicant should benefit from the Divine names.

The sixth day question: Which of the following is the key to the acceptance of all actions?

21. Hajj 22. Prayer 3. Commanding right 24. Forbidding wrong

The seventh day question: Which of the following is not true about commanding right and forbidding wrong?

25. It is a public duty, which everybody should practice according to their capacity.

26. It should be consciously, compassionately, wisely, and as far as possible, secretly.

27. The one who invites others to good deeds will share the reward of their good deeds.

28. When we are not sure our words have no effect, we have no duty.

The eighth day question: Which of the Infallible Imams said the following? “*Bism Allāh* is the source of blessings in actions and abandoning it causes inconclusiveness.”

29. Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.) 30. Imam al-Ḥasan (P.B.U.H.)
31. Imam al-Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) 32. Imam al-Bāqir (P.B.U.H.)

The ninth day question: Which of the following is true about the importance and excellence of mid-night prayer?

33. The secret for the health of the body and light of grave.
34. Ornament, nobility, and honor for the faithful.
35. It is effective in temperament, sustenance, and radiance of the face.
36. All the above.

The tenth day question: Which subject is stated in verse 60 of the blessed Sūrat al-Tawba?

37. Contemplation on the Divine verses
38. The importance of supplication and devotional acts
39. The referents of spending alms (*zakāt*)
40. Learning science and knowledge

The eleventh day question: In which of the following verses is benevolence to parents mentioned as Divine recommendation?

41. The blessed Sūrat al-Nisā, verse 36
42. The blessed Sūrat Luqmān, verse 14
43. The blessed Sūrat al-Isrā’, verse 23

The twelfth day question: Which example of practical thankfulness does the following noble verse states?

﴿وَأَمَّا السَّائِلُ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ﴾

45. Performing on-time prayer
46. Serving people
47. Helping the deprived and the needy
48. Caring about the orphans

The thirteenth day question: Which Divine missions of the animals does the following Qur'ānic phrase refer to?

﴿أَذْهَبْ بِكِتَابِي هَذَا﴾

49. The flocks of birds (Abābil) that were appointed to suppress the elephant riders.
50. The hoopoe that was appointed to deliver the letter of the Prophet Solomon to Queen Sheba.
51. The crow that taught Cane how to bury his brother's corpse.
52. The whale that kept the Prophet Jonah (P.B.U.H.) in its belly.

The fourteenth day question: Which of the following the noble lady made a vow to make her child an attendant to the Farthest Mosque (Masjid al-Aqṣā)?

53. Ḥaḍrat Maryam's (P.B.U.H.) mother
54. Prophet Moses' (P.B.U.H.) mother
55. Prophet Ishmael's (P.B.U.H.) mother
56. Prophet Abraham's (P.B.U.H.) mother

The fifteenth day question: What event was chosen as the basis for the start of the Islamic calendar?

57. Āmm al-Fil (The Holy Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) birth year)

58. The day of the Holy Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) *Bi'tha* (prophetic mission)

59. The Holy Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) migration from Makka to Madīna

60. The day of the conquest of Makka by Muslims.

The sixteenth day question: Which aspect of the angels is described in the Qur'ān by:

﴿يَجُودُونَ لَهَا﴾

61. Being follower and obedient

62. Writing down human deeds

63. Giving good tidings to the warriors in battle

64. Welcoming the people of Paradise

The seventeenth day question: Which of the following does the noble verse refer to?

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ﴾

65. Those who repent and do good deeds, Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds

66. Divine precedents are constant and unchangeable

67. With faith and God wariness, the course of Divine wrath will change toward favor and blessing.

68. Allah will not change what is in people, unless they change what is in themselves.

The eighteenth day question: Which Infallible is the following saying related from? "Whoever is not thinking of serving the Muslims every morning is not a Muslim."

69. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) 70. Imam al-Ḥasan (P.B.U.H.)

72. Imam al-Bāqir (P.B.U.H.) 73. Imam al-Kāẓim (P.B.U.H.)

The nineteenth day question: In which verse of the Holy Qur'ān has the Exalted Allah stated love of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (P.B.U.T.) as the reward for the Prophetic mission?

73. The blessed Sūrat al-Mā'ida verse 67.

74. The blessed Sūrat al-Shūrā verse 23.

75. The blessed Sūrat Ṭā Hā verse 183.

76. The blessed Sūrat al-Furqān verse 183.

The Twentieth day question: Which of the following does verse 55 of the blessed Sūrat al-Mā'ida refer to?

77. Imam 'Alī's (P.B.U.H.) *Wilāya* and Guardianship

78. Imam 'Alī's (P.B.U.H.) giving his ring to the beggar, while praying in *rukū'*

79. Importance of *Wilāya*

80. All the above.

The twenty first day question: According to the traditions, which of the following blessed sūras is the full referent of the government of Imam Mahdī's (P.B.U.H.) rule?

81. The blessed Sūrat al-Shūrā verse 23.

82. The blessed Sūrat Āl-i Imrān verse 104.

83. The blessed Sūrat al-Nūr verse 55.

84. The blessed Sūrat al-Ra'd verse 39.

The twenty second day question: Which of the following is not true about intercession?

85. It is a ray of hope for the sinners and a means for their connection to the Friends of Allah.

86. On the Resurrection the Angels and martyrs are permitted to intercede.

87. Only those who have created the competence for intercession by their thoughts and actions will be interceded.

88. Intercession will cause people's sins to increase in society and to become corrupted.

The twenty third day question: Which of the following is the worst sin from Imam 'Ali's perspective?

89. The sin after which one does not repent.

90. The sin that one takes it as light or small

91. The sin for committing of which no limitation is set.

92. The sin for whose committing no punishment is promised.

The twenty fourth day question: Which of the following does this verse of the Qur'an refer to?

﴿تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُبْتَغِكُمْ مَتَاعاً حَسَناً﴾

93. Allah likes the repentant.

94. Repentance should be accompanied by compensating sins.

95. Repentance is a means for changing sins to good deeds.

96. Repentance is the means for good provision.

The twenty fifth day question: Which of the features of reckoning on the Resurrection does the following verse refer to?

﴿لَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

97. On the resurrection the first question is about prayer.
98. The Divine blessings will be questioned about.
99. All the actions will be questioned about.
100. All body organs will be asked about.

The twenty sixth day question: What kind of *infāq* is the *infāq* to others despite the existence of the needy among one's relatives?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 101. Blameworthy <i>infāq</i> | 102. Unlawful <i>infāq</i> |
| 103. Permissible <i>infāq</i> | 104. Preferable <i>infāq</i> |

The twenty seventh day question: What was the first thing the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) did in Madīna after Hijra?

105. Building a place for the children without guardian
106. Building a Mosque
107. Creating unity among different communities
108. Reinforcement of military equipment

The twenty eighth day question: Which of the Infallible Imams is the following saying related from? "The faithful is the brother of the faithful, like a body that if one part of it gets sick, all the body is upset."

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 109. Imam al-Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) | 110. Imam al-Kāẓim (P.B.U.H.) |
| 111. Imam Al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) | 112. Imam al-Hādī (P.B.U.H.) |

The twenty ninth day question: Which religious relation does the following Qur'ānic phrase refer to?

﴿فَسَلُّوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

- 113. Emotional relation with parents
- 114. Financial relation with the needy
- 115. Cultural relation with the learned
- 116. Intellectual relation in managing the society

The thirtieth day question: Which group of the prosperous does the following verse refer to?

﴿فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ﴾

- 117. Those who have waged *jihād* in the way of Allah.
- 118. Those who remember Allah a lot.
- 119. Those who worship Allah a lot.
- 120. Those whose deeds are precious and weighty.

Specifications

First and last name: Father's name:.....

Education: Province:

City: Phone:

Mobile:

Competition of Ramaḍān with the Qur'ān Answer Sheet

1 st question	1	2	3	4	16 th question	61	62	63	64
2 nd question	5	6	7	8	17 th question	65	66	67	68
3 rd question	9	10	11	12	18 th question	69	70	71	72
4 th question	13	14	15	16	19 th question	73	74	75	76
5 th question	17	18	19	20	20 th question	77	78	79	80
6 th question	21	22	23	24	21 st question	81	82	83	84
7 th question	25	26	27	28	22 nd question	85	86	87	88
8 th question	29	30	31	32	23 rd question	89	90	91	92
9 th question	33	34	35	36	24 th question	93	94	95	96
10 th question	37	38	39	40	25 th question	97	98	98	100
11 th question	41	42	43	44	26 th question	101	102	103	104
12 th question	45	46	47	48	27 th question	105	106	107	108
13 th question	49	50	51	52	28 th question	109	110	111	112
14 th question	53	54	55	56	29 th question	113	114	115	116
15 th question	57	58	59	60	30 th question	117	118	119	120

Dear Pilgrims and Residents

The following questionnaire is provided to receive your precious comments in order to upgrade the cultural services. Please help the attendants to fulfill this task.

Opinion Poll

No.	Subject	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
1	Degree of satisfaction with binding attraction (cover design, size, etc.)					
2	Degree of fluency of the subject					
3	Degree of understandability					
4	Degree of attraction and novelty of the subject					
5	Degree of impact and usefulness of the subject					
6	Degree of the proportion of the content with your requirement					
7	Proportion of questions with the subject					
8	Degree of your general satisfaction					
Recommendations and Suggestions:						

Endnotes

1. Tafsir-i Burhān.
2. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 7, p. 119.
3. Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Amālī*, pp.93-96.
4. *Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 18.
5. Tafsir al-Manār.
6. Tafsir Rūḥ al-Bayān.
7. Tafsir Marāghī.
8. Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn.
9. *Biḥār*, vol. 60, p.380.
10. Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn.
11. Tafsir-i Burhān.
12. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 8, p. 459.
13. Al-Insān, 9.
14. *Kāfi*, vol. 4, p. 51.
15. Tafsir Nūr al-Thaqalayn.
16. Introduction to Sūrat al-Wāqī'a.
17. Risālat al-Inṣāf.
18. *Ṣaḥīfa-yi Nūr*, vol. 20, p. 20.
19. *Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 627.
20. *Kāfi*, vol. 4, p. 228.
21. Al-Dhāriyāt, 56.
22. Al-Anfāl, 24.
23. Ṣadūq's Tawḥid, Tafsirs Majma' al-Bayān, and Nūr al-Thaqalayn.
24. Tafsir Ithnā 'Ashar.
25. Al-'Arāf, 180.
26. Tafsir Furqān.
27. (Adopted from) Āl-i 'Imrān, 110.
28. *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Wisdom 252.
29. *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 3, p. 170.
30. Al-Mā'ida, 78.
31. *Biḥār*, vol. 44, p. 328.
32. Fuṣṣilat, 33.
33. Al-An'ām, 54.

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34. Al-A'raf, 156.
 35. Al-Anbiya', 107.
 36. Al-Nisa', 69.
 37. Tafsiṭ Qurṭabī and Majma' al-Bayān.
 38. Muḥammad, 17.
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