

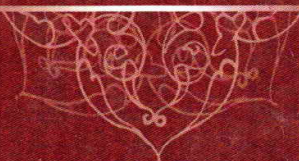


# The Core of Islam

Ayatollah Sayyid Fadhel Hosseini Milani

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Recorded and edited by Amar Hegedüs



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Ayatollah Sayyid Fadhel Hosseini Milani

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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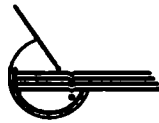
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# Editor's Note

This singular introduction to Islam in the English language presents, in one easily accessible volume, a coherent overview of the structures and practices of the faith of Islam. Informed by a profound level of Islamic scholarship, it answers many commonly asked questions of this much maligned faith.

It is the fruit of incessant questions 'Why?', that the almost unbelievably patient, kind, generous and knowledgeable Ayatollah Milani was prepared to give of his time to answer.

A quest to acquire knowledge of the faith, like any journey of discovery, is fraught with sometimes seemingly unsurpassable difficulty. Those who have not studied Islam and Islamic history in some depth find many mundane and profound issues difficult to access. For example: What was the cultural context in which Islam developed? What are the faith's core beliefs? What is sacred to Muslims? What social behaviour does Islam teach? What is the position of women in Islam? What are its main groupings? And, most importantly, how can one best worship Allāh?

Allāh willing, later volumes will provide greater detail on both scholarly and spiritual aspects of the faith.

Amar Hegedüs

# Foreword

**Dr. Sayyid Fadhel Hosseini Milani**

Over the centuries, introductory books on Islam have tended to focus on the rituals of mosques and specific Islamic occasions. Little or no emphasis has been given to Islam's moral values or to its holistic view in which each individual's well-being is regarded as essential for the health and harmony of society.

Texts that present Islam from a historical viewpoint often ignore its intellectual and spiritual contributions to focus solely on territorial wars waged by caliphs and, in consequence, advance a view that Islam was spread by the sword.

Orientalist texts, restricted to detailed investigation of specific aspects of Islam, largely ignore everything not directly related to the focus of their attention. However, it is no easier to comprehend the faith from a concentrated study of the minutiae of a specific matter, than it is to comprehend the lifestyle of an organism from a detailed study of its mitochondria.

Muslim youth often find it difficult to reconcile information from the above sources with what they have been taught by their parents. Faced with myriad ambiguities and mystifying reports, many are confused about their own identity, about how Muslims are expected to behave, and unable to distinguish between the core of Islam and the carapace of misconception that surrounds it.

The aim of this work is to replace bewilderment with the clarity that comes from profound study of the primary sources of Islamic thought — the Holy Qur'ān and *aḥādīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and error-free Imāms of his progeny عليه السلام. Thus, it examines contemporary issues, fundamentalism, extremism, radicalism, etc., through researched insights into Muslim personality, moral behaviour and Islamic teachings of justice and fairness.

Dr. Sayyid Fadhel

فاصل الحسيني ميلاني

Hosseini Milani



# Conventions

- ﷺ ***Sallallahu Alayhi wa alihi wa Salaam***  
May Allāh’s greetings and blessings be upon him and his progeny (used immediately after referring to the Prophet Muḥammad)
- ﷺ ***Alayha al-Salaam*** – Peace be upon her  
(used immediately after referring to Khadijah, Faṭimah, Zaynab and Maryam)
- ﷺ ***Alayhi al-Salaam*** – May Allāh bless him  
(used immediately after referring to a single Imām or Prophet)
- ﷺ ***Alayhima al-Salaam*** – May Allāh bless them  
(used immediately after referring to two Imāms or two Prophets)
- ﷺ ***Alayhum al-Salaam*** – May Allāh bless them  
(used immediately after referring to three or more Imāms or Prophets)
- ﷻ ***Rahimahu Allāh*** – May Allāh grant him mercy  
(used immediately after referring to a single deceased and respected person)
- ﷻ ***Rahimahum Allāh*** – May Allāh grant them mercy  
(used immediately after referring to deceased and respected people)
- ﷻ ***Quddisa Sirroh*** – May his soul be blessed  
(used immediately after referring to a single deceased and respected scholar)
- ﷻ ***Quddisa Sirrohuma*** – May their souls be blessed  
(used immediately after referring to deceased and respected scholars)
- ﷻ ***Radi Allahu anhu*** – May Allāh be pleased with him  
(used after referring to a respected companion of the Prophet ﷺ or the Imāms)

# PART ONE

## CHAPTER 1

### Muhammad's Cultural Context

#### 1.1 Broadmindedness

In the pre-Islamic Arab peninsula the elemental principle of survival was loyalty to the clan — without any regard whatever to their being in the right or not. This aspect of clan membership — of paramount importance at a time when Arab clansmen roamed the isolated terrain intent on primeval plunder — was extended to allies with whom treaties of mutual protection had been established.

Thus, when Makkan clans jointly determined to assassinate the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, they designated a member of his own Hashemite clan to commit the heinous act on their joint behalf in order to forestall revenge attacks by his clan and its allies.

Nationalism and racism were also deeply rooted in pre-Islamic Arab society. No one could have envisaged a time in which non-Arabs would hold positions of status. It was inconceivable that a non-Arab, black or white, would ever be considered the equal of an Arab.

It was within this setting that the Prophet ﷺ proclaimed the Islamic Principle of Equality — that all of humanity is equal and all are entitled to equal rights — regardless of race, background or tribal extraction. Astoundingly, shortly after he had done this, the first line of worshippers in congregational prayers — that included Persians like Salmān, Roman slaves like Ṣuhaib and black Abyssinians like Bilal — stood shoulder to shoulder with the most distinguished members of the Quraish tribe.

In one famous *ḥadīth*, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, 'All of humanity are as equal as the teeth of a comb.' Although today this doctrine

may appear to be accepted, in those times it was regarded as a bizarre, revolutionary concept. So, what we refer to today as 'Human Rights' were in reality established 14 centuries ago — when Divine Will revealed the principle of equality to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

It was the broadmindedness of the Prophet's teachings that gave impetus to Islam and its principles being spread throughout the world. Compliance with equality and justice is a core value of Islam, even in dealings with those who have treated us, our family or other Muslims unjustly.

Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān:

Ill feeling towards others should never cause you to behave unfairly.  
Act justly, for that is closer to piety.

**Qur'ān 5:8**

Ill feelings towards those who barred you from entering the sacred mosque are not valid grounds for unjust behaviour.

**Qur'ān 5:2**

It is recorded that once, while the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ sat with his companions, a funeral cortège passed by and he ﷺ stood up out of respect. A companion remarked that this was only the funeral of a Jew, implying that that was far too unimportant for the Prophet's attention. He challenged this by asking, 'Was he then not also a human being?'

Myriad examples of Islamic broadmindedness are recorded in historical reports. Here are some examples:

### **Regarding justice, fairness and impartiality**

When a Jewish person sued Imām 'Alī ؑ — then the Caliph — over a shield that the plaintiff claimed was his, the judge — who addressed the defendant by his title and the plaintiff by name — was criticized by the Imām for not being impartial.

### **Regarding openness to criticism**

People confronted by a diversity of views often hold resolutely to their own opinions and are loath to accept criticism, or the validity of contrary views. Despite Islam teaching that only the Prophet ﷺ and his error-free progeny ؑ are protected from error in their decisions and behaviour, Imām

Zayn al-‘Abidīn ؑ declared, ‘May Allāh be merciful to those who make me aware of my shortcomings.’ The Imām ؑ here emphasizes the need for people not to be irate when their opinions are contradicted or their faults exposed, but rather to be grateful to those who afford them the opportunity to improve.

### **Regarding forbearance and patience**

In *Sūrah* 18 (the Cave), Allāh relates the dialogue between the Prophet Mūsa ؑ and the person traditionally referred to as Khidr — who is renowned for his Divine gift of great wisdom. Mūsa ؑ asks permission to accompany Khidr to draw benefit from his wisdom. Before agreeing, Khidr warns Mūsa ؑ that his patience and forbearance are not adequate to comprehend Khidr’s actions. So Mūsa ؑ promises to remain silent until Khidr has explained his actions.

On their journey together, Khidr smashes a hole in a boat’s hull, murders a young man and rebuilds a wall without request or payment. Mūsa ؑ finds these actions inexplicable and unacceptable and on each occasion criticizes Khidr — who responds by saying, ‘I warned you that you would not have the patience and forbearing to understand.’

In his later explanation, Khidr reveals that he had damaged a poor family’s boat in order to prevent it being pillaged by an approaching tyrant; that the murdered boy was depraved and about to bring about the ruin of his parents; and that the wall he rebuilt was owned by two orphans whose parents had secreted their inheritance under it. He ended by saying, ‘This is the interpretation of my actions that you were not patient enough to accept.’

This story is an illustration of the need to remain patient, regardless of how bizarre life’s occurrences may occasionally appear to be.

### **Regarding considered decisions being better than hasty ones**

People’s immediate responses reflect what they see as being of benefit or disadvantage to themselves. However, Islam teaches that decisions should not be made prior to considered reflection on the long-term benefit and/or disadvantage of situations. Indeed, Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān:

You may dislike a thing that is beneficial and love a thing that is potentially harmful.

Qur’ān 2:216

You may dislike something that Allāh has endowed with abundant benefits.

**Qur'ān 4:19**

### **Regarding remaining receptive to a variety of opinions**

To arrive at safe and sound conclusions in their inferences of rulings from Islamic sources, Muslim jurists employ rigorous intellectual analysis of the variety of relevant issues that need to be considered. While unstinting in their effort to seek out and examine the widest variety of possible opinion prior to issuing a ruling, they always leave room for the possibility of further opinions being considered later.

When a jurist relies on an unequivocal text, he/she presents the ruling as a '*fatwā*' or independent binding opinion. However, when a text is equivocal or ambiguous, or if more than one potential interpretation of the facts is perceived, in place of a *fatwā*, jurists who follow *Ahl al-Bayt* traditionally issue a statement that underlines that their recommendation is to be followed as 'an obligatory precaution'. This, by definition, means that one may either accept their opinion or refer to the next most learned jurist for one.

There is no overarching central authority that issues 'diktats' for Muslims to adhere to. Everyone is free to consult the 'learned counsel' of their choice to resolve questions regarding rulings of *Sharī'ah*, vis-à-vis their daily lives, or to pass judgements in their disputes.

Another sign of his broadmindedness is observed in the advice the Prophet ﷺ gave regarding seeking the advice of those who are knowledgeable — regardless of their being believers or not.

Imām 'Alī عليه السلام said,

With the same relentlessness with which a person searches for a precious item they've lost, a believer's search for wisdom even includes consulting those without faith.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 78, p.34**

As the above examples clarify, broadmindedness was, indeed, an essential characteristic of the Prophet Muhammad's personality.

## 1.2 Emphasis on the doing of good and the condemnation of evil

One of the most important teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is his emphasis on it being the duty of every Muslim to work towards the establishment of a moral environment. In numerous *āyat* in the Qur'ān, Allāh counsels believers that it is their moral responsibility to enjoin that which is good and to condemn all things that are evil:

And there should be among you a group who call [humanity] to virtue, who enjoin good and condemn evil; it is they who will prosper.

**Qur'ān 3:104**

All nations are equal in the eyes of the Creator. Not one is superior to any other, except in its moral standards:

The best nations are those that believe in Allāh, enjoin good and condemn evil.

**(Refer to: Qur'ān 3:110)**

'*Ash'arite* belief is that the human intellect is not able to distinguish between good and evil — in the absence of *Shar'i* rulings. In contrast, *Imāmiyah* and *Mu'tazilite* belief is that common values are shared by everyone who is of sound mind (regardless of their religious faith) and that this commonality is rooted in humanity's innate instincts — *fiṭrah*. Honesty, charity, fairness, truthfulness, modesty and all other moral values are commonly accepted as desirable, while dishonesty, greed, arrogance, deception and all other vices are commonly accepted as being undesirable qualities.

These teachings are clearly part of the Prophet Muḥammad's personality and attitudes, for in addition to preaching them, he exemplified and implemented them during his lifetime. The following narrations evidence his emphasis to enjoin good and condemn evil:

1. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'My nation shall live in prosperity while they enjoin good, do not tolerate bad behaviour and cooperate with one another in good works. When they abandon these, Allāh's blessings will be withdrawn and some [i.e. tyrants] will overcome them so that they suffer without relief or refuge on this earth.'

**Tahzeeb al-Aḥkam, Vol. 2, p.58**

2. Imām 'Alī عليه السلام said, 'Always adopt the practice of virtue and enjoin others to do so too — and take care to practise what you yourself preach.'

Ghorar al-Hikam, p.569

The Qur'ānic term for a good deed is *ḥasanah* and for an evil deed *sayyi'ah*. Whilst the former may be committed by both humankind and Allāh, the latter are only committed by human beings. He tells us in the Qur'ān:

Whatever good befalls you is from Allāh while all the ill that befalls you is from yourself.

Qur'ān 4:79

In order to encourage humanity to do good and avoid evil, Allāh promises to multiply good deeds by a factor of ten but to consider each evil action only as a single unit. For, He tells us in the Qur'ān:

While those who present a virtue will receive a tenfold reward, those who present a vice will only be accountable for a single act.

Qur'ān 6:160

Another Qur'ānic term related to this subject is *iḥsān* — derived from the word *ḥusn* — the quality of being good and beautiful. *Iḥsan* is referred to in the following *āyat*:

1. Indeed Allāh enjoins justice and kindness and generosity to one's relatives, but He forbids indecency, wrongdoing and aggression.

Qur'ān 16:90

2. Can the response to goodness be anything other than goodness?

Qur'ān 55:60

3. Allāh's mercy is close for those who do good.

Qur'ān 7:56

See also Qur'ān 2:195; 28:77; 4:36.

### 1.3 Mercy as the basis of all action

Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān that:

The Prophet Muḥammad was sent as a mercy to humanity.

**Qur'ān 21:107**

Many *āyat* of the Qur'ān combine guidance and mercy to underline that both mercy and kindness are necessary to 'guide people to the right path'. See, for example, Qur'ān 6:157; 7:52; 7:154; 7:203; 10:57; 12:111; 16:64; 16:89; etc.

Allāh's mercy encompasses all things.

**Qur'ān 40:7**

The Qur'ān is itself a remedy and a mercy.

**Qur'ān 17:82**

Marriage is considered a source of tranquillity, love and mercy.

**Qur'ān 30:21**

Allāh is The Most Merciful.

**Qur'ān 7:151; 12:92; 23:109**

All but one *Sūrah* of the Qur'ān commence with:

'In the name of Allāh the Beneficent the Most Merciful'.

Affection and kindness between people is a sign of Allāh's mercy to His creatures. According to one Prophetic *ḥadīth*, Allāh Almighty created 100 different categories of mercy — each one as wide as the distance between the heaven and the earth. Only one of that hundred lies at the root of motherly kindness; the facility creatures have to find water; and the ability of humans to live in harmony and peace (*Kanz al-Ummāl*, Tradition 10407).

When Imām Zayn al-ʿAbidīn عليه السلام was told that Al-Hasan Al-Basri had said:

One should not be surprised at the numbers who perish, nor how they perished — but rather by the numbers who survive and how they survived.



The Imām ﷺ commented:

One should not be surprised by the vast numbers who attained salvation, but rather by why the whole of humanity does not.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 78, p.153**

In order to receive Allāh's Mercy on 'The Day of Judgement', the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ advised his followers to be kind to their fellow human beings:

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Those who are not merciful will not receive mercy.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 82, p.76**

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition 5971**

Those who are not merciful while on this earth will not receive mercy in heaven.

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition 5972**

Allāh is the All Merciful and loves those who are kind.

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition 10381**

Convey mercy to three groups of people — those of distinction who have been humiliated; those who were rich but have lost their wealth; and scholars who live amongst the ignorant.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 74, p.405**

Imām 'Alī ﷺ said, 'Be kind to those in inferior positions to you, and the One who is above you will show kindness to you.'

As mercy is the basis of desirable behaviour, violence and hatred are rejected by Islam. And Islam teaches that merciful treatment is to be directed to all of Allāh's creation — not only to human beings.

Comparison between teachers who treat their students with kindness and those who treat them with indifference or contempt illustrates that kindness leads to improvement in learning and achievement. Similar effects may also be observed in the plants of gardeners who tend them lovingly,

compared to those for whom gardening is merely a chore; and the recovery rates of patients who are nursed with loving care.

So, we are in no doubt that we always need to remain merciful.

## **1.4 Education**

Education is the distinctive activity that enables human beings to fulfil their mental and social potential. It is through this process of social normalization that humanity is endowed with its character. While individual biological characteristics, such as hair, eye colour and physical features, are inherited, the mental and social constituents of personality are acquired through education. It is the only process by which maturity and improved spiritual, material and social character may be achieved. The objectives of education then are:

1. To inculcate individual discipline.
2. To promote social trends beneficial to society.
3. To encourage a broadminded approach to the search for knowledge.
4. To promote comprehension of the philosophy of life.
5. To promote commitment to the development of society.
6. To promote and develop individual artistic talent.
7. To promote rigorous research methodologies.
8. To enhance spiritual development and purification of the soul.
9. To promote professional development and competence.
10. To programme for academic, intellectual and economic progress.

The faith of Islam emphasizes the significance of knowledge and accords the highest social status to those who are learned. In the illiterate society of the Arabian peninsula, bereft of educational structure or centres of excellence, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ encouraged everyone to seek knowledge.

Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān:

Allāh will elevate to high status — those who have faith and those who have been given knowledge.

**Qur'ān 58:11**

Many *aḥadith* refer to the significance of knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ said:

The merit of a scholar, compared to that of a worshipper, is like a full moon compared to a tiny star.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 1, p.164**

Scholars are the successors of the prophets.

**Al-Kāfi, Vol. 1, p.32**

**Sunan abi Dāwūd, Vol.2, p.285**

The most valuable people are those who are the most knowledgeable, and the least valuable, those who have the least knowledge.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 1, p.164**

Those who leave home to seek knowledge in order to support truth or to remove confusion from the public's minds, will gain the reward of having worshipped for 40 years.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 1, p.182**

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition 28835**

Imām 'Alī ؑ is reported to have told his companion:

O Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth because knowledge safeguards you, while it is you who has to safeguard wealth. In addition, while knowledge is increased and deepened in being disseminated, wealth dwindles in being distributed.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Maxim 147**

Further:

It is incumbent upon all Muslims to seek knowledge.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 1, p.177**

Angels spread their wings for those who seek knowledge and plead for their forgiveness.

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition 28745**

The best charity is to teach what one has learned.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 2, p.25**

It is the responsibility of the scholar to clarify and to guide.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 3**

In the search for knowledge one should be prepared to travel as far abroad as China.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 1, p.180**

At the time of the Prophet ﷺ, even the many months-long journey to the distant centres of knowledge in China was considered to be worthwhile. The Prophet ﷺ encouraged everyone to seek knowledge — from the cradle to the grave — for education and the pursuit of knowledge are not limited by time or distance.

## **1.5 Focus on the 'eternal' rather than the 'temporary'**

Those who consider this life to be the sole manifestation of existence are surely short-sighted, for all Divine messages emphasize that this life is but one small step towards the eternal.

It was extremely difficult to uproot the materialistic attitudes of the Arabian peninsula and convince people of the significance of the hereafter. Most of the Prophet's time in Makkah was spent promoting awareness of the life to come. For without any perception of the eternal existence of God, it is difficult to talk about eternal life.

Essential qualities of the 'eternal' are:

1. By definition, the eternal is self-existent — it has no beginning, because if we were to suppose it had a beginning, we would have to acknowledge that it had been non-existent before that beginning.
2. By the same token, the eternal has no end and is understood to be everlasting.
3. That which is eternal also has to be self-sufficient — for it cannot be in need of anything.
4. Thus, the eternal can be neither compound nor mixture.
5. That which is eternal cannot by definition be subject to change.

The above points may be summarized as follows:

A timeless God does not remember or forget; has neither future nor past; does not change; and there can be no temporal gap between His forming a plan and its execution.

Having explained the concept of an 'Eternal Creator', we now examine the concept of 'eternal life'.

The question is: have we been created for a temporary existence in this world — or for a more all-embracing existence? To quote Imām 'Alī's advice to his son:

O my son, know that you have been created for the next world and not for this one . . . you are in a place that does not belong to you — a house in which to prepare for your passage to the next world.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Letter No.31**

In a sermon Imām 'Alī عليه السلام describes the movement of the whole of humanity towards the hereafter, saying:

O people, this world is a passage but the next world is a place of permanent abode. So take all that you can in your passage to your permanent abode . . . here you have been put on trial, for you've been created for the next world.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 203**

It is clear that Islamic teaching emphasizes the significance of eternal life and considers the materialistic world to be nothing other than a bridge over which to pass to arrive at the 'other side'.

All evil is the consequence of desires for the things of this world. On the other hand, focus on the eternal and preparation for it is the quality that leads to righteous behaviour.

Although it is not possible to make comparison between that which is 'limited' and that which is 'eternal', Allāh does tell us in the Qur'ān that a single day in the life that is to come is equivalent to 50,000 years of life on this earth . . . (See Qur'ān 70:4)

The Qur'ān provides 76 references to 'eternal life', both for those who are to benefit from its endless bounty and bliss, and for those who are to face endless unpleasantness and grief.

Not only does focus on 'eternal life' broaden our perspective on the purpose of life, it also extends our ability to understand how to behave in order to ensure that we meet our objective.

No single act — good or evil — is missed, for all are 'bricks' for the construction of the life to come and contribute to the promised bliss or chastisement that we are warned about.

## CHAPTER 2

# Core Beliefs of the Faith

### 2.1 The Universe and its Creator

All Divine religions teach that the source of every perfection — the Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator — created the Universe and that the entirety of existence is an effect caused by Him. In contrast to the atheist's viewpoint, every Prophet promoted the belief that all of creation derives its 'existence' from One Pure and Perfect Source — the Almighty Creator.

Even though human beings tend, in general, to believe only in tangible things, and have difficulty comprehending things that lie beyond the senses, every Prophet has stressed that the Creator does not fall within the orbit of human sensual ability. Islamic theology has striven to study and clarify that it is only via 'inner sight' that we are able to access the concept of the Creator.

At the time of the emergence of Islam, idolaters justified their beliefs with claims that 'We only worship them to bring us closer to Allāh' (Qur'ān 39:3). This illustrated that despite their actions being diametrically opposed to their claims, they nonetheless inwardly acknowledged that a Creator had brought everything into existence. In their attempts to rationalize such human beliefs, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle established Ontological, Cosmological and Teleological arguments in proof of the existence of God. However, many Christian and Muslim thinkers combined the above quoted arguments with textual sources to conclude that 'the whole Universe was created by one Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator'.

Belief in such a Creator is the bedrock of all theistic religion. Despite this, anthropomorphism appears to have created confusion in the minds of

Christians, who believe in ‘the Trinity’, and those Muslims who describe the Creator’s actions in human terms. Islam removes all such ambiguity:

Allāh is One. Allāh is He on whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like Him.

**Qur’ān 112**

Nothing is like Him, for He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

**Qur’ān 42:11**

All praise is due to Him for He is immeasurably exalted, beyond their comprehension.

**Qur’ān 17:43**

Not the weight of an atom in heaven or on earth escapes His knowledge.

**Qur’ān 34:3**

The technical term for belief in ‘One True God’ — *tawḥīd* — encompasses two levels. The first is rejection of many deities for the affirmation of One Divinity. In other words, the rejection of finite deities for the affirmation of One Absolute and Infinite Divinity. The second level of *tawḥīd* is only attainable by the most devoted and sincere. It is only achieved through the total annihilation and extinction of the ‘self’ — and after that, there is the possibility to pass beyond all stations, levels and manifestations of the contingent phenomenal world. As the faith of believers deepens, so does acceptance of natural causes being expressions of Divine Will. This was articulated by the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام when he said,

It is He who guides me and provides me with food and drink; and when I become sick, it is He who cures me; who will bring about my death; and it is He who will bring me to life and, I hope, forgive my iniquities on the Day of Judgement.

**Qur’ān 26:78–82**

The above statement does not negate the role of natural causation, but rather clarifies that natural causes are but tools through which Divine Will operates. It follows that in the comprehension of *tawḥīd* at its deepest level, a believer does not consider the salary paid by his/her employer as being the main provision for life, but sees that Allāh Almighty is the true provider —



and that His provision reaches them in the form of an employer's salary, maintenance provided, charity given or other means. Similarly, in seeking medical help, a patient will regard that help as coming from Allāh, via the assistance of the National Health Service.

## 2.2 It is the Creator who makes the law

All societies have legal systems to establish and maintain order, regulate business and social relationships, safeguard rights and prevent anarchy. Without such controls chaos would reign.

Two types of law exist — that which is written and that which is not. The term 'unwritten law' refers to the common laws based upon customs that have obtained the force of law by being established with the implied consent and practice of illiterate people. Such laws have not been instituted by charter or parliament and are unrecorded and unregistered — other than in the memory of the people.

On the other hand, 'written laws' in most democratic systems emerge from a legislative body that has been elected by the people [parliament].

As far as 'religious law' is concerned, legislative authority lies entirely and absolutely in the hand of the Creator. Although jurists strive to apply Principles of Religion to contemporary issues of life, 'Revelation' is the bedrock upon which their analysis and conclusions rest. According to the Qur'ān, Allāh is both Creator and Lawmaker. When the Prophet Mūsa ﷺ was ordered to invite the Pharaoh to the 'One True God', Pharaoh asked, 'Who is your Lord?' Mūsa ﷺ replied, 'Our Lord is the One who created all things and then guided them' (Qur'ān 20:50). Here, guidance refers to both spiritual enlightenment and legal order.

In a *ḥadīth* reported from Imam Mūsa al-Kāẓim ﷺ, we are told that Allāh has provided humanity with two sources of guidance — one internal, the other external. Internal guidance is provided by wisdom and the intellect, external guidance from Allāh's Prophets. It is through this external resource and authority that the intellect is able to acquire comprehensive guidance.

The human being is a complex, obscure and indivisible whole that cannot easily 'be known'. We still lack the methodology to enable us to understand all the various parts of the whole being. Numerous techniques and precise sciences are necessary even to study one small part of this complex system,

let alone the complexity of the whole that incorporates the mysterious spiritual aspects of the soul. Only the ‘One who Created a Being’ is aware of its full complexity, capabilities and well-being.

*Sharīah* is the technical term for religiously established laws, described in Qur’ān 45:18 as being ‘the path to be followed’. As emphasized in Qur’ān 42:13, Allāh has ordained the religion that was enjoined upon Nūh, Ibrāhīm, Mūsa and ‘Īsā ﷺ when He said, ‘Establish the religion and do not be divided therein.’

Allāh has no need for advantage or profit from ordaining the law and encouraging His creatures to follow the right path. Indeed, all ‘dos’ are purely for the advantage of His creatures — and all ‘do nots’ are purely to avert disadvantage from His creatures.

### **2.3 Messengers are human beings inspired by divine knowledge**

Allāh tells us in *Sūrah* 17 that the disbelievers in Makkah were not prepared to accept Muḥammad ﷺ as Allāh’s Messenger without supranatural evidence for his claim of being the Prophet of God. They said to him, ‘We will not believe you [O Muḥammad] until you make a spring of water gush forth for us from this [arid] land. Or until you have a garden of palms and vines and make rivers suddenly surge through it. Or you cause, as you threaten, the heaven to shatter and drop upon us; or you bring Allāh and the Angels face to face before us. Or you have a house of gold, or ascend into the heavens; and we will not believe you have been there unless you bring back a book which we may read. Say then [O Muḥammad], “Glory to my Lord. I am only a mortal who has been sent as a Messenger.”’

The reason for the above *āyat* being revealed was because a group of well-known members of the Quraish tribe — including Walid, the son of Mughirah and Abu Jahl — had gathered near the Ka’bah to request the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to open discussions with them. The Prophet ﷺ attended in the hope of guiding them towards the right path. The Makkan spokesperson began by listing the many changes Muḥammad ﷺ had wrought to the traditions and customs of their tribe. He concluded, ‘You have disrespected our gods, ridiculed our religion, annulled our ambitions and created disunity. If your purpose is to gain wealth, we are prepared to

help you achieve that; if you are after political power, we are willing to establish you as the head of the tribe; if you are suffering from anything, we will assist you in any way we can.'

Muḥammad's response was, 'I seek none of these; the truth is that Allāh has sent me as a Messenger and revealed His Divine scripture for me to deliver to you. If you accept it, you will gain the prosperity of this life and the life hereafter. If you reject it, I will patiently persevere until Allāh passes His Judgement between us.'

The spokesman replied, 'If you persevere, you will not find a place more uncongenial than our city — so ask your Lord to move these mountains and make rivers flow in our land like those of Syria and Iraq.'

The Prophet ﷺ responded, 'I was not sent to do such things.' They said, 'Then ask your Lord to send down Angels to certify your status and to bestow on you castles of gold within lush gardens.'

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'I was not sent to do such things. I brought you what has been sent with me and what I have been ordered to deliver. If you do not accept this, I must leave the matter with Allāh.'

They then said, 'Then cause, as you threaten, that the heavens shatter and drop down upon us.' He ﷺ said, 'That is up to Allāh.'

The Prophet ﷺ then left. Abdullah, the nephew of 'Ātikah and Abu Umayyah, went with him saying, 'O Muḥammad, they made you generous and fair offers, yet you refused them. When they challenged you, you declined to accept their challenges, so we will not believe you until you ascend into the heavens and bring us back a book to read.'

Abu Jahl threatened, 'If he does not cease disrespecting our gods and ridiculing the customs of our ancestors, I will have a boulder dropped on him when he prostrates himself.' The Prophet ﷺ, who hoped they would follow the right path, was disturbed by the incident until the above *āyat* were revealed.

If they thought all this would end the Prophet's claim to prophethood, he ﷺ disappointed them. The Prophet's twofold response to the Makkan suggestions, designed to safeguard idol worship and existing traditions, was:

1. Allāh Almighty is glorified and above puerile requests.
2. That he, like them, was human, while the supernatural incidents and

miracles they demanded were under the sole control of Allāh Almighty and could only be brought about with His permission.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ, sent as a teacher of humankind, shared their joys and sorrows, mingled with them and was acquainted with their doings. He was merely a human being who had been inspired with Divine wisdom. There would have been no point in Allāh sending angels as messengers. Had they been sent, they would have caused confusion rather than understanding. The leader of society must match the nature of those who follow, be a role model whose characteristics people can emulate. This is not possible unless feelings, emotions and desires have a similar basis. Had the Messenger of Allāh had no idea about anger, greed, jealousy, self-centredness or other human emotions, how could he have been in the position to propose solutions for them?

Familiarity with the hardships, difficulties and sufferings of ordinary folk provides eligibility for a leader to empathize with his people and make realistic proposals. To give an example, Imām ‘Alī ؑ wrote to his governor in Basra after the latter learned that he had attended a banquet.

Remember, everyone emulates their role model. Be informed that your leader [himself] has contented himself with two shabby garments out of all the comforts of the world — and only two loaves for his daily sustenance. It is unlikely that you will be able to do the same, but at least support me by remaining pious, chaste and upright. By Allāh, I have no treasure of gold in this world nor have I plentiful wealth . . . Should I be content with being called Commander of the Believers, even if I do not share with them their lives’ hardships? . . . I try to keep myself engaged in piety so that I am secure on the Day of Judgement and steady on the slippery path. If I wished, I could have found my way to pure honey, fine wheat and silken clothing — but I dare not allow passions to lead me to greed.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Letter No.45**

It is clear from the above that Allāh’s Messengers are human beings who share the same qualities as all other human beings. Notwithstanding this, they have been inspired by Divine Will, and at Allāh’s discretion, to present miracles and supranatural evidence of His existence.

## 2.4 Humanity is en route to eternity

The materialists' vision of life is limited to the short period of existence that begins at birth and ends at death. They do not accept, and thus do not contemplate or have aspirations or objectives for, the time after death. In contrast, the Prophet of Islam ﷺ emphasized that all of humanity is continuously and inexorably being driven towards eternity. Believers thus seek perfection — by the elimination of their shortcomings and negative thoughts — in pursuit of the elements of salvation and spiritual advancement.

Many *āyat* in the Qur'ān point to the inevitability of humanity ultimately meeting their Lord:

Truly, we are Allāh's and to Him we shall return.

**Qur'ān 2:156**

Your final destination is with your Lord . . . [on the Day of Resurrection].

**Qur'ān 75:12**

You will be driven to your Lord on that day [Day of Resurrection].

**Qur'ān 75:30**

And your Lord is your final destination.

**Qur'ān 53:42**

In Qur'ānic terminology, 'The Lord' is the Absolute, Perfect, Limitless and Eternal Existent, and thus it is to this that the whole of humanity is being directed. Imām 'Alī ؑ described this temporary life as the bridge that spans the gap between 'that which is limited and that which is unlimited'. He ؑ explained the role of this analogy in the establishment of Islamic personality when he said,

This world is a thoroughfare but the next world is a permanent abode. So, garner in this thoroughfare all that you will need in your final abode . . . take your hearts away from this world — prior to your bodies being taken from it — because here you are 'on trial', but your destination is the everlasting hereafter. When a person dies people ask what property they have left — but the Angels ask what good actions they have sent forward. May Allāh bless you — send forward

something that will benefit you and do not leave anything behind that will be burdensome to you there.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 203**

In some *āyat* of the Qur'ān, those who do not strive for advancement in their spiritual life are described as losers, and in others as being animals.

Vis-à-vis temporal and eternal life, Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān:

You prefer the life of this world, even though the hereafter is everlasting and superior. Indeed, this is mentioned in previous scriptures, the scriptures of Ibrāhīm and Mūsa.

**Qur'ān 87:16–19**

## **2.5 Islamic jurisprudence – Sharī'ah – is to guarantee justice**

As in many legal systems, the 'beam-balance scale' — *mizān* — is used to represent the Islamic concept of 'equitable and unbiased justice' that is indispensable in all social and commercial interactions. Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān, 'Truly, Allāh commands you to return everything that is placed in your trust and that when you pass judgement between people, to do so with justice' (Qur'ān 4:58) — and no one is excluded from this ruling regardless of their status or position.

When a woman at the highest social level of the Makhzum clan was accused of theft, influential members of the tribe were fearful lest she be sentenced to have her hand amputated. In discussions over the societal effect of such an occurrence, they pondered on who should represent her when her case was put before the Prophet ﷺ. Knowing of the Prophet's high regard for 'Uthmān bin Zayd, they asked him to plead for mercy on her behalf. The Prophet ﷺ responded to 'Uthmān bin Zayd's plea with the question, 'Are you asking me to violate a decree of Allāh?' He continued, 'The communities that preceded you were destroyed, because regardless of their being found guilty, those at the highest social levels were not obliged to fulfil the terms of their sentences, while in sharp contrast, lower socio-economic groups could not evade being punished for their misdeeds. By Allāh, had Faṭimah ﷺ been convicted of stealing, I would have had her hand cut off.'

When Imām ‘Alī’s blind brother ‘Aqīl asked him for extra funds from the *Bayt al-Mal*, his ﷺ irritated response was,

By Allāh, I would rather lie sleepless on a bed of thorns, or be driven a captive in chains, than have to meet Allāh and His Messenger on the Day of Judgement as an oppressor of people or a usurper of worldly wealth . . . I saw my destitute brother ‘Aqīl beg me for three kilograms from your share of wheat, and I saw his emaciated children suffering the pangs of hunger. He came several times to repeat his request in the hope I would sell my faith to meet his need. When I heated a piece of iron and brought it close to his body so that he could feel its heat, he cried out in pain. I then said to him, “Aqīl, why do you cry on account of the heat of this piece of iron while you try to drive me towards the fire that Allāh Almighty has promised those who violate his just ruling?”

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 224**

Imām ‘Alī ﷺ was punctilious about both the collection and distribution of *Bayt al-Māl* funds and the behaviour of appointed governors. He wrote to the governor of Azerbaijan:

Certainly, your assignment is not to provide you with the means to accumulate wealth; it is in reality a trust around your neck. Until passed on to me you are liable for the funds in your safekeeping — for they are the property of Allāh Almighty.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Letter No. 5**

On another occasion, Imām ‘Alī ﷺ wrote to the governor of Baṣra:

If I should discover you have misappropriated any Muslim funds, large or small, I shall inflict punishment upon you that will leave you empty-handed, heavily burdened and utterly humiliated.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Letter No. 20**

Although affection and kindness between people is a sign of Allāh’s Mercy to His creatures, the establishment of justice in an absolute and uncompromising way has a significant role in every aspect of *Shari’ah*.

## CHAPTER 3

# What is Sacred to Muslims?

### 3.1 The Holy Mosque in Makkah

While the primary function of a mosque is as a place of worship, mosques are also centres for learning and charity — in addition to being the place of the community's social, cultural and political activity.

Over 4,000 years ago, the Prophet Ibrāhīm and his son Ismā'īl عليهما السلام built the Ka'bah — lit. 'cube' in the Arabic language — for the worship of Allāh, and this now stands at the centre of the Holy Mosque in Makkah. Wherever they might be, all Muslims align themselves to face in the direction of the Ka'bah when they offer prayer and it is thus, for Muslims worldwide, the most revered place of worship in the world.

It is believed that the Ka'bah, constructed of stone blocks, was erected on the original site of a sanctuary established by the first Prophet, Adam عليه السلام. Embedded in the corner of the structure is the foundation stone initially used by Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, a meteorite that is referred to as the 'Black Stone'.

The city of Makkah lies in the Valley of Ibrāhīm, located within a rugged landscape of granite rocks, some as high as 300 metres (1,000 feet) above sea level. To the North lie the Al-Falaq and Qu'aqi'an mountains, to the South the Abu Hudaidah range, to the West the Kuday and to the South and South-East the Abu Qubais and Khindimah.

There are three main entrances to Makkah: Al-Mu'allat (also known as Al-Hujoon), as well as Al-Musfalah and Al-Shubaikah. It is generally agreed



that Al–Mu‘allat serves those areas that are higher than the Holy Sanctuary, and Al–Musfalah those that are lower.

### **Qur’ānic references to the Ka’bah**

And remember Ibrāhīm’s plea:

O Lord, make this land secure and shield me and my children from idol worship. O Lord, idols have led many astray, so those who follow [my faith] are truly of me, and for those who disobey me — You are truly the oft-forgiving, the merciful.

My Lord, in order to establish prayer there, I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley near Your sacred house. Please, incline people’s hearts towards them, and grant them fruitful sustenance so that they have reason to be grateful.

**Qur’ān 14:35–37**

Recall that when Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl were raising the foundations of this house [they prayed], ‘O All-Knowing, All-hearing Lord, accept this labour from us.’

**Qur’ān 2:127**

When We confirmed to Ibrāhīm the place for this house [We said]:

Do not associate anything with Me, and keep My house clean for people to walk round — stand before — and bow down and prostrate.

Now make the [duty of] pilgrimage known and call upon people to come to you on foot, and on beasts made lean by travel from far-distant places.

**Qur’ān 22:26, 27**

So that the Quraish remain secure and safe during their winter and summer journeys, empower them to worship the Sustainer of this house who has granted them food against hunger and safety in the face of danger.

**Qur’ān 106:1–4**

### 3.2 History of the Holy Mosque

Over the years, the pagans of the Arab peninsula forgot the message of Ibrāhīm ؑ and filled the Ka'bah with idols — some say with as many as 365. As de facto custodians of the Ka'bah, the pagan Quraish tribe, who resided in Makkah, promoted pilgrimage to the then idolatrous 'holy site' for the undoubted commercial benefits that this brought.

After the Prophet Muḥammad's peaceful reconquest of Makkah in the year 8 AH/630 CE, the Ka'bah was purified of idols. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrates in his *Musnad* and al-Nissa'i in his *Khaṣaiṣ* that the Prophet ﷺ asked 'Alī ؑ to kneel down so that he ﷺ could stand on 'Alī's shoulders to reach the roof of the Ka'bah. However, as 'Alī ؑ felt himself to be an inadequate support for the Holy Prophet of God ﷺ, it was 'Alī ؑ who stood on the Prophet's shoulders to complete the purification process. Once the Ka'bah had been cleansed, pilgrimage was made an obligatory once-in-a-lifetime duty for Muslims who can afford it, and worship was redirected to Allāh — Creator and sole Divinity.

At that time, the Holy Mosque consisted of an open circular space of some 2,000 square metres (21,528 sq ft). Throughout history, successive Islamic regimes have striven to dignify and honour this most Holy of mosques. This matter of extreme pride has been — and still is — considered their greatest and most treasured responsibility. Thus, over the centuries, the Holy Mosque in Makkah has been extended many times.

#### Regarding the change of qiblah from Jerusalem to Makkah

When the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prayed for the first time in the Holy Mosque, together with his wife Khadījah and cousin 'Alī ؑ, they faced in the direction of Jerusalem. After his migration to Madinah, he ﷺ continued to face Jerusalem until the following *āyah* was revealed:

As We see your face turning to the heavens [for guidance], We shall direct you towards a qiblah that will please you. So turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque — and face in its direction wherever you may be.

**Qur'ān 2:144**

At the time of this revelation, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was visiting the village of the small 'Bani Saleem' clan. There, he and his companions

offered *Ṣalāt al-Duḥr* facing Jerusalem — but after the above revelation came down, they faced in the direction of the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to offer *Ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr*. As the result, this ‘Bani Saleem’ mosque, on the outskirts of Madinah, has become known as ‘The Mosque with Two *Qiblahs*’ — and it is today still visited by pilgrims on *Ḥajj* and ‘*Umrah*. It is remarkable that the Prophet ﷺ, with no map or geometrical instruments to indicate the direction of Makkah from that mosque, was nonetheless able to turn to face in the precise direction of Makkah.

Prior to this change, the Jews of Madinah had teased Muslims that they had no option other than to face this Holy Jewish site.

### **The significance of Makkah itself**

I swear by the existence of the fig, the olive, Mount Sinai and this secured city [Makkah], that We indeed created human beings in the most excellent of moulds; yet diminish them to the lowliest form — except for those who believe and perform commendable deeds that merit endless recompense. Who can then refute this ‘Moral Law’, is not Allāh the Most Just Arbitrator?

**Qur’ān 95:1–8**

In the above *sūrah*, Makkah is referred to as ‘The Secured City’ — *Al-Balad al-Amin* — to indicate that immunity is granted to all who seek refuge within the Holy Mosque at its centre, even in circumstances in which this is done to evade prosecution. However, many scholars argue that for justice to be served, those in charge should prevent relatives and friends bringing food to the mosque so as to encourage such people’s departure. However, on the 1st Muḥarram 1400 AH, after the 1979 *Ḥajj* season — when a gentleman called Al-‘Utaibi declared himself the *Mahdi* and his followers urged those inside the mosque to pay allegiance to him — the authorities of the Ḥijāz invited a Special French Rapid Response Force to enter the sacred mosque in armoured vehicles and hunt him down.

## **3.3 The Divine Final Scripture (the Qur’ān)**

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ invited the whole of humanity to Islam. In presenting the matchlessness of the Qur’ān as proof of his prophethood, he challenged the Arabs to produce its like, as individuals or in collaboration

with one another. He later reduced the degree of difficulty of his challenge to the composition of ten, and later, to only one *sūrah* like it. See Qur'ān 17:88; 52:34; 11:13; 2:23; and 10:38.

Arab society clearly expected those renowned for eloquence and oratory among them to rise to this direct challenge to their ability, reputation and status — for the duty to negate the proof submitted by the Prophet ﷺ had clearly been directed at them.

However, reflection on the eloquence of the Qur'ān led such acclaimed Arabs to concede that they could not replicate the matchless content of the Qur'ān. Hence, some of them believed the 'Caller to the Truth' and accepted the call of the Qur'ān. However, there were others who chose rather to forsake eloquent words and counter his claim by force of arms.

While the prophecies of earlier prophets were limited to their own times — Divine Wisdom decreeing their miracles be of short duration — in the case of the Eternal *Sharī'ah*, the miracle that attests to its truthfulness remains its timelessness. For if the validity of this miracle had been limited, it would not have been meaningful to those distanced from it by location or time.

It was the Qur'ān that enlightened the hearts of those who had been devoted to idols, tribal warfare and pre-Islamic vainglory. It was the Qur'ān that disposed them to kindness and empathy towards each other and to forsake those who rejected faith. Hence, by virtue of Islam, Muslims became the cohesive and convincing group that attracted others to their faith.

Many *āyat* in the Qur'ān deal with the essential issues of theology and ascribe attributes of perfection appropriate to Allāh Almighty's prestige — and exalt Him beyond the effects of deficiency and contingency. No other Divine Scripture deals with these issues in such a precise manner.

### **Vis-à-vis monotheism**

They [unbelievers] say:

God has taken to Himself a son, be He glorified. No, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His. All are subservient to Him — the 'Originator' of the heavens and the earth! When He decrees a thing, he only says 'Be' and it is.

**Qur'ān 2:116–7**

Your God is One God; there is no Divinity save Him, The Merciful, The Compassionate.

**Qur'ān 2:163**

Allāh, there is no Divinity save Him, The Ever-living, The Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him.

**Qur'ān 2:255**

Nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allāh. It is He who fashions you in the womb as He pleases. There is no Divinity save Him, The All-Mighty, The Wise.

**Qur'ān 3:5–6**

Such is Allāh your Lord. There is no Divinity save Him, the Creator of all things, worship Him for He tends everything. Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends all. He is The Subtle, The Aware.

**Qur'ān 6:102–3**

Say, Allāh produces creation, then reproduces it. How, then, are you misled?

**Qur'ān 10:34**

It is Allāh who raised up the heavens without visible support, then mounted the Throne and compelled the sun and the moon to be of service. Each runs to an appointed term, and it is He who orders their course. He details the revelation that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord.

**Qur'ān 13:2**

It is clear from the above examples that the Qur'ān describes the Creator of the Universe in a manner that accords with reason. For it would not have been possible for an unlettered person, who grew up in an environment of ignorance, to bring forth such distinguished knowledge.

### **Vis-à-vis prophethood**

Qur'ānic references to prophets confirm their excellent virtues and accord them the status appropriate to their sanctified station of prophethood and Divine Deputyship:

Those who follow the Messenger; the Prophet; the unlettered one; the one whom they find mentioned in the Torah and Injil, he commands them to do good; forbids them to commit evil acts; makes all pure and good things lawful for them; and all things foul and filthy unlawful . . .

**Qur'ān 7:157**

It is He, who sent among the unlettered ones, a Messenger of their own, to recite to them His Revelations and teach them the Book and Wisdom . . .

**Qur'ān 62:2**

Thus, did We show Ibrāhīm the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, that he might be of those who possess certainty.

**Qur'ān 6:76**

We bestowed upon him [Ibrāhīm] Ishāq and Ya'kūb, each one of them We guided, and Nūḥ we guided before this, and of his seed we guided Dāwūd and Sulayman and Ayūb and Yusuf and Mūsa and Hārūn. Thus, do we reward the good. And Zakaria and Yaḥya and 'Īsā and Ilias, each of them was of the righteous. And Ismā'īl and Al-Yasa' and Yunus and Lūṭ. Each one of them did We prefer above Our creatures, with some of their forefathers and their offspring and their brethren. We chose them and guided them to The Straight Path.

**Qur'ān 6:84–87**

These are of the seed of Adam to whom Allāh showed favour from among the prophets, and of those whom We carried in the ship with Nūḥ, and of the seed of Ibrāhīm and Isra'il, and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the All-Merciful were recited to them, they prostrated in respect and wept.

**Qur'ān 19:58**

While the above *āyat* refer to the holiness and righteousness of prophets that accords with their position as role models for their communities, the sacred book of Christianity and Judaism, in marked contrast, portrays some prophets in rather unflattering terms — for example:

**II Samuel**

**1:11–16** David has the Amalekite killed — who had brought Saul's crown and bracelet to him after acquiescing in Saul's request to slay him.

**II Samuel**

**David commits adultery with Bathsheba (wife of Uriah the Hittite):**

**11:2** . . . he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful.

**11:3** David sent someone to enquire . . . 'This is Bathsheba . . . the wife of Uriah the Hittite.'

**11:4** So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. [Now she was purifying herself after her period.] Then she returned to her house.

**11:5** The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, 'I am pregnant.'

**11:6** So David sent word to Joab (commander of his army), 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.'

**In 11:7–13** David encouraged Uriah to go home to his wife, but Uriah felt it not right for him to go home to eat and drink and lie with his wife while his comrades were camping in the fields and still in danger.

**11:14** David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it to him by the hand of Uriah.

**11:15** In the letter he wrote, 'Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die.'

**11:16** As Joab was besieging the city [Rabbah], he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew their most valiant warriors would be.

**11:17** . . . Uriah was killed as well.

**11:27** When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and she bore him a son.

**I Kings**

**11:3–10** David [and Bathsheba's] son Solomon — who had 700 royal wives and 300 concubines — did not in old age remain wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord. He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Phoenicians [NRSV Bible — Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians]; and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, built a shrine for Chemoth, the abomination of Moab etc., and the gods of all his strange wives.

## **Socio-ethical teachings of the Qur'ān**

The Qur'ānic legislative system and its teaching is rational. The Qur'ān advocates justice in the clearest manner possible.

### **Vis-à-vis justice**

Allāh commands that you return all valuables held in your care and that if you pass judgement on anyone, you do so with justice.

**Qur'ān 4:58**

Deal justly, that is closest to your duty.

**Qur'ān 5:8**

If you give your word, keep true to it, even if that may be to the detriment of a kinsman.

**Qur'ān 6:152**

Allāh enjoins you to justice and kindness and to give to kinsfolk, but forbids lewdness, abomination and wickedness. He exhorts you to take heed.

**Qur'ān 16:90**

### **Vis-à-vis the condemnation of miserliness**

Let not those who hoard what Allāh has bestowed from His bounty think that doing so is better for them. No, it is far worse, for what they hoard will prove a burdensome yoke for them to bear on the Day of Resurrection . . .

**Qur'ān 3:180**

On the other hand, the Qur'ān condemns extravagance and squandering:

Do not be spendthrift for Allāh loves not those who are extravagant or wasteful.

**Qur'ān 6 :141**

Those who squander wealth are brothers of the devil.

**Qur'ān 17:27**

Do not be miserly and worthy of reproach, nor so generous that you become destitute.

**Qur'ān 17:29**



### Vis-à-vis Qur'ānic evidence and scientific fact

Some matters that the Qur'ān informs people about were unknown until later advancements in scientific learning and discovery. For example, everything in the earth has its own specific weight:

We have spread out the earth with stabilizing mountains and caused everything to grow on it in proper measure.

**Qur'ān 15:19**

Well before scientists discovered that each element has a specific atomic weight, the above *āyah* could not be fully understood or made sense of.

Among the unknown things that the Qur'ān disclosed 14 centuries ago is the existence of other continents. In this respect, Allāh Almighty declares,

[Allāh] Lord of the two Easts and Lord of the two Wests.

**Quran 55:17**

This *āyah* perplexed Qur'ānic scholars for many centuries. Numerous interpretations were proposed — that the *āyah* refers to where the sun and the moon rise and set — or that it refers to seasonal changes in the rising and setting angles of the sun and moon. However, in the light of current scientific knowledge, this *āyah* is clearly seen to allude to the existence of another continent — on the other side of the earth — where the rising of the sun corresponds to its setting on this side.

This is clear from the following *āyah*:

Until he comes to us he will say [to Shayṭān], 'I wish there was the distance of the two Easts between you and me.'

**Qur'ān 43:38**

i.e. the furthest distance possible, namely at the other side of the world.

Another unknown thing to which the Qur'ān refers is the fact that the earth is round:

Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and Lord of the sun's risings.

**Qur'ān 37:5**

This *āyah* indicates that the sun rises and sets over the earth at more than one point, and this cannot be understood other than by the earth being a rotating

sphere. That the rising of the sun over any part of the globe coincides with its setting over the other is also mentioned in other Qur'ānic references:

I swear by the Lord of the Easts and the Wests that We are able to replace them with better people.

**Qur'ān 70:40–41**

We conclude that the Qur'ān is the eternal miracle and the strongest proof that this final Divine scripture was Allāh's revelation to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. It follows that every statement contained within it is sacred.

Although it is the content of the Qur'ān that is sacred, Muslims treat the physical book with the deference due to its content. They do not permit it to be exposed to anything that might be construed to be disrespectful. One *Sharī'ah* ruling concerning the Qur'ān is that no one who is not in a state of ritual cleanliness is permitted to touch its script. This is based upon the *āyah*,

It is truly an honourable scripture from a safeguarded source, and none may touch it without having been thoroughly purified.

**Qur'ān 56:77–79**

### 3.4 Muḥammad ﷺ — guide and exemplar

The value and validity of received information relates, not only to the relevance of the authority of its source, but also to the credibility and integrity of those who convey it. The Prophet of Islam ﷺ could not have successfully invited others to comport themselves in a manner that he himself was unfamiliar with. This applies equally to the error-free Imāms ؑ who followed him, for they too needed to be seen to evidence the behaviour that they advocated.

The characteristics of Allāh's final Messenger ﷺ described in the Holy Qur'ān are:

1. That Muḥammad is a Messenger — this is emphasized in many *āyat*, for example:

Muḥammad is only a Messenger, other messengers have passed away before him.

**Qur'ān 3:144**

2. That obedience to Muḥammad reflects obedience to Allāh:

The Messenger himself drew no benefit or authority from people hearing the message he was sent to deliver. The benefit, and the authority invested in him, is derived solely from the authoritative source of the message that was revealed to him ﷺ:

O you who believe, obey Allāh and obey His messenger and those vested with authority over you, and then, if you really believe in Allāh and the last day, refer your disputes to Allāh and His Messenger.

**Qur'ān 4:59**

Those who obey the Messenger, indeed obey Allāh.

**Qur'ān 4:80**

3. That ten characteristics are attributed to Muḥammad ﷺ:

Those who follow the Messenger [1]; the Prophet [2]; the unlettered one [3]; the one whom they find mentioned in the Torah and Injil [4]; he commands that they do good [5]; forbids them to commit evil acts [6]; makes all pure and good things lawful for them [7]; and all things foul and filthy unlawful [8]; and relieves the yoke of burdens upon them [9]; thus, those who believe in him honour him, help him and follow the light sent with him [10] achieve success and salvation.

**Qur'ān 7:157**

4. That he ﷺ invites you to a life of enlightenment:

O you who believe, respond to Allāh and to His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life . . .

**Qur'ān 8:24**

5. That he ﷺ is an excellent exemplar:

Truly, in the Messenger of Allāh you have an excellent exemplar . . .

**Qur'ān 33:21**

6. That being softly spoken in his presence is a sign of piety:

O you who believe, do not raise your voices above that of the Prophet . . . truly, those whose hearts have attained piety speak softly in the presence of Allāh's Messenger.

**Qur'ān 49:2-3**

7. That previous Messengers gave glad tidings of his coming:

‘Īsā, the son of Maryam, said, O children of Isra’il, truly I am Allāh’s Messenger — assigned to confirm the Torah sent before me, and to transmit the good news that a Messenger named Aḥmad is to come after me . . .

**Qur’ān 61:6**

8. That he ﷺ has been delegated to bear witness for all communities:

Deeds that communities and individuals commit in this temporary life are to be judged on the Day of Resurrection. The objective of each Messenger has been to guide their community to the ‘Right Path’. Although they fulfilled their assignments, not everyone has adhered to their teachings. So should any plead that they did not receive a message, and as such, were unaware of what was expected of them, the need for reliable witnesses arises:

What will they do when We bring witnesses from each community, with you [Muḥammad] to be a witness against these people?

**Qur’ān 4:41**

On the day when We raise up in each community a witness against them, We shall bring you [Muḥammad] as a witness against them . . .

**Qur’ān 16:89**

9. That He is a Mercy for the whole Universe:

It was only as a mercy for the worlds that We sent you.

**Qur’ān 21:107**

10. That His message is addressed to the whole of humankind:

We have sent you to convey good news and to be a Warner for the whole of humankind.

**Qur’ān 34:28**

The above-mentioned points summarize the personality of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ — the one sent to guide the whole of humankind towards light, mercy, justice and every good quality. He is venerated by all Muslims.

### 3.5 Acts of devotion

There are many reports in *Al Şiḥaḥ al-Sittah* — the six major Sunni reference books on *aḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ — that the pillars of Islam are five:

1. *Şalāh* (five daily prescribed times for worship)
  2. Fasting during the month of *Ramaḍān*
  3. Payment of *zakāh*
  4. Pilgrimage during the *Ḥajj* season
  5. Declarations that there is no divinity but Allāh, and Muḥammad ﷺ is His Messenger
- Şaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Chapter of Faith, Vol. 1, p.9

However, the Shi‘ah source this information in Kulayni’s *al-Kāfi* that the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Islam is established upon five pillars’:

1. *Şalāh* (the daily five prescribed times for worship)
  2. Fasting during the month of *Ramaḍān*
  3. Payment of *zakāh*
  4. Pilgrimage during the *Ḥajj* season
  5. *Wilayah* — the guardianship of the faith by error-free Leaders whom believers love and turn to for guidance
- Al-Kāfi*, Vol. 2, p.15  
*Wassa’il al-Shi‘ah*, Vol. 1, First chapter, Tradition No.1

When we compare these two sources, it is apparent that all Muslims agree on the significance that acts of devotion, such as Prayer, Fasting, payment of *zakāh* and Pilgrimage, have with regard to faith commitment. Without these ‘acts of devotion’ faith would be worthless.

In many *aḥadīth*, the acceptance of good deeds hinges upon prayer also being accepted — if that aspect is rejected, all others are too.

To summarize the significance of daily devotional prayer:

1. It improves communications with The Lord.
2. It is able to be offered individually as well as in congregation.

3. It is considered to be the 'instrument' by which believers ascend to the spiritual realm.
4. It is not regarded as a duty but rather as a confirmatory aspect of submission to the Almighty.

All the above and the details of how to pray and what is to be recited during the prayer are explained in chapter 9 of this book.

## CHAPTER 4

# Social Behaviour

### 4.1 Respect for elders — parents in particular

Allāh Almighty instructs humanity to reciprocate their parents' devotion to their well-being and education through tender, kind and thoughtful consideration for them in their old age. Qur'ānic references include:

For your Lord has ordered you not to worship any except Him. He also commanded you to be good to your parents. Should either or both of them reach old age and need care, do not behave irritably or reproach and reject them but always respond to them gently.

Treat them with humility and tenderness and pray, 'Lord be merciful to them, as they were to me when I was little.'

Your Lord is aware of what is in your heart and how you behave [towards His Creation]. He is All-Forgiving to those who repent.

**Qur'ān 17:23–25**

Here, as well as in *āyah* 151 of *Sūrah* 6, Allāh Almighty links His order — not to worship any other than Him — with His command to treat parents well,

Come, I will clarify what Allāh really prohibits, do not associate anyone or anything with Him; and be good to your parents . . .

**Qur'ān 6:151**

These two commands are linked in order to emphasize the significance of parental rights. The assertion 'Allāh is Divine' separates atheist from Muslim, as does obedience to heavenly injunctions.

Society depends on parents maintaining responsibility for the care, nurture and education of their offspring — and this is balanced by the reciprocal responsibility to be good to parents.

The Qur’ānic expression ‘lower the wing of humility’ implies compliance and acceptance of the will of another. The analogy of a bird lowering its wings to conceal and protect its offspring illustrates the tender, caring treatment that parents most need when they themselves are old and dependent. We are told to be gentle and to ensure we do not express any irritation that might upset aged parents — regardless of how they may behave in their dotage.

Many *aḥādīth* emphasize the need for patience and kindness towards parents, beautifully expressed by Imām ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn عليه السلام in the *du‘ā*,

O Allāh, fill me with an awe of my parents like the awe in which people hold tyrannical sovereigns; let me be devoted to them with the devotion of a compassionate mother!

Make my obedience and commitment to them more pleasing to me than sleep to the drowsy, more refreshing than drink to the thirsty; so that I prefer their inclination over mine.

O Allāh, thank them for my upbringing, reward them for their kindness, and protect them as they protected me in my infancy.

**The Psalms of Islam, Prayer No.24**

In considering the degree of parental duty to mature children, jurists have debated the extent of a father’s responsibility regarding decisions over his son’s property. Some conclude that there are no limits to a father’s complete authority over his offspring. They base this on the *ḥadīth*, ‘You and your property belong to your father.’ However, we understand this to relate to ethical values rather than civil laws concerning ownership.

During the daily formal prayers — *ṣalāt* — we are recommended that when standing in submission to Allāh — *qunūt* — we should pray, ‘O Lord, be merciful to my parents as they were to me in infancy.’ It is highly recommended that gratitude towards parents continues to be expressed even after they have died. After that time, Muslims should beg Allāh to shower their parents’ souls with His mercy. We take comfort in the belief that prayers, which Allāh has specifically ordered us to offer, will indeed be accepted by Him.



Although the above is addressed specifically to parents, by inference it extends to all senior members of the family and community. Indeed, in this ‘two-way system of Islam’, elders are expected to treat the young with mercy and kindness, and the young to reciprocate by treating the elderly with deference.

## 4.2 Charity

Giving and caring for others is an elemental characteristic of Islamic behaviour. Indeed, everything around us is a manifestation of giving. The sun has provided light and heat for millions of years, and continues to do so, for without it life on earth would not be possible. Forests provide the oxygen that sustains us in addition to the material with which to produce the millions of publications that educate and inform us. Our hearts beat to supply life-sustaining blood to our other organs. All these manifestations demonstrate the significance of giving. The Qur’ān and *aḥādīth* describe the concept of charity as follows:

### From the Qur’ān

Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh are like grasses with seven ears — each with 100 grains. Truly, Allāh gives manifold increase to whomever He wills . . .

**Qur’ān 2:261**

While it is acceptable to give donations in public, it is preferable not to reveal one’s generosity to the poor. That will redeem some of your evil deeds and Allāh is aware of all that you do.

**Qur’ān 2:271**

Sincere giving of what one has — out of a longing to please Allāh — may be likened to a garden on elevated ground. Rain falls freely upon it and it yields twofold fruits . . .

**Qur’ān 2:265**

O you who believe, spend of the good things you have earned from what We have brought forth from the earth. Do not give as charity worthless things which you would not want yourselves . . .

**Qur’ān 2:267**

[O Muḥammad] take charity from their wealth to cleanse and purify them and then pray for them. Truly, your prayer is an assurance of their tranquillity. Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Do they not know that it is Allāh who accepts His servants' repentance and receives their charity . . .

**Qur'ān 9:103-4**

There is seldom good in secret deliberations other than to enjoin charity, goodness or to reconcile people. Those who meet in secret in order to seek Allāh's pleasure will be granted enormous rewards.

**Qur'ān 4:114**

Vie with each other to obtain the Lord's forgiveness and paradise — which is as wide as the heavens and earth. It has been prepared for those who safeguard themselves with full awareness of Divine law. Those who spend, while prosperous or straitened, who control anger and forgive people . . .

**Qur'ān 3:133-4**

Those who recite the book of Allāh, establish prayer and spend what We have given them — openly or in secret — aspire for imperishable reward.

**Qur'ān 35:29**

### **From aḥadīth**

The Prophet ﷺ said:

My community will prosper whilst they remain faithful to one another, return the things that they hold in trust and give in charity. When they no longer fulfil these duties, they will face famine and shortage.

**Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 6, p.13**

While charity is delivered by the hand of its owner, it voices four statements:

I was perishing and you have given me existence.

I was insignificant and you have given me significance.

I was an enemy and you have turned me into a friend.

**I was protected by you and you have made me your protection until the day of resurrection.**

**Al-Ithna Ashariyah, p.223**

**Give charity to restore your family — for charity removes bad fortune and ailments, prolongs life and increases rewards.**

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Vol. 6, p.371**

**Imām ‘Alī ؑ said:**

**Allāh Almighty has established the livelihood of the destitute in the world of the rich. If the destitute are hungry, it is because they have been denied their due by those who are rich.**

**Nahj al-Balāgha, Maxim 328**

**Imām Ṣādiq ؑ said:**

**When you are in financial need, get out of bed early — for the means of subsistence are distributed before sunrise. Allāh Almighty blessed this nation in its early hours. So give charity in the early hours, for adversity does not follow charity.**

**Al-Amāli by Sheikh Mufid, p.72**

**The first thing which will be weighed on the Day of Judgement will be the charity given to relatives.**

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 49, p.94**

## **Commentary**

**While Islam promotes charity it does not encourage people to accept it, not to mention ask for it. However, as there are always people who need assistance, it is important for those with means to remain sensitive to the needs of others — so that none are ever obliged to ask for help.**

**Human beings are only temporary custodians of Allāh’s sustenance and favour. In the past this has been in the safekeeping of others, as it will be again in the future. Thus, commendable charity is given ‘for the sake of Allāh’, in the knowledge that what is being given is not owned or earned by the donor. Therefore, to be parted from property presents no problem. Muslims who comprehend this never humiliate or belittle those to whom**

they give, nor do they feel they have done a great favour for which reciprocation is due.

Charity is not restricted to the giving of money; it is a broad concept that embraces greeting others warmly, smiling and seeking to solve another's problems — without expectation of gain.

The theme of the Qur'ānic *āyat* 2:261–274 that exhort believers to give charity willingly for the pleasure of Allāh, makes the following points:

1. The motivation should be to seek Allāh's pleasure and not to 'show off' (2:264).
2. The act should not be followed by self-reproach or injury (2:263) (2:264).
3. What is given must be lawful and pure.
4. Maintain trust in the Provider and ignore Shayṭān's encouragement not to give.
5. Give both openly and in secret.
6. The rewards for giving are in both this world and the one to come.

Those who give to display magnanimity should not expect to be rewarded by Allāh. To clarify this, He provides the analogy of soil being completely washed off a smooth rock in the first heavy downpour, while similar rainfall on fertile earth is absorbed so that the earth eventually becomes adorned with abundant vegetation.

To conceal charitable gifts is to protect the recipient of them from embarrassment, shame or disgrace, and to preserve their standing in the eyes of others. This is emphasized in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ — 'One hand knows not what the other gives.' However, this in no way implies that there is no reward in giving openly as stated in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6, verse 1 — 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen by them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven.'

### 4.3 Care of others — orphans and the destitute in particular

Orphans, deprived of tender, loving, parental attention, are entitled to the utmost care and consideration in Muslim society. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ declared that in paradise, those who have cared for orphans will remain in close proximity to him. He ﷺ illustrated this by holding together two fingers of one hand, to demonstrate that they would never find themselves further away from him than those two fingers.

It is the duty of a guardian to employ the utmost diligence to safeguard the rights and property of orphan(s) under her/his protection. Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān,

Safeguard the property of orphans until they attain maturity . . .

Qur'ān 17:34

In another *āyah* He tells us:

Those who unjustly consume the property of orphans ingest the fire that will soon envelop them.

Qur'ān 4:10

With good deeds balanced against bad, we are led to understand that jealousy consumes good deeds in the same way that fire consumes wood. Thus, usurping the property of an orphan is described as ingesting fire rather than food.

A lady came to the Prophet ﷺ saying, 'O Messenger of Allāh, my husband died leaving me and his daughter, but we did not inherit a thing.' The deceased's brother said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, how can she expect to inherit from him when she neither rides a horse, attacks her enemies, nor earns. What she needs, others have to provide for her?' It was in response to this that the above *āyah* was revealed.

Islamic jurisprudence deals comprehensively with the matter of guardianship of minors and orphans. Guardians are obliged to continue to support orphans in their care until they attain physical and spiritual maturity and the competence to deal with their own property.

In a general guideline, Allāh's order to the Prophet ﷺ is:

Do not oppress orphans.

**Qur'ān 93:9**

In the Qur'ān, Allāh Almighty addresses the Muslim community directly, 'O you who believe', or indirectly, via His instructions to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, as in the above example. Such instructions include the care of helpless creatures — orphans, dependants or those incapable of managing their own affairs for whatever reason — as sacred trusts. Such sacred trust also applies when one is petitioned to help — by the poor seeking financial assistance, the ignorant seeking information, knowledge or guidance or the helpless seeking protection. All petitions should be granted in accordance with the resources Allāh has made available, for a Muslim's duty is to share Allāh's bounties with those who have been endowed with a lesser facility than ourselves — whatever that facility might be.

In another *āyah*, Allāh refers to those who neglect the needs of orphans, as having no belief in the Day of Resurrection:

Have you seen a person who denies the existence of final judgement?  
Well, that is the one who rejects orphans and does not encourage the feeding of the poor.

**Qur'ān 107:1–3**

Allāh Almighty tells us in the Qur'ān that the good deeds that will repel misfortune on the Day of Judgement include:

The freeing of captives and feeding those who have insufficient food to survive on, the orphans and the homeless.

**Qur'ān 90:15**

An essential lesson that Allāh taught previous nations was:

Do not worship any other than Allāh, treat your parents and kindred well and care for orphans and the needy.

**Qur'ān 2:83**

To underline this point, Allāh likens the care of those in need to the care of one's own parents and relatives.

Even though it is only close relatives who normally expect to be included

in an inheritance, Allāh recommends that a portion of an estate be earmarked for distribution to orphans and the needy when disbursement is made:

When kinsfolk and orphans and the needy are present at the time the estate is being disbursed, also provide for them from it and speak kindly to them.

**Qur'ān 4:8**

Although the Prophet Mūsa ﷺ and Khidr were refused food and hospitality after their journey, Khidr immediately began to repair a wall that was in danger of collapsing. Mūsa ﷺ argued, 'If you had wished, you surely could have received a payment for this work.' However, Khidr explained that the wall belonged to a pair of orphaned boys whose inheritance had been secreted within its foundations — and so your Lord has willed that they receive their inheritance when they attain maturity.

**Qur'ān 18:82**

This *āyah* underlines the importance of safeguarding the property of orphans — even if in doing so one is also required to undertake a little unpaid work.

#### 4.4 Honesty

The integrity of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, before he received Allāh's Divine Message, was due to two evident aspects of his behaviour: honesty and truthfulness — *Al-Ṣādiq* and *Al-Amin*. Pagan and idolatrous Arabs entrusted their wealth to the care of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ simply because honesty is admired by all, regardless of faith, race or colour.

Imām Baqir ﷺ said:

There are three meritorious acts that are not excusable to ignore: the return of what has been entrusted, regardless of the owner being righteous or a sinner; the fulfilment of covenants, regardless of these being held with honourable or dishonourable people; and being kind to parents, whether they are righteous or not.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 74, p.176**

The above *ḥadīth* emphasizes the merit of honesty and trustworthiness, that the Qur'ān refers to as being signs of true faith:

Those who are faithful will certainly attain success . . . [as will] those who remain true to their trusts and covenants.

**Qur'ān 23:8**

Even though acts of worship reflect commitment to faith, true faith is verified by one's honesty rather than the duration of one's ritual activity. The Prophet ﷺ once said to his companions:

Do not be misled by the time someone spends offering prayer, fasting or the frequency with which they go on pilgrimage, but rather form your opinion by how truthful and trustworthy their behaviour is.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 75, p.114**

The above criterion was held in such esteem by the error-free Imāms عليهم السلام that Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام said:

Had the murderer of Imām 'Alī عليه السلام entrusted me with anything, I would most certainly have returned it to him.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 75, p.114**

## 4.5 Fairness and justice

Fairness and justice are observable characteristics of elevated and purified souls, for those who are fair do not wrong others and avoid selfish or self-centred actions. Islamic teaching describes these commendable qualities thus:

### From the Qur'ān

O you who believe! Stand firmly with justice.

**Qur'ān 4:135**

O you who believe! Remain principled for the sake of Allāh and bear witness with justice. Do not let hatred of anyone provoke you into intolerant behaviour. Conduct yourself honourably, for that is nearer to piety.

**Qur'ān 5:8**



If you judge, judge with impartiality, for truly, Allāh loves those who are just.

**Qur'ān 5:42**

Give full measure and weight with justice, and be just when you speak, even if it is against a kinsman; fulfil Allāh's covenant.

**Qur'ān 6:153**

Say, my Lord has enjoined justice.

**Qur'ān 7:29**

Measure with justice and do not shorten the balance.

**Qur'ān 55:9**

In truth, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and sent with them the book and the balance so that people can establish themselves in justice.

**Qur'ān 57:25**

### **From aḥadīth**

The Prophet ﷺ said:

An hour's justice is worth more than 70 years of fasting the whole day and praying the whole night. One hour of injustice is worse than 60 years of sin.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 75, p.352**

The highest level of justice is to love for others what you love for yourself, and hate for them what you hate for yourself.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 75, p.25**

Whoever is in charge of ten people and does not deal with them justly will, on the Day of Judgement, arrive with their hands and legs in chains.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 75, p.345**

When someone said to the Prophet ﷺ, 'I would like to be one of the most just people', he ﷺ replied, 'Then love for others what you love for yourself.'

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition No.44154**

Imām ‘Alī عليه السلام said:

**Justice is the most secure of foundations.**

**Ghorar al-Ḥikam**

**Allāh created justice in order to sustain and protect humanity from sin and cruelty.**

**Ghorar al-Ḥikam**

**Faith is based on four pillars: patience, certainty, justice and jihād.**

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Vol. 3, Maxim 31**

Imām ‘Alī عليه السلام included in his will the advice to his sons:

**Be just to friend and foe alike.**

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 77, p.236**

Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام said:

**Justice is more welcome than water discovered by the thirsty.**

**Al-Kāfi, Vol. 2, p.146**

**A seeker of wisdom followed a wise man 700 miles for the answer to seven questions. The sage answered the question, ‘What is greater than the whole world?’ with the single word — ‘Justice.’**

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 75, p.344**

## **Commentary**

**Chingiz-Khan sent three Muslim envoys to offer peace and safe commercial relations to Sultan Muḥammad of Khwarazmshah. Although the Sultan responded favourably, when a caravan of 450 merchants and Muslims arrived from Mongolia with 500 laden camels, he detained and murdered them. He subsequently also murdered other envoys sent by the great Khan. From 1219 to 1221, Mongol armies pursued Muḥammad and his son Jalal al-Din across Iran through Azerbaijan and into Syria — leaving death and devastation in their wake. The entire Kingdom of Khwarazm passed into the hands of Chingiz-Khan, together with a sizeable part of Iran. The Mongol conquest of central Asia that ended the Caliphate was achieved in less than three years.**

When he came to Baghdad, the Mongol Lord Hulagu assembled Muslim scholars to ask, 'What is preferable, an unjust Muslim ruler or a just non-Muslim governor?' With the concurrence of the other scholars present, the highly respected *Sayyid* 'Alī ibn Tawus responded, 'A just non-Muslim is better than an unjust Muslim' (*Al-Fakhri fi al-Adāb al-Sultaniyyah*, p.17). He based his response on a *ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, 'While the state may function on disbelief, it cannot continue with injustice' (*Kashif al-Ghita, al-Din wal Islam*, Vol. 1, p.116). That reply is claimed to have saved Hilla, Najaf, Karbala and all the inhabitants of southern Iraq from destruction.

It is unsurprising to find that 'The Just' — *Al-'Adl* — is one of Allāh's most beautiful names and that the *Imāmiyah* include justice as one of the five principles of faith.

'*Adl* is itself the root word from which *Al-'Adl* — The One who is Just — is derived. *Al-'Adl* is He who is just and from whom all justice emanates — the justice that underpins peace, harmony and order from which balance flows. He gave all things existence, created all things perfectly and, with absolute justice and generosity, sited creation in a perfectly balanced environment. Each aspect of creation is fully equipped to fulfil its own special function. *Al-'Adl* represents absolute justice, the converse of tyranny — justice that represents right as opposed to wrong, order as opposed to chaos and harmony as opposed to dissension.

Even though we are not able to observe things at every stage of their journey, or permitted to see their inner aspects, everything is treated justly and is 'as He likes it to be'. Everything has been created with purpose. If we only see clouds, we know that without them we would not appreciate clear skies. Without weakness we would not appreciate strength, without poverty, riches etc. Allāh knows His creation and it knows He is just.

Humankind's share in the attribute *Al-'Adl* is limited to allowing reason and religion to control the passion and anger that cause injustice. To behave justly towards ourselves, our families, relatives, neighbours, employers and employees, we must restrict ourselves to the parameters of Divine Law. On no account may we bestow inappropriate advantages to disrupt order and balance.

Humankind's greatest benefit arises from accepting Allāh Almighty's justice, for His plans, decrees and actions are just, whether they correspond

with our will or not. In the same way that patients accept the medication that doctors prescribe to alleviate their physical suffering, our acceptance of Allāh's Divine and absolute justice alleviates the suffering that stems from objecting to and resisting Allāh Almighty. Absolute faith lies in acceptance of what He has ordained with absolute justice.

The justice of Allāh became a matter of controversy among Muslims. The Shī'ah and Mu'tazilites believe that Allāh is 'Absolutely Just' in the sense that it would be contrary to His nature to wrong anyone. The 'Ash'arite school considers it objectionable to regard Allāh Almighty thus. 'Who are we,' they ask, 'To place any stipulation on the will of Allāh?' They are certain that no one has the right to any opinion on how Allāh will decide any matter, even if he is to commit the righteous to hell and reward the criminal on 'The Day of Judgement'.

The Shī'ah and Mu'tazilites reject that view. They say 'Allāh Almighty Himself' promised to reward the righteous and to punish the criminal and, they claim, Allāh never breaks his promises. Because of their support of Allāh's justice, the Shī'ah and Mu'tazilites came to be known as 'Those who are pro-justice' — *al-'Adliyah*. The *Imāmiyah* school consequently includes 'The Justice of Allāh' as a 'Root of Religion'.

## 4.6 Repelling evil and exemplifying good

By the grace of Allāh surges of adrenaline enable us to react swiftly to stress and danger. However, as with our other abilities, we have the choice to employ this wisely and appropriately — or to squander it on foolishness.

Adrenaline-induced 'fight or flight' responses generate biochemical changes in the brain that may make us aggressive and unpredictable, or make us timid and urge us to flee. At such time our natural judgement system is turned down and more primitive responses take over. If our body triggers the fight or flight response for situations that are not truly life-threatening, we experience what is, in effect, a false alarm. Too many such alarms may result in stress-related disorders, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, immune system disorders, migraine headaches, insomnia and sexual dysfunction.

Fortunately, in civilized society we rarely need to avail ourselves of this risk-facing enhancement, other than in 'extreme sports'. So, it clearly makes

sound sense, physically, psychologically and legally, for us to control our aggressive and unpredictable urges. A society in which aggression-induced stress is constantly met by reciprocal aggression must be the closest thing to hell that we can imagine.

The ability to restrain anger and suppress retaliation not only signifies a refined and developed psyche, but control and self-denial are also prerequisites for spiritual development. Imām ‘Alī عليه السلام, the epitome of courage and bravery, is reported to have said,

The most courageous are those who manage to control their ego’s desires.

**Ghorar al-Ḥikam**

In the Qur’ān, Allāh encourages us to repel evil via good deeds:

[And those] — who in adversity are kept patiently steadfast by their longing to face their Lord; who maintain prayer and give, privately and openly, of what We have provided them, and who repel evil with good — will find fulfilment in the hereafter [their ultimate abode].

**Qur’ān 13:22**

It is these who shall receive a twofold reward for having remained steadfast in adversity, for having repelled evil with good and for having given to others from what We have provided them.

**Qur’ān 28:54**

But, [as] good and evil are diametric opposites, repel [evil] with that which is better, and the hatred of those who regard you as their enemy may be transformed into intimate friendship.

**Qur’ān 41:34**

The above *āyah* stresses that when controversial subjects need to be discussed, Muslims should present the points they wish to make in a mild and inoffensive manner. They should not regard those with whom they debate as enemies, but rather as colleagues with whom they are having amicable discussions.

This is also emphasized in the prayer of Imām ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn عليه السلام:

O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and Muḥammad's Household and  
direct me:  
to resist with good counsel, those who behave dishonestly  
towards me,  
to repay with gentle devotion, those who distance themselves  
from me,  
to reward with generosity, those who have deprived me,  
to recompense with cooperation, those who exclude me,  
to counter with excellent praise, those who slander me,  
to shut my eyes to evil and give thanks for good!  
**Psalms of Islam, Supplication 20**

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ once asked:

Would you like me to clarify what the best morals for this world and the hereafter are? They are to forgive the one who oppressed you, to establish bonds with those who avoid you and to be kind to those who insult you.

Imām Ṣādiq ؑ said something similar:

Three noble qualities belong to this world and the hereafter — to forgive those who oppressed you; to make bonds with those who separate themselves from you; and to show forbearance when insulted.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 71, p.339**

These are not empty exhortations for they were exemplified by the lifestyles of the error-free Imāms ؑ. When a man from Damascus who was in Madinah happened to chance on Imām Ḥusayn ؑ, he broke into an abusive tirade about him and his family. The Imām's response was to say, 'I see that you are a newcomer to town. If you have not yet found accommodation you are welcome to stay at my house; if you are famished by your journey please dine with us; if the costs of travel have strained your finances I will be pleased to be of assistance.' Those who overheard this exchange were amazed by the differences in tone of the two men and quite taken aback when the Damascene accepted the proffered hospitality. Before this traveller

left Madinah he let it be known that he had hated Ḥusayn ؑ when he arrived in the city, but was leaving it with his heart overflowing with love for him ؑ.

**Biography of Imām Ḥusayn ؑ by Ibn Asakir, p.160**

In a similar incident, Imām ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn ؑ was once confronted in public by an onslaught of vituperation from a cousin. At that time, he ؑ chose to ignore both his cousin and his comments. Not to be silenced, his cousin shouted, ‘I am speaking to you’, to which the Imām ؑ replied, ‘And I am ignoring you.’ Shortly after the offender left, the Imām ؑ suggested to his companions that they follow him home. They assumed the Imām would confront him, but when the door was opened they heard the Imām say, ‘If the statements you made about me are true, I ask Allāh to forgive me. However, if they were untrue, I ask Allāh to forgive you.’ This embarrassed his cousin into making an apology. At this, the Imām ؑ turned to his companions and asked, ‘Which of the two actions was the better?’

**Qadatuna, Kayfa Na’rifuhum, Vol. 6, p.124**

## 4.7 Relationship with other faiths

In the view of Allāh the whole of humanity consists of one single community,

To the one community of humankind Allāh sent Prophets, as bearers of good tidings and as Warners. He sent down to them The Book with the Truth so that He could judge between people . . .

**Qur’ān 2:213**

Three facts emerge from the above *āyah*:

1. the unity of all humanity under One God;
2. the distinctiveness of the different religions brought by various prophets;
3. the role that revelation (The Book) plays in resolving differences that occur between people.

The Qur’ān does not deny the variety of religions, nor that contradictions might exist between them regarding beliefs and practices. At the same time it emphasizes the need to recognize the ‘oneness’ of humanity created by

Him, and the need for all to work towards a better understanding between the followers of the different faiths.

This is illustrated by history. For example, when conditions in Makkah were unfavourable to the early Muslim community and a challenge to the inhabitants of that city, Allāh commanded His Messenger ﷺ to say, ‘you to your religion and me to my religion’ (Qur’ān 109:5). This was even more relevant when real issues of co-existence arose between the followers of Divine scriptures in Madinah.

The universal message of the Holy Qur’ān thus reveals that, without subordination to any limited historical and cultural context, revelation accepts religious pluralism as a necessity. It teaches Muslims to continually negotiate the transformation of society via emphasis on the fundamental aspect of the unity of humanity that lies in its origin — its creation by the Divine Being.

This affirmative principle of diversity is the cornerstone of the Creation Narrative in the Qur’ān and serves to remind people:

Surely this community of yours is one community and I am your Lord:  
so worship Me.

**Qur’ān 21:92**

Rather than regarding diversity as a source of inevitable tension, Qur’ānic teaching underlines the indispensability of variety in defining common beliefs, values and traditions for the community life of the variety of specific traditions.

O humankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allāh is the most God-fearing of you.

**Qur’ān 49:13**

The unique characteristic of Islam is conviction that belief in the Oneness of God unites the Muslim community with all of humanity — because He created every human being, irrespective of their religion, tradition or background. And on the Day of Judgement, all the inhabitants of the world are to be judged, regardless of their sectarian affiliation or moral performance.

In his letter to his governor in Egypt, Imām ‘Alī ؑ wrote, ‘Humanity is made up of two kinds of people, those who believe that they are like others



because all have been similarly created, and those who only believe that they are like those who follow the same faith.’ The Persian poet Sa’di (d. 1292 CE) elaborated, ‘Human beings are members of a body, in which every part is related to every other part, and each of those parts has been created from a single essence.’

Divine gift requires humans, regardless of their particular religious affiliations, to live harmoniously together and to strive for justice and peace throughout the world. In the Qur’ān, Allāh urges humanity to ‘. . . compete with one another in doing good’ (Qur’ān 5:48).

Islam does not claim that revelation was limited to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ alone, for it is known that other prophets also received the truth.

We have revealed to you, as We revealed to Nūḥ, and the prophets after him. We revealed to Ibrāhīm, Ismā’īl, Iṣḥāq, Ya’qūb and the Tribes, ‘Īsā and Ayūb, Yunus, Hārūn and Sulayman, and We gave to Dāwūd Psalms [in the same way as we gave to] messengers We have mentioned to you and messengers We have not mentioned to you — and Allāh spoke to Mūsa. Messengers who gave glad tidings and warnings in order that people may have no argument against Allāh . . .

**Qur’ān 4:163–5**

Islamic recognition of the variety of communities, each with its own laws, attests to the validity of the Jewish and Christian faiths, despite Islam — which avoids extremes and cautions moderation in everything — being the ideal for ‘the best community’.

The Qur’ānic notion of religious pluralism, even when the right path is conceived of as being the only basis for the success of humanity, objects to intolerant claims that various religious communities sometimes make. The Qur’ān refers to moral as well as to religious obligations. While universal guidance indicates that moral standards underpin human well-being, specific guidance indicates the necessity for human beings to exercise their volition in matters of personal faith, if for no other reason than because any attempt to enforce faith would lead to its negation.

Justice is Islam’s most sacred concept. Many *āyat* in the Qur’ān emphasize its significance for all of humanity. Qur’ānic injunctions stipulate the action to be taken whenever justice is violated,

If two parties of believers fight one another, make peace between them [by trying to minimize the causes of the conflict], then, if one of them transgress against the other, fight the transgressor until they comply with Allāh's command. However, when the transgressor once again submits to Allāh's law, make peace between them with fairness and justice and act equitably. Truly Allāh loves those who are just.

**Qur'ān 49:9**

It is obvious that no lasting peace can ever be established without the elimination of the causes of conflict, violations of justice and equity. Consideration of the universal and absolute nature of the moral categories of justice and equity indicates that the Qur'ānic answer to conflict resolution is not limited to believers only. Rather, it conveys universal significance, and an answer to the demand for peace between conflicting parties to be restored by them both and for both to behave justly and equitably towards each other. 'Truly Allāh loves those who are just.'

In another *āyah*, Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān,

O you who believe, always remain upright before Allāh, bear witness with justice and do not let repugnance of others provoke you into not behaving equitably. Behave equitably, that is nearer to piety.

**Qur'ān 5:8**

Islam orders just behaviour, even when 'being just' does not advantage one's own case (Qur'ān 4:135). The obvious conclusion of all of the above is that justice is an absolute concept and one which is not limited to any one religion or race.

During Imām 'Alī's caliphate a dispute arose between the Caliph and a Jewish citizen over the ownership of a shield in the caliph's possession. Imām 'Alī ﷺ attended the court but when the judge addressed him by his title and addressed the claimant by his name, the Imām reminded the judge to observe equity between both parties in the manner in which he addressed them.

It is interesting to note how Allāh addresses humanity, regardless of their beliefs, compared to the way in which He addresses believers. The Qur'ānic expression for the first group is 'O humanity' — *Ya ayuha al-Naas* — while the term used for the second group is 'O you who believe' — *Ya ayuha al*

*ladhina Amanu*. The *āyah* mentioned earlier ‘O humanity, We created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes so that you may know one another’ — is an example of the former group (Qur’ān 49:13).

Directives related to justice, fairness and all aspects of moral and spiritual values are addressed to humanity at large. Those that refer to acts of worship and Islamic law are addressed to those who believe in Islam.

Life is a gift of our Almighty Creator, and none may take it from any of His creation. Taking the life of one individual is considered equivalent to taking the lives of the whole of humanity. On the other hand, saving the life of one individual is regarded as being as noble as saving the lives of all of humanity (Qur’ān 5:32). In this *āyah*, Allāh doesn’t limit sacredness of life to Muslims only. The behaviour of all who arrogantly ignore this is not acceptable to humanity, and neither is it acceptable to those who believe in Islam.

## CHAPTER 5

# Position of Women in Islam

### 5.1 Gender equality

No gender differentiation is found in the Qur'ān. The following *āyat* provide a few examples of the all-embracing nature of the Qur'ān vis-à-vis men and women:

I do not permit the efforts of workers male or female to be unappreciated — all of you stem from the same source.

**Qur'ān 3:195**

Believers male or female who commit righteous deeds shall surely enter paradise . . .

**Qur'ān 4:124**

We shall certainly ensure that the male and female believers, who commit good acts and live virtuous pure lives, will be rewarded for their actions.

**Qur'ān 16:97**

Male or female believers, who commit good acts, will certainly enter the garden of paradise and receive sustenance beyond measure.

**Qur'ān 40:40**

O humankind, we created you male and female and appointed you races and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing among you.

**Qur'ān 49:13**

From the above *āyat* it is clear that gender differentiation is not a component of Qur'ānic teaching.

Further, in a Qur'ānic *āyah* that refers to laudable qualities, repeated reference to both 'men and women' emphasizes that the same standards apply to both sexes and that Allāh's recompense is in no way related to gender:

**Muslim men and Muslim women**

**Faithful men and faithful women**

**Obedient men and obedient women**

**Truthful men and truthful women**

**Patient men and patient women**

**Humble men and humble women**

**Charitable men and charitable women**

**Men who fast and women who fast**

**Men who control their private parts and women who control**

**Men who frequently remember Allāh and women who remember**

**Allāh has prepared for them forgiveness and great reward.**

**Qur'ān 33:35**

However, vis-à-vis rights and obligations, some duties are considered to be the province of men and others of women. For example, in Islamic law a husband is required to maintain his home and family, while his wife is not required to contribute anything to it, be she a millionaire or not. That is why the Islamic Law of Inheritance provides sons with double that of daughters, not in any way to indicate discrimination, but rather to reflect their actual responsibilities and duties. (See section 5.4 Share of inheritance.)

## **5.2 Preparation for motherhood**

As mothers are, de facto, at the helm of family life, motherhood is considered to be the cornerstone of Islamic society. For Muslims, the concept of motherhood is inextricably linked to the Islamic concept of leadership and nationhood — for, in the Arabic language, both are derived from the same root word:

*Um* = mother

*Ummah* = nation

*Imām* = leader

The question is, if a sound and healthy society depends on good mothers, how is this achieved? Muslim interest in the importance of motherhood does not in any way imply that Muslim women should not be educated or fulfil their career objectives (See sections 1.4 Education, 5.1 Gender equality and 5.5 Women jurists and scholars), or be isolated from society, but it does underline the significance of preparation for this most important role. A quotation comes to mind,

Parents wonder why the streams are bitter, when they themselves have poisoned the fountain.

**John Locke, 17th-century English philosopher**

A whole panoply of scientific research indicates that, before and during conception, foetal development and birth, a new organism's nourishment and well-being depends on, and is affected by, its mother's physical and psychological condition. Whilst the following facts have been uncovered over the last 30 years or so, Islam has always promoted the well-being of Muslim society by encouraging family life, insisting on no premarital sex and prohibiting the consumption of substances that can be harmful, such as alcohol.

### **Contemporary society**

Research into contemporary concerns for motherhood has been undertaken by a gamut of scientists such as Larry Bumpass, PhD, N.B. Ryder Professor of Sociology at University of Wisconsin-Madison. In his paper, 'The Changing Contexts of Parenting in the United States', he refers to increasing instability in the lives of children in Europe and the United States, brought about by the changing social context in which parenting interactions and child development take place. He asks, 'do we really value stable relationships and parenting?'

### **Pregnancy**

Research studies in prenatal stress and risk for psychopathology early or in later life by Anja C. Huizink, Edu J. H. Mulder and Jan K. Buitelaar, who

refer to the work of Hepper and Lake, suggest that maternal stress during pregnancy may lead to offspring with much higher rates of childhood autism, psychosis, schizophrenia, emotional and behavioural disorders, and psychiatric disorders in general. Further, it has been reported by Dr Joy Goodfellow that population studies conducted in the last decade suggest that environmental factors active during embryonic and foetal development have substantial consequences vis-à-vis the occurrence of metabolic and cardiovascular disorders in adulthood.

## **Substances**

### **Caffeine**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises pregnant women to eliminate or limit the consumption of products containing caffeine, including coffee, colas, tea, cocoa, chocolate and some over-the-counter remedies. Caffeine has been implicated in miscarriages and low birth weight. Caffeine stimulates increased heart and metabolic rates in babies, just as it does in adults. Furthermore, caffeine may remain in the baby's bloodstream longer and at higher levels, because a baby's immature liver cannot get rid of the caffeine as quickly as its mother's can.

### **Smoking**

Lower birth weight may result from nicotine poison narrowing uterine blood vessels and reducing blood flow to the baby. Increased levels of carbon monoxide reduce blood oxygen that in turn affects the development of the baby's organs. The level of carbon monoxide in the blood of pregnant women who smoke is 600—700 per cent higher than in those who do not. Brain injury results not only from reduced oxygen but also from chemicals in cigarette smoke that poison developing brain cells. Children of mothers who smoked during pregnancy have also been found to have smaller head circumferences, decreased mental performance scores at one year, reduced IQs and diminished academic performance at school, compared with the children of mothers who did not smoke. There is also an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) if mothers smoke — if both the father and mother smoke, the risk of SIDS is nearly double.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol has the potential to damage male sperm and women's eggs and decrease the chances of conceiving by 50 per cent or more. As women do not necessarily know they have conceived for the first four to six weeks of pregnancy, abstention from drinking alcohol will prevent babies from being exposed to it during the early weeks of growth and development. The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that there is no safe level of alcohol for women during pregnancy and recommends abstinence from all alcohol for the entire pregnancy. Heavy alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), a disorder that encompasses a variety of abnormalities. FAS babies are lighter, shorter and have smaller brains than normal babies. Their brains are sometimes malformed and as a result they sometimes suffer mental retardation.

### **Illegal drugs**

When a mother takes a substance, so does her baby. If a mother is addicted, so is her baby. If she breast feeds, the baby will drink drug-laced breast milk. If she does not breast feed, her baby will suffer symptoms of drug withdrawal — convulsions, no appetite, bluish pallor, heavy sweating and endless high-pitched crying. Possible effects of illegal drugs on the developing baby include stillbirth, miscarriage, reduced birth weight, mental retardation, prematurity, and an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Researchers believe that such drugs may constrict blood vessels in the placenta and thus reduce the oxygen supply to the unborn baby — a suffocation effect similar to that caused by nicotine.

In the Holy Qur'ān, the significance of the 'Immaculate Conception' is to illustrate that every precautionary measure had been taken to ensure the safe delivery of 'Isā ﷺ. In the following *āyah*, Allāh employs the word 'peace' to embrace both physical and spiritual purity in reference to the successful completion of the first stage of life — the period of pregnancy. 'Peace be with him the day he was born . . .' (Qur'ān 19:15), and in another *āyah*, 'Isā ﷺ says, 'Peace be with me the day I was born . . .' (Qur'ān 19:33).

In Islam, preparation for motherhood begins with the selection of a suitable marriage partner. As both genetic background and educational environment contribute towards personality, it would be wrong to ignore



them. This is why the background of a prospective spouse is considered to be so important in Islamic culture:

Do you expect, forsooth, that a mother will hand down to her children principles that differ from her own?

Juvenal's Satires, Sat. vi, 1. 239

As it is parental behaviour, especially that of the mother, that establishes the standard pattern of a child's behaviour, it is highly desirable that parental behaviour is exemplary. Imām 'Alī عليه السلام said:

The best legacy to leave one's children is good manners.

Ghorar al-Hikam

The question for the child is not 'Do I want to be good?' but 'Whom do I want to be like?'

Bruno Bettelheim, 20th-century German/American child psychologist and author

For women to be effective role models they, of course, need to participate in, and be part of, society. It is nonsensical to expect them to be in a position to guide the younger generation if they themselves are isolated from, and unaware of, what occurs within society.

### 5.3 **Hijāb is to protect, not to isolate**

To understand *hijāb* we need to look at the following:

1. What the Qur'ān and *aḥadīth* teach us about *hijāb*.
2. The different styles of *hijāb*.

#### **What the Qur'ān and aḥadīth teach us about hijāb**

Tell Muslim men to dress modestly and to lower their gaze [when in mixed company] for that will contribute to their spiritual purity . . .

And tell Muslim women to lower their gaze, to be modest, to conceal the embellishment of their beauty [e.g. jewellery and cosmetics] — other than that which is outwardly visible. To draw their veils over

their bosoms and to only reveal their embellishments to their husbands, brothers, nephews . . .

**Qur'ān 24:30–31**

O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and those women who believe, to conceal their bodies under long loose garments so that they do not excite attraction.

**Qur'ān 33:59**

The precise word for virtuous, modest conduct — an essential Islamic teaching — is the Arabic word *ḥayā'*, that is considered to lie at the root of self-discipline and moral behaviour.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

Modest behaviour encapsulates the whole of religion.

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Vol.3. p.121**

Imām Ḥasan ؑ said:

Those who do not behave with modesty have no religion.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 78, p.110**

Imām Ṣādiq ؑ said:

Absence of modest behaviour equates to the absence of faith.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 71, p.331**

Imām Baqir ؑ said:

Modest behaviour and faith are linked — where one goes, the other follows.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 78, p.177**

In recognizing the compelling effect of sexual attraction, Islam guides us to regulate and direct our natural urges and avert their uninhibited expression. This is analogous to the trickles of pure sweet water that burble from mountain springs to flow into streams and rivers. If unchecked, these may later rise to become great torrents of water that cascade over riverbanks and flood defences, to overwhelm and destroy everything in their path. To avert such destruction, society regulates and directs such waters into reservoirs and dams to contain and preserve their mighty volumes for future use.

Sigmund Freud based his studies on the sexual urge being the foundation of all human characteristics and activity. He started with the identification of two main and powerful human objectives — the defence and protection of each human being's very existence, and the expression of each human being's sexuality. However, he later ignored the first to concentrate solely on the second. The damaging result of this indicates that love loses its spiritual purity and is transformed into sexual gratification. This distortion led him to link suckling at the mother's breast to the provocation of adult sexuality by the female bosom. He also considered the relationship between teacher and pupil, fatherly love for offspring and purity of friendship to be emanations of sexuality. Today, there is a voluminous and complex literature in this area.

At the opposite end of the scale, some consider sexual activity to be almost sinful. Indeed, ascetic Christian, Buddhist and Hindu orders link spiritual progress to a celibate life — the renunciation of sexuality.

Islam rejects both these views as extreme. It considers sexual intercourse to be a natural, beautiful and pleasurable act that is to be enjoyed, even when not indulged in, to ensure the continuation of the human race. As mentioned above, Islamic teaching is to regulate and direct natural sexual urges towards beneficial and fruitful ends, e.g. to strengthen the bonds of love and mercy between men and women within the secure boundaries of marriage:

Among His signs is that He created mates for you, with your self-same essence so that you may dwell together in tranquillity, and He instilled between you love and compassion.

**Qur'ān 30:21**

The most suitable means to secure the above objective is to advocate and promote 'modest behaviour — *ḥayā*'.

In the story of the Prophet Mūsa عليه السلام, two girls wait for their turn to water their flocks. As stronger shepherds pushed them aside to jump the queue, the Prophet Mūsa عليه السلام helped them. Afterwards while resting in the shade, he prayed, 'O my Lord, I have need of the good that You have sent me.' Later, one of the girls came up to him in an exceedingly modest manner to tell him that, despite her father being too frail to come himself, he wanted to thank Mūsa عليه السلام for his kind help. This incident eventually led to her marriage to

Mūsa ﷺ. (See Qur'ān 28:23–28). The respectful, decorous way in which the girl conveyed her father's message exemplifies the manner in which all contact between males and females should be conducted.

*Hijāb* is entirely to serve the above purpose.

### **Does *ḥijāb* hinder the freedom of women?**

Those who claim that *ḥijāb* limits freedom and hinders women from taking their rightful place within society do not in reality understand the concept of freedom. A woman in *ḥijāb* is free to express her views, own property in her own right, decide if she wishes to accept a proposal of marriage, etc. Her parents cannot force her in one direction or another.

*Hijāb* does not prevent her from pursuing her studies and fulfilling her potential, nor does it prevent her from driving a car, earning her own living or directing a commercial or industrial enterprise. Rather, *ḥijāb* enhances her dignity and encourages males with whom she comes into contact to behave in a respectful manner towards her.

While western society ridicules *ḥijāb* and claims it to be oppressive, Muslims believe that it is the answer to a multitude of societal problems. The *ḥijāb* is protection to shield them from the unwanted and lascivious gaze.

### **Different styles of *ḥijāb***

Having explained the concept of *ḥijāb* according to Islamic teaching, we now look at a variety of cultural approaches to meet the requirement. Women in diverse parts of the Muslim world deal with this matter differently. In parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan, some cover themselves completely in a *burku'* leaving only a small grid before their eyes. In other parts of the world, women only cover their heads with a scarf and wear modest contemporary clothes. Here is a small variety of examples of the *ḥijāb*:

1. **Scarf** – The headscarf, regarded by many Muslims as a symbol of both religion and womanhood, comes in a myriad of styles and colours and is commonly seen in the West as a covering of the head and neck — leaving the face clear, provided that no cosmetics are used.
2. **Niqāb** – This is a veil that covers the face leaving only the area around the eyes clear. Jurists differ regarding the necessity for a

*niqāb* to be worn — especially when no cosmetics are used and there is no intention to attract the notice of others.

3. **Khimar** – This is a long cape-like veil that hangs down to just above the waist. It covers the hair, neck and shoulders completely, but leaves the face clear.
4. **Chador and ‘Abaya** – Both of these full-body cloaks may be accompanied by a smaller headscarf beneath them. The *chador* is worn by Iranian women and the ‘*abaya* by Iraqi women.

### **The fuss over covering the hair**

There is some debate over whether women covering their hair is an aspect of *ḥijāb* or not. What is significant?

#### **Mark of a woman**

As is seen in the following, hair is recognized by society to be a secondary sexual characteristic.

‘Hair is so significant because of what it is and where it is,’ says Dr Martin Skinner, social psychologist at the University of Warwick. ‘It is part of us, much more intimate than things like clothes. If you cut it away, you are cutting away a bit of yourself. Whatever we do with it is very much part of our identity.’

So why is hair — particularly long hair — viewed as such a defining part of a woman and inextricably linked to femininity? Zoologist Desmond Morris suggests that women traditionally have long hair because their ancestors, the aquatic apes, developed long hair to give their babies something to hang on to. In recent times, he argues that women have styled their hair to reflect their self-image, with long hair suggesting a certain availability.

Nature also plays a role. People are programmed to take notice of hair because it is a secondary sexual characteristic.

‘Thick, healthy, long, glossy hair or fur is seen as a sign of good hormonal health and is one of the things animals use to select a mate — humans are no different,’ says evolutionary psychologist Nick Neave of Northumbria University.

Why long hair is so linked to femininity could come down to many things, say experts. It is about youth, health, grace and movement.

Just look at shampoo advertisements, typically featuring models swinging their long, glossy locks. And look at how much the average woman spends on her hair — £600 a year, according to one study. Men spend just £90.

How this association started is not so easy to answer, but it has been entrenched in what is seen as the feminine for centuries' says psychologist Lorraine Sherr. 'As far back as cavemen, there are drawings of women with longer, glossier hair.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/6375683.stm> 'Mark of a woman' by Denise Winterman BBC News Magazine, 20th February 2007

The purpose of the *hijāb* is then to shield this important aspect of feminine sexuality and beauty from unwanted attention.

## 5.4 Share of inheritance

Under Islamic law, a male is entitled to inherit twice the share a female is entitled to inherit. This ruling may appear objectionable — some say it is unjust, others that it is a sign of Islam's low regard for women.

However, for a better understanding of women's rights under *Sharī'ah*, we need to explore family law according to the Qur'ān and *aḥadīth*.

First, as soon as a marriage is conducted, it is incumbent on the husband to care for his wife's every need. A woman is not expected to make any contribution towards the family's living expenses, regardless of the extent of her personal wealth. Indeed, should a woman elect to accept employment, her earnings are not expected to contribute to the family.

Second, any dowry a woman receives remains her personal property — to be invested or disposed of as she wishes.

As an illustration of inheritance distribution, if a man dies leaving a wife, a son and a daughter, his assets would be distributed in the following proportions:

The wife's share of the estate is 12.5%.

The balance of 87.5% is divided into three equal parts. One to go to the daughter — 29.166% — and two parts to the son — 58.333%.

In this distribution it is understood that when the son marries he is expected to pay a dowry and to maintain his wife. However, when the daughter marries, it is she who receives a dowry and lifelong maintenance from her husband — this is in addition to keeping everything that she inherited from her father.

Once in possession of these facts, Islamic inheritance laws no longer appear to be inequitable.

In cases in which parents share in an inheritance, the deceased's mother and father receive equal shares, namely 16.66% each. Indeed, in some situations the mother receives twice the share of the father. For further details see references on Islamic law.

## 5.5 Women jurists and scholars

There has never been a time, throughout Islamic history, when women were faced with discrimination in their pursuit of Islamic knowledge. From the time of the Prophet ﷺ, women played prominent and highly respected roles in the collection and dissemination of *ḥadīth* — and this has also been the case in every subsequent period of history. Biographies of a large number of women are recorded in tomes such as Ayatollah Khomeini's 24-volume *Encyclopaedia of Ḥadīth Narrators — Mu'jam Rijal al-Ḥadīth*.

The most notable women at the time of the Prophet ﷺ were the Lady Faṭimah ؓ; Asmā, the daughter of Abu Bakr; her sister 'Aisha; Um Salamah; Anas bin Malik's mother Um Salīm; and Amamah daughter of Abul 'Āṣ. In later generations, many prominent lady scholars are also recorded as having taught the Qur'ān, *aḥadīth*, Arabic literature, etc.

Towards the end of the first Islamic century, 'Amra, daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥman, Ḥafṣa, daughter of Ibn Sīrīn, and Umm al-Dardā were acknowledged to be the most prominent traditionalists of their time. 'Amra's reputation was so distinguished that the Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered Abu Bakr ibn-Hazm, the celebrated judge of Madinah, to notate all the traditions of which she was the recognized leading authority.

Zaynab, daughter of Sulayman — whose father was cousin to Al-Saffah, the founder of the 'Abbāsīd dynasty — a most celebrated traditionalist, was mentor to many renowned scholars. Another famous woman scholar of the

seventh century AH known simply as 'Karimah the Syrian', is described by biographers as the supreme Syrian teacher of *ḥadīth*.

In his work *Hidden Pearls — Al-Durar al Kāmina*, Ibn Hajar names and provides brief biographies of 170 prominent women of the eighth century AH. In mentioning Juwayriya, the daughter of Aḥmad, he records that many of his contemporaries, as well as some of his own teachers, attended her discourses. Umm Hānī (d. 778 AH), who learned the Qur'ān by heart as a child, later became learned in all the Islamic sciences, including Theology, Law, History and Grammar. She pursued her study of *aḥadīth* under the renowned *ḥadīth* scholars of Cairo and Makkah. She is also celebrated for her mastery of calligraphy, her command of the Arabic language and her poetry. She carried out a rigorous programme of lectures at the great colleges of Cairo, where she had the authority to grant licences of competence to many of the scholars of the time.

Throughout Islamic history there have been many women who took their seats as students and teachers in public educational institutions — alongside male counterparts at the highest levels. In the last century, a renowned jurist — *mujtahid* — from Isfahan in Iran, Mrs Amīn, taught Islamic Law, Jurisprudence, Exegesis and Arabic Grammar for many decades. Many still refer to her legal opinions for guidance.

In contemporary times, there are colleges and religious centres headed by women in Qum, Mashad and Tehran, in addition to those beacons of illumination and guidance, the women professors at the University of Tehran.



## CHAPTER 6

# Main Groupings

### 6.1 Introduction

The most controversial event in the history of Islam, subsequent to the Prophet Muḥammad's death, was his succession. There was a dichotomy of views — one that the Prophet ﷺ had appointed 'Alī رضي الله عنه, son of Abu Ṭālib, as his successor; another that the Prophet ﷺ had left the matter of his succession to the Muslim community.

After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, the first group followed the Islamic teaching of 'Alī رضي الله عنه and, because the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, '... 'Alī and his followers — *hatha wa shī'atu* ...' they became known as followers — *shī'ah*. *Shī'ah* sources rely upon the reports of the Prophet's sayings and doings relayed via the error-free Imāms from his progeny عليهما السلام — *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The second group, who followed the caliphs after the Prophet ﷺ, came to be known as *Sunni* because they identify themselves as being followers of custom — *sunnah*. *Sunni* sources rely upon reports of the Prophet's sayings and doings relayed by any of the Prophet's 'companions'. The two schools are thus recognized by the following names:

*Shī'ah* School of Ahl al-Bayt

*Sunni* School of the Companions and Caliphs

The word *Sufi* is thought to be derived from the Arabic word for wool — *ṣūf* — because early ascetics are supposed to have preferred simple rough

woollen clothing to finer materials. *Sufis* may briefly be described as being dedicated to the esoteric aspects of Islam, in much the same way as mystics of other religions are dedicated to the esoteric aspects of their faiths.

Sufi groups — *ṭuruq* (sing. *ṭarīqah*) — are organized around spiritual masters who guide the spiritual development and progress of dedicated followers.

## 6.2 Shī'ah

There are dozens of valid *Shī'ah* arguments to support the view that succession, like prophethood itself, is a matter of Divine decree and *not* human preference. For brevity, here are three items of valid evidence:

### 1. The summoning of his family

In the early days of Islam, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was ordered to invite his kinsfolk to Islam (see Qur'ān 26:214). To this end, he ﷺ invited approximately 40 of the family's menfolk to dine with him. Those present included his uncles Abu Ṭalīb, Hamzah, 'Abbas and Abu Lahab. At the end of the meal the Holy Prophet ﷺ addressed his guests: 'O children of 'Abd al-Muṭalib, I do not know any amongst the Arabs, who has given his nation a better gift than that which I now present to you [i.e. Islam]. As Allāh has ordered me to invite you to Islam — I now offer you the 'good' of this life and that of the one to come. I will regard whichever one of you is willing to help me convey the faith of Islam to the people as my brother, the executor of my Will and as my successor.'

The only one present to respond was 'Alī رضي الله عنه, the youngest person present. He immediately arose to announce that he was ready and willing to share the Prophet's burdens. The Messenger of Islam ﷺ placed his hand on 'Alī's shoulder and said, 'This is my brother, the executor of my Will and my successor — so listen to what he says and obey him.'

The family considered this outrageous and said to Abu Ṭalīb, 'Now you are being ordered to listen to and obey your own son.'

It is evident from this event that from the very earliest days of his mission, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ had concerned himself with the matter of his succession. As he had made it clear to all his relatives that 'Alī رضي الله عنه had been appointed to take over this position, subsequent to that event, all of

them were aware that 'Alī رضي الله عنه would eventually take charge of the Muslim nation. Hence, their jibe at Abu Ṭalīb being ordered to listen to and obey his own son.

The following sources support the content of this report:

Ṭabari in his *History*, Vol. 2, p.216

Tha'alabi in his *Commentary* – Qur'ān 26:214

Kanji Shafiei in *Kefayat al-Ṭalīb*, p.89

Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad*, Vol. 1, p.159

Mutaqi Hindi in *Kanz al-Ummāl*, Vol. 6, p.391

## **2. His صلى الله عليه وسلم appointment of a deputy each time he had to leave Madinah**

Meticulous study of the history of Islam shows that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم never left Madinah without leaving an appointed deputy to take charge of Muslim affairs during his absence. This was so even when he planned to be away for a single day or to go on a short journey, such as to Uḥud:

1. When he left Madinah in the year 2 AH, he appointed Sa'd bin 'Abadah to be in charge in his absence.
2. When he left for the Battle of Bowāṭ in year 2 AH, he appointed Sa'd bin Ma'ath.
3. When he left for the Battle of Badr, he appointed Ibn Um Maktoum.
4. For the Battle of Bani Qaynaqa and Sawiq, he appointed Abu Lubabah al-Anṣari.
5. When he went to Salim and Ghatfan in year 3 AH, he again appointed Ibn Um Maktoum to be in charge.
6. He appointed 'Uthmān bin Affan when he left for Dhi Amr.
7. He appointed Ibn Um Maktoum when he left for Uḥud, Bani al-Nadir, Dawmat al-Jandal and Aḥzab.
8. When he left Madinah for Bani al-Muṣṭalaq, he appointed Zayd bin Harithah.
9. He appointed Abu Ruham al-Ghifari when he left for Bani Qurayḍah.

10. When he left for Khaybar he appointed Siba' bin 'Arfaṭah.
11. He appointed Abu Ruham al-Ghifari while he took charge of the conquest of Makkah.
12. The only occasion that 'Alī عليه السلام was ordered to take charge in Madinah was when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم left for Tabūk.

The above facts corroborate that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم never neglected to appoint a deputy when he knew he was not going to be present. It would have been contrary to his customary practice, and quite out of character, for him to have left the Muslim nation without having appointed a deputy and successor. It is not logical to imagine that this occurred.

### 3. Ghadir Khum

Ghadir Khum lies near Joḥfah between Makkah and Madinah. On the Prophet's journey home from his final pilgrimage, Jibrā'il delivered this urgent command from Allāh:

O My Messenger, deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord for if you do not, you will have failed to have delivered His message [completely]. Allāh will protect you from the people.

Qur'ān 5:67

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم immediately drew to a halt and ordered those ahead of him to be called back while he waited for the stragglers to arrive. Acacia thorns were swept away, cloaks spread underfoot and overhead as protection from the heat and a platform, constructed of camel saddles, was raised. When all were present, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ascended this makeshift structure to address them as follows:

O people, know well that Jibrā'il has come down to me several times with the Lord Most Merciful's order to halt here to inform all, white or black, that 'Alī, son of Abu Ṭalīb, is my brother, my successor, my caliph and the Imām that has been appointed to follow me. His position in relation to me is as that of Hārūn to Mūsa, except that no prophet is to follow me. 'Alī is your master after Allāh and His Prophet.

In most reports, the Prophet ﷺ also informed them of his approaching demise and called them to witness that he had faithfully discharged his duties. He then asked, 'Do I not have more authority over you than you have yourselves?' They responded that he certainly had greater rights over them than they themselves had. The Prophet ﷺ then said, 'Whoever I am master over — *mawlā* — 'Alī is also *mawlā*.' He ended with the prayer, 'O Allāh, love those who love 'Alī and oppose those who are 'Alī's enemies.'

When he had finished, the following *āyah* was revealed:

This day I have perfected your religion for you, granted you my bounties and approved Islam as your faith and way of life.

Qur'ān 5:3

Three important aspects need to be examined regarding the above reports:

- a. Their authenticity.
- b. The general meaning of the word *mawlā*.
- c. The specific meaning of the word *mawlā* as used in this context.

#### a. Authenticity

'Alamah Amini recorded his comprehensive eleven-volume study of this subject entitled *Al-Ghadīr*. In this he lists the chains of narration throughout the 14 centuries of Islamic history and traces every Arab poet whose work mentions the events at Ghadīr.

In his book *'Abaqat al-Anwār*, another scholar, Sayyid Ḥamid Ḥusayn, presents all the chains of narration on Ghadīr and includes comprehensive details of each narrator and their reliability that have been confirmed in dozens of Sunni books.

In the first volume of 'Alamah Amini's *Al-Ghadīr*, the names of 110 of the Holy Prophet's companions who narrated *ḥadīth* on this subject are listed. Only those companions whose names start with the letter *alif* have been included below:

1. Abu Layla al-Ansari
2. Abu Zaynab ibn 'Awf
3. Abu Fadhalah al-Ansari
4. Abu Qudamah al-Ansari
5. Abi 'Amra ibn Muhasin

6. Abu al-Haytham ibn al-Tayyihan
7. Abu Rafia'
8. Abu Dhuwayab
9. Usamah ibn Zayd
10. Ubayy ibn Ka'b
11. As'ad ibn Zurarah
12. Asma' bint 'Umays
13. Umm Salamah
14. Umm Hanī bint abu Talib
15. Anas ibn Malik
16. Abu Bakr
17. Abu Hurayrah

'Alamah Amini also includes the names of 84 of the generation that followed the companions — the *tābī'ūn* — followed by succeeding generations. In referring to scholars and writers who include this *ḥadīth* in their works, 'Alamah Amini lists 360 scholars throughout the 14 centuries of the Hijri calendar.

In his book *The Right Path*, 'Alamah Sharafuddin quotes Al-Ḥākim al-Nishaburi, Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Al-Nissai'i and many others, who included this *ḥadīth* in their works.

#### b. General meaning of the word 'mawlā'

As Sunni Muslims cannot deny the authenticity of the Ghadīr *ḥadīth*, they downplay its significance with claims that the word *mawlā* in this *ḥadīth* means 'friend' — that the Holy Prophet ﷺ simply wanted to announce, 'Whoever's friend I am, 'Alī is also their friend.' The problem with this assertion is that not a single person present at Ghadīr understood that to be the case. Ḥassān ibn Thabit, famously regarded as being the Prophet's poet, composed a few lines before the audience present at Ghadīr. In these he clearly described the occasion in which the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Arise O 'Alī, for I am pleased to appoint you Imām and Guide after me.'

The fact that, at that time, no one objected to Ḥassān's words, confirms that those present had all understood *mawlā* to denote that 'Alī was their Master and Guardian. This comprehension is confirmed by the phrase that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to congratulate 'Alī ﷺ, 'Congratulations O son of

Abu Ṭalīb. This morning you have become the *mawlā* of every believing man and woman.'

Not only was 'Alī عليه السلام known to be friendly to all — it is clear that no congratulatory declaration would have been apposite if the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had stated, 'Those to whom I am a friend, 'Alī is also friends with.'

Scholars who recorded the phrase that 'Umar used include:

1. Al Fakhr al-Razi in his *Tafseer*, Vol. 12, p.49
2. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his *Musnad*, Vol. 4, p.281
3. Al-Tabari in his *Tafseer*
4. All references are documented by 'Alamah Amini in *Al-Ghadir*, Vol. 1, p.270

While it is true that Arabic lexicons make reference to 22 different meanings for the word *mawlā*, what defines the specific meaning of all homonymous words is the context in which they are used. Thus, depending on the context, *mawlā* may mean:

Owner	Lodger/guest
Master	Partner
Slave	Son
The one who frees another	Uncle
The one who has been freed	Cousin
The benefactor	Nephew
The beneficiary	Son-in-law
Friend	Relative
Companion	Follower
Protector	Helper
Neighbour	The one in authority

### c. Specific meaning of 'mawlā' in the above context

To examine the meaning implied by *mawlā* in the context of the Ghadīr ḥadīth, we find scores of 'associations' that point clearly towards 'Master' being the only meaning which fits that context. Here are some such 'associations':

1. The question that the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked prior to his declaration: 'Do I not have more authority over you than you have yourselves?' When they responded in the affirmative, the Prophet ﷺ declared, 'Whoever I am master over — *mawlā* — 'Alī is also *mawlā*.'

The word *mawlā* used in this declaration has the same meaning as *awla bikum* — 'having greater authority over you' — in the preceding question. At least 64 Sunni scholars have quoted the above question that the Prophet ﷺ asked, including Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Majah, Al-Nissai'i and Al-Timidhi. See Al-Amini, p.344, for detailed references.

2. The prayer that the Holy Prophet ﷺ offered just after this declaration is, 'O Allāh, love those who love 'Alī and oppose those who are 'Alī's enemies. Help those who help 'Alī and forsake those who forsake 'Alī.' From this it is clear that on that day 'Alī was entrusted with a responsibility that by its very nature would arouse the enmity of those eager for that position.
3. The Prophet ﷺ declared, 'I am soon to depart from this world in response to Allāh's call.' This points to his making arrangements for the leadership succession after his departure.
4. The expressions of joy of the congratulatory companions leave little room to doubt the meaning of the word *mawlā* in the context of the Prophet's declaration.
5. Consider the ludicrousness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ halting his, and nearly 100,000 travellers', journey at midday, to assemble together in a thorn-strewn area and erect a platform of camel saddles — in the relentless sun of the Arabian desert — simply to tell them that 'Alī ﷺ is their friend?

### Protection from error

As the result of the Prophet's explicit directive, 'I leave behind two precious things — *thaqalain* — the Book of Allāh and my progeny that will, while you adhere firmly to both, safeguard you from being led astray,' after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, Shī'ah Muslims acknowledge the error-free Imāms to be the ultimate source of Islamic knowledge, theology, exegesis and law. On the other hand, those who classified themselves as Sunni Muslims elected



to accept and support the narrations and interpretations of the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd caliphs.

Despite this, even those who accepted and submitted to the authority of the caliphs acknowledged that, in terms of knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, charisma and leadership, there were marked differences in the qualities and characters of the Imāms and the caliphs. Whilst caliphs were observed to indulge themselves in power and the pleasures of this world, the error-free Imāms of *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ are recorded by history to have led pious, humble lives and been primarily concerned with the enlightenment and spiritual enhancement of the Muslim community.

### 6.2.1 The Twelvers — Ithnā‘ashariyyah

The majority of *Shī‘ahs* who follow the progeny of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are referred to as ‘The Twelvers’ — *Ithnā‘ashariyyah* — because they follow the 12 error-free Imams of *Ahl al-Bayt* who are regarded as being the true spiritual successors of the Prophet ﷺ. The twelfth Imām is alive but hidden until, on Allah’s command, he is to re-appear to overcome corruption and tyranny and ensure that justice and truth reign.

The information provided above in this section refers mainly to this group.

### 6.2.2 Zaydis

After the death of the fourth Imam ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-‘Abidīn ؑ, the majority of *Shī‘ah* Muslims accepted Imam Muḥammad al-Baqir ؑ as his father’s appointed successor. The significance of this Imām ؑ rests on his enduring focus on the dissemination of knowledge and promotion of education. However, some *Shī‘ahs* chose instead to support his brother Zayd son of ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ؑ, in his unremitting renunciation of the tyranny of the Umayyad dynasty. As the result of their confrontational characteristic, anyone seen with a dagger in their cummerbund was assumed to be a Zaydi.

The Zaydis relied for their Islamic teaching on a collection of *aḥādīth*, called ‘*Musnad Zayd*’, that incorporated the traditions reported by his predecessors. However, as Abu Ḥanifa benefited greatly from Zayd’s knowledge, later Zaydi jurists adopted Ḥanafi *fiqh*.

Zaydi Imāms ruled Yemen for centuries until the revolution led by Abdullah al-Sallal turned Yemen into a republican regime.

### 6.2.3 Dawoodi Bohras

Another sub-group emerged after the death of Imam Ja'far al-Şādiq ؑ. Whilst the majority of Shī'ahs followed Imām Mūsa al-Kadhīm ؑ, a few believed that his elder brother Ismā'īl should rightfully be the Imām. However, as Ismā'īl had passed away during his father's lifetime, his inheritance of the Imāmate did not make any sense to the majority of Shī'ahs.

The Faṭimid dynasty, established by the descendants of Ismā'īl, ruled Egypt until a further division occurred in the time of Al-Mustanşir — who died in Cairo in 487 AH/1094 CE — as to which of his two sons, Musta'li or Nizar, should succeed him. The group who followed the former have come to be known as *Dawoodi Bohras*, whilst followers of the latter have come to be known as *Aga Khanis* or *Isma'īlis*.

According to the Dawoodi Bohras, the Imāmate starts with Imām Ḥasan ؑ, who died in 49 AH/669 CE, and ended with Imām al-Tayyib (who chose complete seclusion in the year 526 AH/1132 CE). Over the years 52 *Dā'is* have been charged with the group's leadership; the current Dawoodi Bohra *Dā'i* is Muḥammad Burhanuddin.

Whilst the Dawoodi Bohras share all acts of devotion with the Muslim nation, the Agha Khanis, also known as Isma'īlis, following their leader Agha Khan IV, perform prayer in a different manner.

## 6.3 Sunni

For a clear understanding of Sunni Islam, three aspects need to be understood — the succession to the Prophet ﷺ, the Principles of Faith and the Four Schools of Law.

### Succession to the Prophet ﷺ

As the Prophet ﷺ was undisputed leader of both the spiritual and civil aspects of Muslim society, Shī'ahs believe that the nomination and appointment of the leader to succeed him was made by the Divinely guided Prophet ﷺ himself. For had not precedent already established religious authority to be the province of Divine determination? Sunnis reject this view

in favour of one in which both aspects of leadership are held by an individual whom the majority of a populace are prepared to pay allegiance to.

History records that after the death of the Prophet ﷺ a meeting was held at *Saqifah*, and after some debate between those who had migrated with the Prophet ﷺ and their Madinah hosts — the *Muhajerin* — and *Anṣār*, ‘Umar and Abu ‘Ubaidah introduced Abu Bakr as the Caliph to whom all Muslims in Madinah were ordered to pay allegiance. This method was later referred to as ‘consensus’ — despite its non-acceptance and non-approval by many companions as well as the entire Bani Hashim clan.

Abu Bakr appointed ‘Umar to be the second Caliph. ‘Umar selected a consultant committee of six to appoint his successor, that resulted in ‘Uthmān becoming the third Caliph. When ‘Uthmān was assassinated, ‘Ali رضي الله عنه, the only one ever to have the actual consensus of the people in Madinah, became the fourth of the so-called ‘Rightly Guided Caliphs’.

The Umayyad dynasty, that Mu‘āwiyah started, ended on the death of Marwan al-Himar. The concession for family control of the caliphate was then taken by the ‘Abbāsīd dynasty.

Historical evidence thus clearly refutes the caliphs’ assertions that their prerogative to hold supreme religious authority was derived from their being the successors to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Notwithstanding this, Sunnis believe the caliphs to have validly held supreme spiritual, as well as temporal, leadership over the Muslim nation.

Sunnis consider ten qualifications necessary for a person to be eligible for appointment as caliph:

1. To be a Muslim.
2. To be of age.
3. To be male.
4. To be of sound mind.
5. To be courageous.
6. To be a free man (not a slave).
7. To be accessible.
8. To be able to lead troops in battle.
9. To be just.
10. To be qualified to pass legal judgements.

Despite the first eight items being unexceptional, unbiased historic scholarship shows that item numbers 9 and 10 were not met by the vast majority of appointed caliphs.

### **Principles of faith**

From the earliest days of Islam, scholars debated a variety of issues that today form the basis of what we refer to as Islamic Theology, namely: Are Divine attributes part of the 'Essence', or separate from it? Is the Holy Qur'ān eternal or created? Do people have free will, or are all things pre-ordained? Is a sinner to be regarded as an unbeliever? Plus a variety of other equally arcane subjects.

The first disagreement that was made public arose between Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites, who had each established their own Sunni 'school of theology' — *Kalām*. While the former group were known for uncompromising adherence to tradition, the latter were known as 'defenders of the intellect'. Throughout history, various caliphs adopted contradictory stances, e.g. the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Ma'mūn (198—218 AH) supported Mu'tazilite doctrine, while the Caliph al-Mutawakkil (232—247 AH) endorsed and supported Ash'arite doctrine.

Qādi Abu Bakr Baqillani (d. 403 AH), the most influential scholar of his time to spread Ash'arite doctrine, spared no effort in his attempt to establish this belief as the sole presentation of Sunni faith. He resolutely attacked the Mu'tazilites, to the extent that few were emboldened to adopt that *mathhab*.

Abul Ma'ali Juwaini (d. 478 AH), who followed in the footsteps of Abul Ḥasan al-Ashari and Baqillani, contributed to the institutionalization of Ash'arite teaching by his relentless and vociferous refutation of the Mu'tazilite doctrine on free-will. His view was that all worldly incidents, good or evil, advantageous or disadvantageous, are created by Allāh.

The outstanding Sunni theologian Al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH) put the finishing touches to Sunni belief. He became celebrated as 'The Authority in Islam' — *Hujjat al-Islam* — when he combined Principles of Jurisprudence with Philosophy and Theology.

Thus, what is today known as Sunni belief is in fact the exclusive view of the Ash'arite school.

### Four schools of law

After the death of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, Muslims turned to his ﷺ companions — *ṣaḥabah* — for answers to questions regarding *Sharīah*. The next generation of Muslims consulted those who had studied under his ﷺ companions, known collectively as ‘Followers’ — *tābiʿūn*. Both of these groups relied on the *aḥādith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a methodology that is later referred to as ‘The School of Tradition’. Another group of scholars of the time, distinguished by their faculty for intellectual reasoning, is later referred to as ‘The School of Opinion’.

Malik ibn Anas (93—179 AH) headed the School of Tradition centred in Madinah, and Abu Ḥanifah (80—150 AH) the School of Opinion centred in Baghdad. Both scholars gained renown as distinguished authorities. While further scholars later emerged within the Islamic world, Kufah and Madinah continued to be the most prestigious centres of excellence.

To control the authority and support for the opinions of other Islamic scholars, in the fifth Islamic century it was decreed that only four schools were to hold official authorization, namely those of Mālik, Abu Ḥanifah, Shāfiʿi and Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal.

### The Ḥanafi School

Perhaps the most influential of all the Sunni schools is the rational and liberal Ḥanafi system of jurisprudence. Despite having been the official school of the Ottoman Empire, India, Egypt and Sudan, it is today followed in Central and South Asia, Europe and America. Abu Ḥanifah was reluctant to accept the authenticity of any *ḥadīth* without having first examined its content and those who reported it. To solve problems about which no clear Qurʾānic or *ḥadīth* references are to be found, he relied heavily on analogy — *qiyās*. In addition to *qiyās*, he cited *istiḥsan* as being another valuable process by which to deduce law. *Istiḥsan* enables a jurist to reject *qiyās* in favour of a ruling that he believes will dispel hardship and promote the common good. In invoking *istiḥsan*, laws that have a bearing on an issue are permitted to be rejected if, in the opinion of the jurist, their enforcement would lead to a legal opinion not being entirely fair. The Ḥanafi jurist Al-Sarakhsi (d. 483 AH) considered *istiḥsan* the best method by which to seek facility and ease in legal injunctions.

Abu Ḥanifah studied under Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq ؑ for two years and under Zaid, son of ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn ؑ for several more.

### The Māliki School

This school — *mathhab* — founded by Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH) prevails in Egypt, Sudan, North Africa, West Africa and a variety of areas in different Arab countries. Mālik’s jurisprudence is based primarily on textual sources — he did not subscribe to the methodology of analogy — *qiyās* — favoured by Abu Ḥanifah.

The Māliki *mathhab* uses narratives of the Prophet’s companions as a source of Islamic law. Concern for the public’s interest — *Maṣlaḥah Mursalah* — permits considerations, in harmony with the objectives of the legislation, to be made in order to secure a benefit or prevent a harm. Such *Maṣlaḥah* has to be genuine, general — and not in conflict with a principle or value — and upheld by a clear text or consensus. The Māliki *mathhab* concerns itself more with the application of the spirit of the law rather than with its letter. The consideration of *Maṣlaḥah* is propounded by the famous Māliki jurist Shaṭībī (d. 790 AH) in his book *Al-Muwafaqat*.

### The Shāfi‘i School

Founded by Muḥammad ibn Idris al-Shāfi‘i (d. 204 AH), this *mathhab* presents a middle-course between the Ḥanafī rational system of jurisprudence and the more traditionalist Māliki school. According to Shāfi‘i, the textual resources of Islamic Law — the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* — are paramount. Analogy is only permitted to be employed in circumstances in which neither of these two textual sources is able to provide a solution. Further, it is a Shāfi‘i School convention that the consensus of Muslim scholars takes precedence over traditions that are based upon a solitary report. Shāfi‘i rejected the Ḥanafī use of *istiḥsan*.

This school of law predominates in Southern Egypt, East Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia and some other parts of Central Asia.

### The Ḥanbali School

The Ḥanbali *mathhab* founded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH) derives legal authority solely from the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*. It entirely rejects consensus as being a valid source of Islamic Law. Ibn Ḥanbal tired of the use of reason

and analogy in the legal coding of Islamic law. However, he developed the Principle of Permissibility, by which all actions that do not contradict the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are presumed to be lawful.

When the 'Abbāsid Caliph Al-Ma'mūn officially supported proponents of the belief that the Qur'ān is created and thus eternal, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal publicly opposed that view. Despite being imprisoned and tortured he resolutely refused to retract his opposition.

This *mathhab* was promoted by ibn Taymiyah and later by Muḥammad ibn Abdul Wahab. The majority of Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar follow the Ḥanbali School.

### Differences in opinions

The four schools of Ahl al-Sunnah hold different opinions concerning every single matter of Islamic Law. Differences between any two of them are sometimes greater than the differences between Sunnis and Shī'ahs. For a quick overview, refer to *The Five Schools of Islamic Law* by Muḥammad Jawad Mughniyah (Ansarian Publications, Qum, 2000).

## 6.4 Sufi

Most Muslim scholars concentrate on the manifest aspects of *Sharī'ah* — i.e. the Jurisprudential or Islamic Law rulings that relate to an individual's relationship with the Almighty and other human beings.

However, there are Muslim thinkers who focus their attention on the spiritual significance of Islamic teaching. To them, *Sharī'ah* is but the outer shell of its spiritual 'kernel'. The matter that concerns them is the elemental characteristic of Islamic teaching — that this temporary life is but a pathway to humankind's final destination, the hereafter. Neglect of the natural needs of the body and emphasis on the purification of the soul became the hallmark by which they became recognized.

Sufis claim that all acts of worship, rules regarding business and trade, personal law and all other *Sharī'ah* rulings are only concerned with the superficial exterior. The 'way' — *ṭarīqah* — concerns itself with the most precious pearls in the depths of Islam's 'mercy oceans'. They teach that to act upon *Sharī'ah* and walk the path of *ṭarīqah* leads to the achievement of complete truth — *ḥaqīqah*.

Kulaynī relates in *Al-Kāfi* that after offering the Dawn Prayer one morning

a young man — Ḥarīthah ibn Mālik ibn Nu‘man al-Anṣari — caught the Prophet’s eye. Lean, pale and sunken-eyed, he appeared unable to maintain his balance and seemed unaware of his own condition. When the Prophet ﷺ asked him how he felt, he responded by saying that he had attained certainty. When asked what had led him to that conclusion he said that certainty had immersed him in grief, had kept him fasting all day and at worship all night. This had separated him from the world and its affairs so completely that he felt he could see all humankind raised from the dead, and the Divine Throne on Judgement Day, from which all people’s accounts were settled. At that very moment he could see the people of paradise enjoying their bounty, the people of hell suffering their torments, and hear the roar of the flames.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ told his companions that Allāh had illumined his heart with the light of faith and told the young man to preserve his condition and not to let it be taken from him.

The young man asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for Allāh to grant him martyrdom and his wish was shortly after realized on the battlefield.

Many *āyat* of the Qur’ān emphasize that purification — *tazkyah* — is the main purpose of this life and the reason why Allāh sent ‘Messengers and Warners’ to teach humanity how to attain the prosperity that *tazkyah* brings:

By the soul and the power that perfects and inspires it with the ability to distinguish between good and evil, truly it is those who purify [their souls] who realize success.

**Qur’ān 91:7–9**

Despite their earlier manifest errors, Allāh conferred his favours upon believers by sending them — from amongst themselves — His Messenger [Muḥammad], in order to familiarize them with His signs, to purify them, to teach them the book [Qur’ān] and wisdom.

**Qur’ān 3:164**

Indeed, it is only those who purify themselves who achieve success.

**Qur’ān 87:14**

Just as bodily infections have to be overwhelmed by medicines for health to be regained, spiritual infections need to be overwhelmed for the soul to regain health. While bacteria and viruses impact upon the body, sins and negative thoughts impact upon the soul. Regrettably, the majority of people



stay oblivious to such infection. While the merest intimation of water being polluted is sufficient to drive the public to stockpile bottled water, attention drawn to sources of spiritual pollution is met by indifference.

Most people attend to the cleanliness and attractiveness of the human form, spending billions each year on cosmetics and other aspects of external 'beauty'. However, few give consideration to inner beauty. Imām 'Alī عليه السلام compared these two aspects of beauty when he said,

Inner adornment is of greater beauty than external adornments.

Ghorar al-Ḥikam, Maxim No. 5582

In supplication number 20 of *Al-Ṣaḥifah al-Kāmilah al-Sajjādiyyah*, Imām 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn عليه السلام refers to 'Adornment of the Righteous' and 'Ornament of the God-fearing' as practical steps by which to attain purification of the soul.

According to Abu Naṣr al-Sarraḡ (d. 378 AH/988 CE) there are ten positions (*aḥwāl*) and seven stations (*maqāmat*) within Sufism.

The positions are:

- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Vigilance | 6. Spiritual Yearning |
| 2. Proximity | 7. Familiarity        |
| 3. Love      | 8. Tranquillity       |
| 4. Fear      | 9. Contemplation      |
| 5. Hope      | 10. Certainty         |

And the stations are:

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Repentance | 5. Patience       |
| 2. Abstinence | 6. Trust in Allāh |
| 3. Asceticism | 7. Contentment    |
| 4. Poverty    |                   |

Sufi practice is adopted by Shī'ah and Sunni Muslims alike. However, when the Divine love of Allāh settles in His servants' hearts it leads to *wilayah* — traceable to the error-free Imāms of the progeny of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم. It is unsurprising that the 'Chain of Mastership' — *silsilah* — of many Sufi orders include the name Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, a servant of Imām Riḍā عليه السلام, the eighth Imām of the progeny of Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم.

## **Historic reports**

1. Distinguished guests invited by a prominent socialite included luminaries such as the Minister of Health, prominent physicians and one Sufi Shaykh renowned for his healing prowess. When the daughter of the house suddenly became pale and faint and had to retire, the host asked the Shaykh to pray for her.

While he did so at some length, the health minister was heard to remark that superstitions no longer had any place in today's society, 'With our efficient health service, specialist medical practitioners and array of scientifically approved medicines to cure all manner of ailments, such old-fashioned nonsense can only stand in the way of effective treatment.'

Then, turning to the Minister, the Shaykh responded by saying that until then, he had been unaware that the government had elevated a donkey to the status of Minister! How could such a foolish and ignorant person be a doctor, much less so a Minister of State?

The Minister's face flushed and he became so utterly apoplectic that he was unable to utter a word. The Shaykh then offered, in a gentle and kindly voice, his profuse apology. He said he had only uttered such insulting words to make a point. If a short secular speech could instantly trigger dramatic physical changes, flood the body with adrenaline, set the heart racing and dilate the blood vessels so as to suffuse the face with colour, was it not possible that a few holy words from Allāh's Revelation could help bring about physical healing?

2. While a Shaykh, who had been asked about the subject of 'patience', spoke eloquently and at length about it, his foot dislodged a scorpion that repeatedly stung him. Despite being in acute pain he continued his address and did not falter. When someone noticed what was happening and asked why he did not feel it, he replied that before Allāh, it was not possible to teach others about patience without displaying any oneself.

It goes without saying that until a person has purified her/his own soul and complied with everything required of a true 'wayfarer', she/he is not in a position to guide others. This is why we so appreciate the error-free Imāms whose guidance we follow.

Sufis are renowned for their focus on spiritual enhancement and disregard of natural urges. However, Islam neither promotes asceticism nor counsels people to abstain from the pleasures of this world. Notwithstanding this, it is evident that those whose sole focus is self-gratification, social standing and the things of this world will not taste the sweetness of closeness to Allāh, nor enjoy the light He bestows upon His worthy servants.

To balance the spiritual with the temporal, Imām ‘Alī عليه السلام said,

By Allāh, if you cry like a she camel that has lost its calf; coo like a dove; chant like a devoted recluse; or leave your wealth and children to secure nearness and status in His eyes; or forgiveness for the sins recorded by His angels — your effort will be as nothing compared to His reward that I anticipate for you, or His retribution that I fear for you.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 52**

## CHAPTER 7

# Key Issues for Contemporary Muslims

### 7.1 Muslim identity

According to the Holy Qur'ān, virtue is the singular merit of Muslim identity. While education, talent, socio-economic status, family background and wealth are credentials for status within secular society, none of these aspects plays any role whatever in the evaluation of Islamic personality:

O people, We have created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes so that empathy may be established between you. Truly, in the sight of Allāh, those who are virtuous are the most distinguished.

**Qur'ān 49:13**

All Messengers were proud to have been designated 'Servants of Allāh'. Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān that the first words 'Īsā ﷺ uttered were, 'I am Allāh's servant . . .' (Qur'ān 19:30). He describes Dāwūd ﷺ as being 'A worthy servant' (Qur'ān 38:30), and Ayūb ﷺ as 'A patient and worthy servant' (Qur'ān 38:44). The same is applied to the Seal of Prophethood — Muḥammad Muṣṭafā ﷺ, whom all Muslims acclaim to be the 'Teacher of Virtue'. Indeed, the Muslim declaration of faith — *tashahud* — attests to Muḥammad being His servant and messenger, making it clear that to be Allāh's worthy servant is the highest standing a human being can aspire to.

Clearly, wholehearted commitment is needed to attain such a level of servanthood. Accordingly, the journey towards perfection begins with the

sincere motivation to be a devoted and worthy servant. Those that achieve it truly become 'Masters of the World', for Allāh tells us in a *Hadith Qudsi*, 'O my servant, obey me and I will elevate your status to one in which you have only to order "Be", for it to exist.'

The characteristic of truly worthy servants is unfaltering consciousness of Allāh's omnipresence and awareness that He knows everything they do. With the same awareness that prompts motorists to slow down as soon as they spot a speed camera, true believers remain constantly aware that Allāh is witness to their actions. Their conscience is a mirror that reflects Allāh's ordinances on every aspect of their lives. That is why Imām 'Alī ؑ said, 'I never undertook anything without awareness of Allāh's omnipresence before it, during it and in consideration of its effect' (*Al-Asfar al-Arba'ah*, Vol. 1, p.117).

A very long time ago a physician, renowned for his healing prowess, also earned acclaim for not accepting payment for his services. Not unsurprisingly, it did not take long for the merits of this virtuous man to spread throughout the land. So, when the king's own physicians proved unable to cure his ailing daughter, his vizier suggested they consult the famous physician from the faraway provincial town. An emissary was immediately despatched and, in due course, returned with the physician. Not long after, he managed to effect a cure and the princess regained her health. In an expression of heartfelt gratitude, the king ordered his vizier to accompany the physician to the city limits and there present him with two pack horses loaded with the finest gifts from his treasury.

In spite of the gifts being from the king of the realm, the physician declined to accept anything. The vizier beseeched him, but the physician said that he was not prepared to alter his customary behaviour. He remained resolute, even when the vizier pointed out that if he returned with the gifts he would incur the king's displeasure. When the vizier then said that his only option would be to keep the gifts for himself, the physician replied that he must do as he thought fit. The vizier then pointed out that the physician should accept the gifts because, in any event, the king would believe his gifts had been accepted. The physician responded that while that might be so, his own conscience would know that they had not.

The Prophet ﷺ related that Allāh had said, 'A servant may make every effort to draw close to me through voluntary prayer until I love

him. When I love him, I become his ear by which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his tongue by which he speaks and his hand by which he acts. When he calls I answer him and when he asks I respond.'

Al-Kāfi, Vol. 2, p.352

Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 70, p.22

The above accurately represents the identity of a true Muslim.

According to Imām 'Alī عليه السلام, the signs of true believers — *mu'minīn* — are that they:

1. appear cheerful and optimistic;
2. do not make a display of their sorrows;
3. are broadminded and tolerant;
4. are humble;
5. eschew publicity and arrogance;
6. remain conscious of the hereafter;
7. aspire to noble objectives;
8. do not prattle inconsequentially;
9. busy themselves in worthwhile activities;
10. project gratitude and patience;
11. seriously consider all possible consequences before they act; and
12. maintain a bright demeanour and a gentle approach.

## 7.2 Are cultural practices binding?

One of the greatest problems for all Muslim communities is their tendency to confuse authentic teaching with customs and traditions. Sociologists understand that the emphatic nature of some traditions serves to condition people's understanding of faith. This has resulted in confusion being sown in the minds of future generations. For example, history records that the horse Imām Ḥusayn عليه السلام rode on his journey to Karbala was one of the finest he'd inherited from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Despite there not being a shred of documentary evidence in support of that horse having any specific name, many cultures persevere in the belief that it was called 'Zuljinah'. In spite of it only being acceptable for Muslims to pray and prostrate to Allāh Almighty, in some cultures prayers are offered before, or to horses that are imagined to resemble 'Zuljinah', in a misguided belief that Imām Ḥusayn عليه السلام will hear and

answer them. Yet others whisper prayers into the ears of horses of similar appearance, in the belief that these will be answered if the horse nods its head.

Some Muslims affix horseshoes to the entrance of their homes to dispel 'the evil eye'; and they believe that to hear a cawing crow when starting out on a journey is an omen of such portent that they should cancel their trip. Others believe that the number 13 is inauspicious; and that one sneeze is a sign that current activity should stop and two sneezes, that work needs to be speeded up. Unsurprisingly, none of the above has any religious basis or significance whatsoever.

Islamic scholars have scrutinized available texts in order to identify the practices and beliefs that are based upon authentic religious texts and those that have politico-cultural foundations. The most dangerous sources of confusion are the reports, fabricated for political reasons, that falsely attribute to the Prophet ﷺ sayings or deeds supportive of one or other group vying for pre-eminence:

Specifically, from 132—750 on, the crucial religio-political issue for every historian had been what stance he ought to take in regard to the Abbasids — whether to see them as usurpers either of Umayyad or 'Alid rights, as legitimate successors to the continuing and unbroken caliphal succession since Abu Bakr or even restorers of the purity and integrity of the primitive community. On one's resolution of this delicate problem rested his whole interpretation of Islamic history during the century and a half before the Abbasid Revolution. (p.72)

The validity of Wellhausen's arguments only seems to be deepened by the work of his contemporary Ignaz Goldziher, who demonstrated that a vast number of *ḥadīth*, accepted even in the most rigorously critical Muslim collections, were outright forgeries from the late 2nd—8th and 3rd—9th centuries — and, as a consequence, that the meticulous *isnāds* which supported them were utterly fictitious. (Muslim Studies II, *On the Development of the Ḥadīth*, pp.82–3)

Humphreys, R Stephen. *Islamic History – A Framework for Inquiry*.

I. B. Tauris/Princeton University Press. 1991

For example, there is a '*ḥadīth*' that states fasting on the Day of Ashura (10th Muḥarram) is highly recommended, on grounds that it is the day Noah's

Ark again came to rest upon the earth, the day that Ibrāhīm was saved from the fire, the day that Yusuf was removed from the well and the day Yunus was released from the stomach of the whale — grounds that provide the rationale for many Muslims' commemoration of Ashura. They celebrate that day simply because that is what is done in their culture. Few question if such celebration was observed during the Prophet's lifetime, or even why those days should be remembered at all. Many are blissfully ignorant that these so-called *aḥādīth* were forged in order to direct Muslim public attention away from the Umayyad slaughter of the Prophet's grandson Husayn ؑ on that date.

Other than the gift of faith itself, Islam does not require Muslims to believe in any things that appear specious in the light of intellectual analysis.

### 7.3 Modernization, not westernization

Muslim decline at the end of the 19th century coincided with the emergence of European power. The challenge of modernity came in the wake of European encroachment on Muslim lands at the height of the age of Western Imperialism. This elicited a variety of responses in different parts of the Islamic world. In its attempt to check and contain European domination, the Ottoman Empire pursued a policy of rapid modernization. At its outset, attention centred upon the importation of European weaponry, military organization and industrial plant technology; moves to introduce civil society and the westernization of state institutions rapidly followed. The rationale was to infuse into the Muslim way of life the elements it clearly lacked, such as European-style governmental institutions and the inherent values that went with them. This then became a quest for modernity.

In Turkey, a young officer named Mustafa Kemal, who in 1934 adopted the surname Atatürk — 'Father of the Turks' — believed that the word modernization meant 'copying'. Thus, he abolished the Arabic alphabet on which Turkish communication had been based for centuries and replaced it with the Roman alphabet used in the western world. This action effectively denied subsequent generations of Turks access to the centuries of accumulated scholarship held in Turkey's extensive and well-endowed libraries.

At the same time, the Iranian army commander Reza Shah Pahlavi ordered all Muslim women to remove their traditional head covering — *hijāb*



— which he considered an important step in his drive to ‘copy’ the west and modernize his country. Police were ordered to rip headscarves off women who did not comply with his directive, and to arrest all men not attired in western-style clothing. His concession to public outrage was the granting of permission for five religious scholars to continue to wear the turban. In his drive to cleanse the Persian language of Arabic, an academic committee was appointed to substitute the thousands of Arabic words then in current usage, which they did with an assortment of strange and obscure ‘new Persian words’.

While the use of technology, science, industrial development and western-style marketing clearly yields benefits, there is no evidence to suggest that these can only be successfully utilized after all cultural, educational and other traditions of a people have been destroyed. The areas considered to be in need of modernity were as follows.

### **Administrative systems**

Up until then, absolute control of all state matters tended to be held by kings or emperors, who propounded the belief that they ruled by divine right and were thus only answerable to God Himself. For subjects who believed such claims, it must have been apparent that God was little interested in them, for corruption, injustice and inequality abounded at every level of society. Their hopes must have been that modernization would transform authoritarianism into a democratic system in which the people could elect representatives to legislate and act on their behalf.

In the traditional caliphal system of Muslim countries, rather than the claim to rule by divine right, caliphs claimed that their authority was based upon their being ‘Successors to the Prophet ﷺ’. The difference was slight in as much as any who challenged the caliph were deemed to have challenged the Prophet of God ﷺ and, via this, God Himself, and in that the effect of ‘such sedition’ resulted in the same harsh punishments as levied by kings and emperors. Further and most importantly, neither emperors nor kings or caliphs were able to provide any proof to substantiate their claims. Like the rose, which by any other name smells as sweet, the stench is the same, whatever name is used for authoritarianism, corruption, injustice and inequality.

The winds of modernization struck Iran, Egypt and the whole Ottoman Empire at the start of the last century. In Iran, this brought scholars and

intellectuals out in open revolt against the Qajar dynasty, forcing the last Qajar king to make limited concessions to 'the voice of the people'. In Egypt, calls for the revival of the caliphate resulted in King Farouk proclaiming himself 'caliph'. However, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the Muslim countries that formed it were subjugated by various European powers. It was agreed among them that their 'spheres of influence' entitled each to claim some degree of control or preferential status in different foreign territories. France was to oversee the affairs of Lebanon and Syria, while Britain was to do the same for Iraq and 'Transjordan'. Palestine was to have been under dual control, but France subsequently ceded all rights to Britain, who had also maintained a protectorate over Egypt since 1882. With the discovery of oil the United States was able to establish control over Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.

The question is, in order to benefit from modernization, is it sufficient to simply 'copy' the outward manifestations of supposedly democratic countries, or should indigenous democratic administrations develop their own strategies to satisfy the needs of their cultures and faith?

## **Education**

The Muslim world remained the centre of education for many centuries. The works of Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Averroës (Ibn Rushd), Al-Biruni, Khwarazmi and a plethora of other scholars were for many centuries regarded by western scholars to be ultimate sources of reference in many scientific fields. A short visit to the British Museum, the Louvre or the Library of Congress will evidence the prolific scholarship of Muslim scholars throughout the ages.

By the start of the 20th century, the Protestant work ethic in Europe and the laziness of the Muslim world had resulted in European scholarship surpassing that of the East. Notable Muslim families sent their children to study in the West and later made grants available for gifted Arab students from every walk of life. Regrettably, many graduates who returned home had adopted the lifestyles of the other students in their *alma mater*. Being young and ambitious they took pleasure not only in being qualified professionals, but in being acknowledged for their 'modern' and sophisticated European habits. To pour guests fine French wine appeared to them to be far more chic than to pour them traditional coffee from a *dallah*.

It is shocking to discover that in the 'Arab Human Development Report of 2002', no Muslim state is included in the table that records the volume of book sales in 27 world countries. To quote from it, 'The Arab world translates about 330 books annually, one-fifth of the number that Greece translates. The accumulative total of books translated since the ninth century is about 100,000 — almost the average for books that Spain translates in one year.' Is it not high time Muslims modernized their educational systems and concentrated on the dissemination of knowledge, rather than simply aping the behaviour of the European world?

### **Industry**

The commercial success of the industrial revolution made the West the envy of the world. Mass production and its products so dazzled the public that in their rush to acquire them, they came to regard traditional skills as 'old-fashioned'. In the joy of new-found 'modernity', and belief that their production processes matched those of the leading industrial countries, it either did not occur to them, or the Muslim majority countries were simply not able, to develop overseas markets for their own production. In any event, most lands were not able to access the national wealth with which to build the modern infrastructures needed to develop their countries in the way that Asian 'Tiger Economies' have recently succeeded in doing.

By all United Nations and World Bank indicators, Arab countries trail behind other developing countries vis-à-vis job creation, education, technology and productivity. In listings of economies by gross domestic product (GDP), the highest-ranking Muslim majority country, Turkey (population 70.4 million) is 23rd, while Austria (population 8.3 million) is 22nd and Denmark (population 5.4 million) is 24th. In listings by manufacturing output, the highest ranking Muslim country, Egypt (population 78.9 million), is in 35th place, tying with Norway with a population of 4.6 million.

The above statistics underline that Muslim majority countries have not understood the meaning of modernity in the way that other peoples have, for many rely almost exclusively upon their oil resources.

To conclude, incorporation of the beneficial aspects of modernity does not necessitate copying characteristics that conflict with one's own cultural norms.

## 7.4 Ijtihād as means for modernization

*Ijtihād* is the Arabic word used to describe the processes by which Islamic legal rulings are deduced from legitimate sources, mainly the Qur’ān and *aḥādīth*. It is derived from the Arabic root word *juhd* — that implies a need for considerable ‘effort’ or ‘self-exertion’. In references to physical exertion *juhd* is used, and in references to intellectual exertion, *ijtihād*.

As contemporary problems and issues are not necessarily catered for in the main sources for Islamic Law (the Qur’ān and *aḥādīth*), jurists — specialists in the field of Islamic Law — need to deduce appropriate rulings and provide clear guidance to deal with those issues. For example, the times to pray or fast in the Antarctic or in ‘space’; considered Islamic views on organ transplants, genetic engineering, IVF, the maintenance of life by ‘life support machines’; and hundreds of other contemporary issues. In their consideration of such issues, the Ḥanafi School of Law relies upon analogy — *qiyās* — and the Imāmiyah upon intellectual reasoning.

Two methodologies are available to a *mujtahid* when faced with new subjects that need Islamic Law clarification:

1. To apply the basis of a known subject to another subject, and provide the same ruling (analogy — *qiyās*) was strongly supported by Abu-Ḥanifa. Alternatively, the ‘spirit of a text’, rather than the text itself, may be examined. This is referred to as the ‘Study of the Objectives of Legislation’, rather than the ‘Study of that which is Apparent’, an approach strongly supported by Māliki jurists and propounded by Imām Shaṭibi in his book *Al-Muwafaqat fi Maqāṣid al-Shari’ah*.

The majority of Sunni scholars regard Shatibi’s approach to be the most practical methodology by which to reform *ijtihād*.

2. The Imāmiyah, on the other hand, consider intellectual reasoning to be the fourth source of Islamic Law. (The consensus of learned scholars who reflect the opinion of the error-free Imāms عليه السلام is the third source.) For the purpose of *ijtihād*, they undertake comprehensive examination of each *ḥadīth* and — in conjunction with this valuable tool — see little purpose or benefit in *qiyās* or Shatibi’s methodology. Furthermore, their lengthy debates have demonstrated ‘*qiyās*’ and ‘the Objectives of Legislation’ to be both speculative and not definitive tools for *ijtihād*. Detailed evidence

to support their view was presented by Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Hakim رحمته, in his *Principles of Comparative Jurisprudence — Al-Uṣūl al-‘āmmah lil Fiqh al-Muqarin*.

### Conditions of *ijtihād*

A jurist — *mujtahid* — must be a competent Muslim of sound mind with the intellectual capacity to form independent judgements. In many *aḥādīth*, the *mujtahid* is considered to be a successor to the Prophet ﷺ. This is in respect of the ability to elaborate on rulings and guide the community to ‘Things that please Allāh’. Trustworthiness, reliability and righteousness are thus key qualities of a *mujtahid*. Those who fail to meet one or more of these requirements are disqualified from undertaking *ijtihād*.

Shahīd II (the Imāmi *mujtahid*, d. 966 AH) said,

Knowledge of the following six introductory studies is essential in the process of *ijtihād*: Theology, Principles of Jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, Morphology, Lexicology and an unquestionable comprehension of the Qur’ān, Sunnah, Consensus and Intellectual reasoning.  
Al-Rawdah al-Bahiyya, The Brilliant Garden, Vol. 1, p.236

Ibn Abd al-Shakur (Ḥanafī scholar) said,

*Ijtihād* requires Faith, knowledge of the Qur’ān, at least of the 500 *āyat* that deal with rulings, knowledge of the *Sunnah* — at least of the 1,200 *aḥādīth* that deal with jurisprudence — ability to identify the authenticity of narrators and a familiarity with consensus. However, being righteous is only required for those who accept his *fatāwā*.  
Musallam al-Thubut, Vol. 2, p.320

Al-Ghazali (Shāfi’i scholar, d. 505 AH) said,

While eight branches of knowledge are needed for *ijtihād*, four are essential, the others being only introductory. The essentials are, Qur’ān, *Sunnah*, Consensus, and Intellect. The introductory ones are, Methodology of Argument, Arabic Grammar, knowledge of ‘abrogator and the abrogated’, and ability to recognize authentic *aḥādīth*.  
Al-Mustasfa, Vol. 2, p.101–03

Al-Qarafi (Māliki scholar) offered a similar statement to Al-Ghazali's in his book *Sharh Tanqih al-Fusul*, p.194.

Ibn Qudamah (Ḥanbali scholar) said,

The mujtahid must have complete comprehension of the Qur'ān, *Sunnah*, Consensus, Presumption of Continuity and Analogy. As for knowledge of the Qur'ān, he must be well-versed in the 500 *āyat* concerned with rulings, not necessarily by having committed them to memory, but knowledge of how to refer to them when needed.

As for *Sunnah*, he must be well acquainted with the *aḥādīth* that concern rulings, regardless of them being many or limited. Knowing that a *ḥadīth* in question has not been abrogated is sufficient for the process of *Ijtihad*. Differentiation between strong and weak *ḥadīth* is a further requirement.

As for consensus, it is sufficient to know if the issue in question has been dealt with by previous *mujtahids* or if no precedent exists. Knowledge of Grammar and Arabic language, ability to recognize — both explicit and ambivalent texts, what is literal and what metaphorical, what is general and what is specific — are essential requirements in the process of *Ijtihad*.

Rawḍat al-Nazer, p.190

Al-Shawkani (Zaidi scholar) said, 'There are five requirements for a *mujtahid*:

1. Comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth*.
2. Comprehensive knowledge of the issues that apply to consensus.
3. Comprehensive knowledge of the Arabic language to enable him to arrive at conclusions from the Qur'ān and *aḥādīth*.
4. Comprehensive knowledge of the Principles of Jurisprudence.
5. Ability to recognize the abrogator and the abrogated.'

Irshad al-Fuhul, p.250

## Examples of contemporary ijtihād

### Insurance

Insurance, one of the more recent types of contract, was unknown to Muslim jurists before the last century. When it was introduced, jurists tried to apply general principles to this new type of contract:

**One opinion** was that insurance is prohibited by Islam. This was supported by many jurists in Egypt, in addition to a few in Najaf and Qum. These based their opinions on one or other of the following justifications:

1. That no such contract was known at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the companions or the Imāms عليهم السلام. They claimed that only contracts of the types known by the above categories can be considered to be binding.
2. Insurance leads to ambiguity and lack of information. Despite pre-determined premiums being paid for  $x$  years, the final amount of any payout is not pre-determined and, indeed, may or may not even occur.
3. Because insurance is similar to earned interest — *riba*. As *riba* is prohibited, it is analogous that insurance needs to be also — when a person pays £500 per annum to insure their car so that they might receive £5,000 should it be written off. Such ‘profiteering’ ought to be regarded as earned interest.

As a matter of fact, *riba* applies specifically to loans, while ‘profit’, which may or may not result from an insurance contract, has nothing whatever to do with borrowing or lending.

4. Insurance contains risk, uncertainty and hazard — *gharar*. As it is reported in one *ḥadīth* that ‘The Prophet ﷺ prohibited sales in which *gharar* plays any part’, it follows that insurance cannot be permissible either.

**A second opinion** was that insurance represents a type of contract known at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. This was suggested by a great jurist of Najaf, Shaykh Ḥusayn Ḥilli, whose lectures, compiled by Sayyid Izzudin Bahr al-Uloom, appeared as *Discourses on Jurisprudence — Buḥooth Fiqhiyah*. He suggested that insurance be recognized as a mutual agreement — *ṣulḥ* — or as a conditional gift.

Ayatollah al-Khoei accepted his opinion regarding conditional gifts and, according to his ruling, the same conditions apply to insurance as apply to such gifts. That is to say, the insured should regard, and undertake to 'gift', premium instalments with the clear understanding that the insurer will return the amount mentioned in the policy, as and when the policy conditions apply.

**A third opinion** is that insurance is indeed an independent contract, which meets all the requirements needed for agreements to be valid in Islamic Law. None of the justifications for its invalidity apply as insurance agreements are of the type made at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. This is the currently favoured opinion of the existing Imāmiyah jurists.

### **In vitro fertilization — IVF**

When artificial insemination was first discussed, Muslim jurists expressed differing opinions.

**One opinion** was that it is *ḥarām* for one of the following reasons:

1. That it would entail non-*maḥram* doctors touching the pudenda of Muslim women.
2. That it would require masturbation to obtain semen.
3. And, according to many Sunni jurists, because they thought it akin to fornication — *zina*. They based their opinion on the analogy — *qiyās* — that as adultery is a major and prohibited sin, IVF must be prohibited too.

**A second opinion** rejects the validity of *qiyās* for this subject matter on the basis of the technical meaning of the term *zina*. In Islamic Law, this refers specifically to an act of physical intercourse — to be precise, when a male inserts his penis into the vagina of a female who is not his wife. IVF clearly does not involve any such act. As to members of a medical team touching the private parts of the subjects, we need to consider and weigh the necessity of both of these acts: a) to help a woman desperate to conceive and fulfil her biological motherhood function; and b) to involve a medical team. There are invariably sizeable sections in books on Principles of Jurisprudence, dedicated to the Table of Priorities — *Tazāḥum*. For certain categories



a *mujtahid* will refer to these in order to examine the priority of one circumstance over another. As for masturbation, there are alternative and permissible means to obtain semen.

One may use the needed fertilized eggs and request the others be destroyed. To be on the safe side, one should have someone witness that they are destroyed and not misused. Such action is not regarded as abortion, as by definition this can only occur after a fertilized egg is lodged in the womb.

As experts in any field of endeavour may hold different opinions, jurists too sometimes have differing viewpoints.

## **7.5 Secularism versus fundamentalism**

As the Muslim world has not lived through the industrial revolution or the development of the commercial institutions that have fashioned the modern world, the concept and character of modernization was misunderstood and misinterpreted in Muslim majority lands. In consequence, misguided attempts to imitate the 'West' led to a growing rift between 'conservative' Muslims and those intent on reform. During the 1960s, the current of socialism that swept over the Middle East indirectly promoted communism. In Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya and many other Muslim countries, activists urged the public to reject religion as the 'opiate of the masses', because they said it prevented social advancement and progress. With inferences that space travel evidences that God does not exist, that intellectuals are all atheists and other ideas, activists urged the Muslim public to regard *Shari'ah* Law as redundant and to adopt the modern cure-all solution for society's ills called secularism.

In counterattack, Islamic scholars — such as Hasan Al-Banna, Sayyid Qutub and Muhammad Al-Ghazali in Egypt; Muhammad Baqr Al-Ṣadr, Baqir al-Sharif Al-Qarashi and Muhammad Amin Zayn Al-Din in Iraq; Murtada Mutahari in Iran; Abul 'Ala Maududi in India, Muhammad Mahdi Shams Uddin and Muhammad Husayn Fadlulah in Lebanon; Malik bin Nabi in Algeria, to list only a few — whose unstinting efforts defended the faith, refuted that secular heresy and inspired Muslims throughout the world.

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union, destruction of the Berlin Wall, end of the cold war, and emergence of a new world order exacerbated the

differences and animosity between secularists and believers. This gradually drove many Muslims to conclude that rational opposition to the war against religion was doomed to fail and that the only option left open to them was to completely reject Imperialist power, symbolized by American domination of the Muslim world and its influence over their leaders.

Globalization is the face of the new world order and Muslim resistance to its negative features inspired the new label 'fundamentalist'. Today, the whole world is aware that Imperialists are waging a war against 'fundamentalist' Muslims. The former claim that reasons of national security require the utter destruction of the latter. Thus, they employ, without restraint or hindrance, every possible means available to them, even when those entail unprovoked attack, utter disregard for basic human rights or contraventions of civilized norms of ethical behaviour. On the other hand, the so-called fundamentalists believe that the term 'axis of evil' does not apply to them, but to the very people who coined it, in order to vilify them.

However, it must be made clear to both sides that torture, maiming and killing are condemned by all legal systems — religious as well as secular. Such acts are despicable, depraved and monstrous violations, regardless of who the perpetrators are, or the claims they use to justify their actions — be those intentional, or explained away as 'collateral damage'. All are equally disgusting, intolerable, shameful and utterly unacceptable, and serve only to stoke up hatred.

## CHAPTER 8

# Days to Remember

*Note: Not every Day to Remember is necessarily commemorated by all members of the faith community.*

### **Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah**

*Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah* occurs at noon every Friday after Muslims have gathered at the larger mosques to pray in congregation and listen to the weekly address — *khuṭbah* — that covers both religious and practical matters.

O you who believe, at the Friday call to prayer — the day of Assembly — hasten solemnly to the remembrance of Allāh. Leave business and traffic for that is best for you if you but knew.

**Qur'ān 62:9**

### **The Month of Ramaḍān** *the ninth month in the Hijri calendar*

During the twenty-nine or thirty days of the month of Ramaḍān Muslims do not eat or drink from before dawn until sunset. This fasting — *sawm* — a major feature of Islamic life, promotes an extraordinary sense of community and spirituality. It is highly recommended that the whole of the Qur'ān is read over this holy month.

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed to those before you, so that you may learn self-restraint.

**Qur'ān 2:183**

### **Memorial of Khadijah ؓ 10th Ramaḍān**

Khadijah bint Khwailid ؓ — for 24 years the beloved wife of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ — was the first woman to accept Islam. She is remembered for her unstinting support, encouragement and devotion to him and for being the mother of his six children. Both their sons, Qasim and Abdullah, died in infancy. Their daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayyah and Um-Kulthum became respected ladies of Makkah. Faṭimah al-Zahra ؓ married ‘Alī ibn Abu-Ṭālib ؓ — the elected fourth Caliph and first of the 12 divinely appointed Imāms — and mothered the second and third Imāms, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ؓ. The year in which Khadijah ؓ and the Prophet’s uncle Abu-Ṭālib passed away has become known as ‘The Year of Sorrow’.

### **Birthday of the second Imām, al-Ḥasan al-Mujtaba ؓ**

#### *15th Ramaḍān*

Imām al-Ḥasan al-Mujtaba ؓ — ‘The Chosen’ — was the son of the Prophet’s cousin ‘Alī ؓ and his daughter Faṭimah al-Zahra ؓ. He and his younger brother Ḥusayn ؓ were greatly loved by their grandfather the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who passed away when Ḥasan ؓ was seven years old.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said,

Whoever wants the pleasure of seeing the leader of the youth in paradise should simply look at Ḥasan.

History of Damascus, p.78

### **Memorial of the first Imām, ‘Alī ibn Abu-Ṭālib ؓ 21st Ramaḍān**

Imām ‘Alī ibn Abu-Ṭālib ؓ, Commander of the Faithful — Amīr al-Mu‘minīn — was the Prophet’s cousin and the first male to accept Islam. To foil the Makkan plot to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ in the dead of night, he ؓ risked his life to maintain activity in the Prophet’s house and conceal that the Prophet ﷺ had already left Makkah.

‘Alī ؓ married the Prophet’s daughter Faṭimah ؓ and is the father of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ؓ. He is understood by many Muslims to be the Prophet’s chosen successor.

The Prophet ﷺ said,  
I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its gate.  
Al-Ḥakim, Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p.26

### **Laylat al-Qadr 19th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th Ramaḍān**

*Laylat al-Qadr* — the Night of Measure — commemorates the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. This blessed night falls on one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramaḍān. Muslims remember it particularly between the 23rd and 27th night by offering extra prayers to thank Allāh for His guidance.

The Night of Measure is better than 1,000 months. Therein come down the Angels and the Spirit by Allāh's permission on every errand, Peace! . . . this until the rise of morn!

Qur'ān 97:3-5

### **The last Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah of Ramaḍān**

On the last Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah of the month of Ramaḍān, Muslims are sad the holy month is ending. The Imām announces the levy due for Zakat al-Fiṭr and the community contributes that, or more, for every Muslim who will be under their roof on the night of 'Īd prayer so that everyone has the funds with which to celebrate.

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'O people, the gates of Paradise are opened during this month, so ask your Lord to keep them open for you . . .

Wassail al-Shi'ah, Vol. 7, p.227

### **'Īd al-Fiṭr 1st Shawwal**

'Īd al-Fiṭr falls on the first day after the fasting month ends — on which fasting is not approved. In the morning, Muslims attend 'Īd prayer at the mosque and have a holiday from school and work.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said, . . . do not finish the month of fasting until you have seen the new moon. If it is covered with clouds when you think it should be visible, add an extra day of fasting.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari Book of Fasting, chapter on Moon Sighting

### **Memorial of the sixth Imām, Ja'far al-Şādiq ؑ 25th Shawwal**

The sixth Imām, Ja'far al-Şādiq ؑ — the Truthful — who passed away in 765 CE, a renowned scholar and expert in Islamic law (*Sharī'ah*), was the founder of the Ja'fari School of Law. He had many famous pupils including Abu Ḥanifa, founder of the Ḥanafī School of Law. His work continues to influence the practice and understanding of Islam throughout the world today.

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Being in the presence of a scholar is in itself an act of worship.

*Biḥar al-Anwar, Vol. 1, p.195*

### **Birthday of the eighth Imām, 'Alī al-Riḍā ؑ 11th Dhul-Qa'dah**

The eighth Imām, 'Alī al-Riḍā ؑ — pleased with Allāh's Will — was born in Madinah in 148 AH. He was a devout, calm person who would recite the whole Qur'ān over three days. Humble and well-mannered, he lived a simple life and fasted frequently.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

Humility is an aspect of true knowledge.

*Biḥar al-Anwar, Vol. 2, p.235*

### **Memorial of the ninth Imām, Muḥammad al-Taḳī al-Jawad ؑ 30th Dhul-Qa'dah (celebrated on the 29th if there is no 30th day that year)**

Even as a young child, Imām Muḥammad al-Taḳī ؑ — the Pious — al-Jawad ؑ — the Generous — was referred to vis-à-vis questions about Islam. Crowds often gathered at his home to listen to his lectures.

The most meritorious of you are those who are the most pious.

*Qur'ān 49:13*

### **Memorial of the fifth Imām, Muḥammad Baqir ؑ 7th Dhul-Hijjah**

The fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Baqir ؑ — the Disseminator of Knowledge — established the first *ḥawzah* (religious educational establishment for people of all ages and levels) to nurture minds for the flowering of Islamic knowledge.

Imām Baqir عليه السلام said, 'Laziness harms one's life and one's faith'.

Al-Kāfi Vol. 5, p.85

### **Hajj 9th Dhul-Hijjah**

The *Hajj* — pilgrimage ordered by Allāh — commemorates events in the life of the Prophets Ibrāhīm, Isma'īl and Muḥammad عليه السلام. Muslims who have the health and means to do so are expected to go on *Hajj* at least once during their lifetime.

The first house of worship appointed for people was that at Makkah: full of blessing and of guidance for all the worlds . . . Whoever enters it reaches security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty people owe to Allāh, . . .

Qur'ān 3:96–97

### **The Day of 'Arafah 9th Dhul-Hijjah**

The Day of 'Arafah is the high point of the *Hajj* and commemorates the Prophet Muḥammad's farewell pilgrimage. On that day, he taught his followers how to perform *hajj* while at 'Arafāt and gave them important advice on how Muslims ought to behave. Pilgrims spend the day at 'Arafāt praying for Allāh's forgiveness and blessing.

. . . All believers are brothers, all have the same rights and responsibilities. No-one is allowed to take from another that which he does not allow them of his own free will.

The Prophet's speech at 'Arafāt

### **'Īd al-Adḥā 10th Dhul-Hijjah**

On 'Īd al-Adḥā Muslims may sacrifice a sheep to commemorate the Prophet Ibrāhīm's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismā'īl عليه السلام in obedience to Allāh. This sacrifice is one of the rites of the pilgrimage. People attend 'Īd Ṣalāh on this celebratory day.

'O my son! I have seen in a dream that I offer you in sacrifice, now what is your view?' The son said, 'O my father! Do as you are commanded, you will find me to be one of the steadfast if Allāh so wills.'

Qur'ān 37:102

**‘Īd al-Ghadīr 18th Dhul-Hijjah**

‘Īd al-Ghadīr commemorates an event which occurred after the Prophet’s last *ḥajj*. Some 100,000 people gathered at Ghadīr Khum, a parting of the roads outside Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ proclaimed the last revelation of the Qur’ān and advised the assembled crowd that after him, his cousin and son-in-law ‘Alī ؑ would lead them.

This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.

**Qur’ān 5:03**

**‘Īd al-Mubahala 24th Dhul-Hijjah**

‘Īd al-Mubahala commemorates the occasion when a group of Christians from Yemen queried the Islamic understanding of ‘Īsā ؑ. Having challenged the Prophet ﷺ on this matter they declined to settle the dispute in the traditional manner, which involved both sides praying for the Lord to punish those who were lying — imprecation.

Say, ‘O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you, that we worship none but Allāh . . .’

**Qur’ān 3:64**

**1st Muḥarram**

The first of Muḥarram commemorates the start of the Hijri lunar calendar — the beginning of the new Islamic era and is the first day of a new Islamic year. After years of persecution in Makkah the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was invited to Madinah where, in 622 CE (Common Era), he established the ideal Muslim community and first Islamic state.

. . . [Allāh] provided a safe asylum for you, strengthened you with His aid and gave you good things for sustenance that you might be grateful.

**Qur’ān 8:26**



**Memorial of the third Imām, al-Ḥusayn ؑ****10th Muḥarram — ‘Ashura**

On Ashura, Muslims mourn for the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ؑ, the Prophet’s grandson and the third of the twelve Imāms. His refusal to endorse the claim to leadership of the corrupt tyrant Yazid resulted in his, and his family and followers en-route to Kufah, being intercepted by Yazid’s army, denied access to the waters of the Euphrates and massacred at Karbala in Iraq in the year 680 CE.

The Prophet ﷺ would often say,

Ḥusayn is from me and I am from Ḥusayn. O Allāh, love those who love Ḥusayn.

Sunan al Tirmidhi, Vol. 2, p.307

**Memorial of the fourth Imām, Zayn al-‘Abidīn ؑ 25th Muḥarram**

The fourth Imām, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, Zayn al-‘Abidīn ؑ — Ornament of the Worshippers — was the great-grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. He survived the massacre at Karbala where most of his family were killed. Despite being prevented from teaching in any mosque, he passed on the Islamic knowledge he had inherited. Among his works is the much loved prayer book, titled in English *The Psalms of Islam*.

O Allāh, let me pass my days in that for which you have created me.

*The Psalms of Islam, Prayer Number 20*

**Birthday of the fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Baqir ؑ 3rd Ṣafar**

The fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Baqir ؑ — Disseminator of Knowledge — lived through the appalling massacre at Karbala when he was only four years old. His father was a great-grandson of the Prophet ﷺ and his mother the Prophet’s great-granddaughter. He was the first person to be a direct descendant of Imām ‘Alī ؑ from both sides.

Imām Baqir ؑ said,

Allāh is displeased with those who displease their parents.

Toḥaf al-Uqūl, p.23

**Memorial of the second Imām, al-Ḥasan al-Mujtaba ؑ 7th Şafar**

The second Imām, al-Ḥasan al-Mujtaba ؑ — The Chosen — grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, was violently opposed by the governor of Syria, who was intent to usurp power. This made Imām al-Ḥasan's life difficult and endangered his family.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

My son Ḥasan is the Master by whom Allāh will reconcile two conflicting groups.

Şaḥiḥ Bukhari, Vol 9, p.71

**Birthday of the seventh Imām, Mūsa al-Kāzim ؑ 7th Şafar**

The seventh Imām, Mūsa al-Kāzim ؑ — the Restrainer of Anger — was born at a place between Makkah and Madinah in 128 AH. He was known as knowledgeable and sincere. This sincerity was so convincing that after his conversations with a Christian priest, the man accepted Islam. He had a beautiful voice and loved to recite the Qur'ān.

Imām Baqir ؑ said,

On the Day of Judgement Allāh will fill with peace and faith the hearts of those who restrained their anger.

Al-Kāfi, Vol. 2, p.110

**Memorial of the eighth Imām, 'Alī al-Riḍā ؑ 17th Şafar**

The eighth Imām, 'Alī al-Riḍā ؑ — Pleased with Allāh's Will — was told by Abbasid Caliph Ma'mun that he wanted to install the Imām as Caliph before he abdicated. Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā ؑ declined the offer saying that if that position had been granted by Allāh he could surely not relinquish it. And if Allāh had not installed him, who was he to decide who should be Caliph.

Imām 'Alī ؑ said,

Wisdom is your friend and ignorance your enemy.

Ghorar al-Ḥikam

### **Memorial of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ 28th Ṣafar**

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is a perfect exemplar for all Muslims. They follow his *Sunnah* — customs and practices, recorded in *aḥadith*, which are reports of what he said and did. From these, Muslims learn that they should worship Allāh and be kind and just to all of Allāh's creation.

[O Muḥammad,] We sent you as a mercy for the whole Universe.

Qur'ān 21:107

### **Memorial of the eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-'Askari ؑ**

*8th Rabi' al-Awwal*

The eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-'Askari ؑ — from the Garrison Town — was Imām for seven years during which time he was either in prison or under house arrest. Only his closest followers knew his whereabouts and were able to see him. Despite this, he ؑ was able to pass on the Islamic knowledge he had inherited.

Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askari ؑ said,

All vices are collected in one room and its key is lies.

*Biḥar al-Anwar, Vol 72, p.263*

### **Birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ Mawlid-an-Nabi**

*(12–17th Rabi' al-Awwal)*

Mawlid-an-Nabi — Birthday of the Prophet ﷺ — commemorates the birth, life and example of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ born in Makkah in Arabia in 570 CE. During 'Islamic Unity Week' between the 12th and 17th of the Islamic Month of Rabi' al-Awwal, people meet to tell stories of the Prophet's life, to give thanks to Allāh and to encourage love for the Prophet ﷺ.

You have indeed in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent exemplar.

Qur'ān 33:21

### **Birthday of the sixth Imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq ؑ 17th Rabi' al-Awwal**

The sixth Imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq ؑ — the Truthful — was born in 83 AH. He left a legacy of knowledge and scholarship that, almost 1,400 years later, is still consulted. He lived a humble life preferring simple food and clothing.

He did not agree with merchants making excessive profits and reported that the Prophet ﷺ had said,

The strongest fear I have for my nation is that they will succumb to the lure of unlawful income.

**Al-Kāfi, Vol.5, p.124**

### **Birthday of the eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-‘Askari ؑ**

*8th Rabi‘ al-Thāni*

The eleventh Imām, al-Ḥasan al-‘Askari ؑ — from the Garrison — was the son of the tenth Imām ؑ and the Lady Hadith, who was originally a slave. He was handsome, well built and considered to have a similar character to his revered ancestor the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. One of his well-known sayings is,

Anger is the source of all evil.

**Al-Tarhib wal Tarhib, Vol. 3, p.448**

### **Memorial of Faṭimah al-Zahra ؑ 3rd Jumādā al-Thāniyah**

Faṭimah al-Zahra ؑ — the Bright — was the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his wife Khadijah ؑ. She married the Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī ibn Abu-Ṭālib ؑ and was the mother of the Prophet’s grandsons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ؑ. She is celebrated as being ‘The Leader of Women’ and this day is commemorated as women’s/mothers’ day.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said,

Allāh is pleased with those who please Faṭimah and displeased with those who displease her.

**Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 4, p.5**

### **Birthday of Faṭimah al-Zahra ؑ 20th Jumādā al-Thāniyah**

Faṭimah al-Zahra ؑ — the Bright — was the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his wife Khadijah ؑ and born in Makkah in 615 CE. When the Prophet ﷺ and his family lived there they were persecuted for their belief in the One True God. On several occasions, while still a child,

Faṭimah ؓ is reported to have courageously berated those who abused her father. After her mother's death she remained inseparable from her father.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

On the Night Journey, Jibrā'il offered me a quince from paradise; after I had eaten it I approached my wife Khadījah and Faṭimah was conceived. Whenever I wished to smell paradise again, I visit my daughter Faṭimah.

Al-Mustadrak 'ala Ṣaḥīḥain, Vol. 3, p.156

### **Birthday of the tenth Imām, 'Alī al-Naqī ؓ 2nd Rajab**

The tenth Imām, 'Alī al-Naqī ؓ — the Pure — was the son of the ninth Imām ؓ. A soft-spoken and courteous person, he lived in a time of political intrigue and upheaval. Despite this, he remained patient and was always ready to help people, even those who had wronged him.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

Allāh pardons those who grant pardon.

Kanz al-'Ummāl, Tradition No. 7023

### **Memorial of the tenth Imām, 'Alī al-Naqī ؓ 3rd Rajab**

The tenth Imām, 'Alī al-Naqī ؓ — the Pure — is remembered for many good actions. He once gave medical advice to a Caliph, afflicted with pustules, who had persecuted his family. All others had been too afraid to treat the Caliph but it is recorded the tenth Imām's remedy was successful.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said,

Be just, even to your enemies.

Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 78, p.379

### **Birthday of the ninth Imām, Muḥammad al-Taḳī, al-Jawad ؓ 10th Rajab**

The ninth Imām, Muḥammad al-Taḳī — the Pious — al-Jawad ؓ — the Generous — was born in Madinah in 811 CE. He was well known for his ability to answer and resolve complex questions and issues. He is reported to have regularly travelled on horseback to distribute food and money to the needy.

You shall not attain righteousness until you are able to give in charity that which you love.

Qur'ān 3:92

### **Birthday of the first Imām, 'Alī ibn Abu-Ṭālib ؑ 13th Rajab**

The first Imām, 'Alī ibn Abu-Ṭālib ؑ, was the son of the uncle in whose Makkan home the Prophet ﷺ grew up. When six years old, 'Alī ؑ came to live in the Prophet's own home. Later, when the Prophet ﷺ gathered his relatives to ask them to accept Islam, 'Alī ؑ was the first to answer this call. They remained close throughout the Prophet's life and 'Alī ؑ led the prayers at the Prophet's funeral.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

The first of you to join me at the pool [Kawthar — reported to be a pool in paradise] is the first of you who embraced Islam and that is 'Alī son of Abu Ṭālib ؑ.

Al-Mustadrak 'ala Ṣaḥīḥain, Vol. 3, p.136

### **Memorial of the seventh Imām, Mūsa al-Kāzim ؑ 25th Rajab**

The seventh Imām, Mūsa ؑ also known as al-Kāzim — the Restrainer of Anger — lived in very difficult times. While praying in the Prophet's mosque in Madinah he was arrested and taken in chains to Basra and Baghdad. For years he was moved from one prison to another before finally being poisoned.

Imām Baqir ؑ said,

On the Day of Judgement Allāh will fill, with faith and tranquillity, the hearts of those who have controlled their anger when in positions to retaliate.

Al-Kāfi Vol 2, p.110

### **Laylat al-Isrā wal Mi'rāj 27th Rajab**

Laylat al-Isrā wal Mi'rāj commemorates the Prophet Muḥammad's 'Night Journey' from Makkah to Jerusalem and ascent through the seven heavens to receive Allāh's instructions on Ṣalāh,

Glory to Allāh who took His servant for a journey by night from the sacred mosque to the furthest mosque whose surroundings We did bless.

**Qur'ān 17:1**

### **'Īd-al-Mab'ath 27th Rajab**

'Īd-al-Mab'ath commemorates the start of Muḥammad's 'Prophetic Calling' as Allāh's final Messenger. Muslims offer prayer and read the Qur'ān, Allāh's final revelation to humankind.

We have truly sent you as a witness, as a bringer of glad tidings and as a Warner, in order that you, O people, may believe in Allāh and His Messenger . . .

**Qur'ān 48:8-9**

### **Birthday of the third Imām, al-Ḥusayn ؑ 3rd Sha'bān**

The third Imām, al-Ḥusayn ؑ, son of Commander of the Faithful, Imām 'Alī ؑ and Faṭimah al-Zahra ؑ, was the Prophet's grandson. He was born in Madinah in the fourth year of the Hijri calendar. He was generous, gentle and a staunch upholder of Islamic values. He inspired great loyalty among his family and followers.

Imām al-Ḥusayn ؑ said,

Calamity is a blessing in disguise.

**Biḥar al-Anwar, Vol 67, p.237**

### **Birthday of the fourth Imām, Zayn al-'Abidīn ؑ 5th Sha'bān**

The fourth Imām, Zayn al-'Abidīn ؑ — The Ornament of Worshippers — was born in Madinah in the 36th year of the Hijrah. At night he would often go abroad in disguise to distribute money, food and firewood to the needy of the community. It was only after his death that people realized who had done those good deeds. More than anything else, he liked to pray and help others to reconcile their differences.

Those who restrain anger and forgive others; Allāh loves those who do good.

**Qur'ān 3:134**

**Laylat al-Bara'at 14th Sha'bān**

Laylat al-Bara'at — the night of promises and forgiveness — is when Allāh decides what will happen to all of His creation in the coming year. Muslims offer prayers of gratitude, forgiveness and hope for the future. Because it falls 15 days before the month of Ramaḍān it is sometimes referred to as the gateway to Ramaḍān.

For Allāh is He who gives all sustenance, Lord of Power, steadfast forever.

Qur'ān 51:58

**Birthday of the twelfth Imām, Muḥammad al-Mahdī ؑ****15th Sha'bān**

The twelfth Imām, Muḥammad al-Mahdī ؑ — the Rightly Guided — was born in Samara in 255 AH. People turned to this acknowledged trustworthy person for answers to religious questions. He is considered to be alive but hidden until he reappears to establish Allāh's truth and justice on earth before the Day of Judgement. People pray for his return.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

The end of the world will not come about until the one of my progeny known as The Rightly Guided One — al-Mahdī — has filled the earth with justice and truth.

'iqd al-Durar fi Akhbar al-Mahdi al-Muntaḍar, Chapter 1





# **PART TWO**



## CHAPTER 9

# Prayer

### 9.1 The significance of prayer

#### Qur'ānic āyat on the significance of prayer

1. Maintain prayer at both ends of the day — and the early hours of night. For it is through good deeds that bad deeds are effaced.

**Qur'ān 11:114**

2. He is glorified in the morning and the evening by those — not distracted from remembrance of Allāh by bargain or trade — who maintain the prayer and give *zakāh*. For they fear a day in which hearts and sights are transformed.

**Qur'ān 24:37**

3. Allāh will surely help those who help Him. For Allāh is All-Powerful, Almighty. If We would grant them power over the land they would maintain the prayer, give *zakāh*, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong — for the outcome of all matters rests with Allāh.

**Qur'ān 22:40–41**

4. Certainly, it is the faithful who attain salvation — those who are humble in prayer and baulk at all conceit.

**Qur'ān 23:1–3**

## The significance of prayer from Nahj al-Balāghah

1. Commit yourself to maintain prayer. Offer them as frequently as possible in order to seek nearness to Allāh. For prayer casts off sin as trees do their leaves. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ likened it to the availability of a hot bath that, used five times a day, cleanses one of all dirt.

**Sermon 199**

2. For the God-fearing, prayer is the means by which to seek closeness to Allāh.

**Maxim 136**

3. Keep Allāh in mind apropos the Qur'ān. No one should excel you in acting upon it.

Keep Allāh in mind apropos prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion.

Keep Allāh in mind apropos Your Lord's House [Ka'bah], do not forsake it while you remain alive . . .

**Imām 'Alī's last words to his sons**

4. Sleep, in a state of firm belief, is better than prayer in a state of doubt.

**Imām 'Alī's comment at seeing a Khārijite offering the midnight prayer**

## Imām Ṣādiq ؑ on the significance of prayer

1. When people stand for prayer Allāh's mercy rains down upon them. Angels surround them as one of their number comments, 'If people comprehended the full benefit of prayer, their prayers would never cease.'

**Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, p.32**

2. When anyone praised another in the presence of Imām Ṣādiq ؑ, his sole interest was to know about her/his prayer.

**Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, p.32**

3. Prayer may be likened to a tent pole that is maintained in an upright position by guy-ropes and tent pegs. However, if the pole breaks, neither ropes nor pegs are able to afford it further support.

**Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, p. 33**

(All quotations attributed to any of the 12 error-free Imāms of the progeny of Allāh's Holy Messenger ﷺ refer to what was said by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ himself.)

## 9.2 Introduction to prayer

All of us are able to exercise and develop our muscles. Some do so to keep fit, some to participate in a particular sport and others to shape and sculpt their bodies. Whatever our motive, success is only achieved by way of sustained application and effort. This applies equally to intellectual development, with academic qualifications being awarded after years of diligent study, and, it follows, to the development of our innate spiritual capacities.

While it is apparent that the body requires nourishment, care and protection to grow and flourish, precious few consider the soul's need for similar nourishment, care, protection and growth. As though bedazzled by the 'limousine' that they are happy to refill, wash and securely house, many appear blind to the 'essence' of the entity it carries through this life. Like children who do not understand that education is an investment for the future, they do not grasp that this material world affords the soul the opportunity to realize its true potential and achieve its objective. They are able to register and respond to stimuli that materially affect their 'world-space' or 'worldview' but, as spiritual life does not exist for them, they are not able to register or respond to spiritual stimuli. For similar reasons, a pack of wild wolves only equipped to register other creatures as potential meals is not able to register and respond to stimuli — such as status, gold ornaments or 'state-of-the-art' electronic equipment — that for them do not exist in any meaningful sense.

However, the fact that, to some people, a thing may seem not to exist does not prove that it is in fact non-existent. During routine eye tests those with astigmatism are often surprised to perceive details not previously apparent to them, as are those with stereopsis when enabled to see with full

three-dimensional vision. And, although it may stare them in the face, those who are 'colour blind' do not see numerals formed by tonal dots within fields of similarly toned coloured dots.

To some extent, lack of awareness may also result from upbringing, as William Wordsworth — appointed Poet Laureate in 1843 — expresses so beautifully in these few lines from his ode, *Intimations of Immortality*,

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar;

Not in entire forgetfulness, And not in utter nakedness, but trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy! Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows, he sees it in his joy;

The Youth who daily farther from the east must travel, still is Nature's priest and by the vision splendid, is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away, and fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own; Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And, even with something of a mother's mind, and no unworthy aim, the homely nurse doth all she can to make her foster-child, her inmate Man, forget the glories he hath known, and that imperial palace whence he came. . . .

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,

Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke the years to bring the inevitable yoke, thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?

Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight, and custom lie upon thee with a weight heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.

Despite this, the works of painters such as Edward Hopper eloquently illustrate the soul's yearning to transcend the mundane and emerge into celestial light.

Jallaludin Rumi also refers to this in his lines:

Hearken to this Reed forlorn,  
Breathing, ever since was torn  
From its rushy bed,  
a strain of impassioned love and pain . . .

R. A. Nicholson, *Rumi Poet and Mystic*,  
redrafted by A. J. Arberry, Unwin Paperbacks 1978

Having revealed the outward manifestations of the faith — its practical, ethical and social precepts — and having summoned humankind to His side, to His Inner Reality, Allāh Almighty has also provided a link between the outward aspects of faith and the position of the spirit. The only nourishment needed by a soul in order to hone its ability to see everything with the help of Allāh — 'Light of the Heavens and the Earth' — is 'communication with the Creator' who has granted each one the non-materialistic attribute referred to as the soul's 'eye'.

Thus, the objective of the inner and outward aspects of the faith of Islam extends beyond the life of this world. The term 'nearness to Allāh' stretches beyond physical nearness to the lords of wealth and power of this world, for those who step on the path of human destiny travel a straight path to 'Nearness to Ultimate Truth' — *Al-Ḥaqq*. Beings who exist in this world should not imagine that success is limited to excellence in the sciences, arts, skills, customs or traditions that confer status in society. Real success can only be achieved through the refinement of the soul, and appreciation that its ultimate goal is the Purified Essence of Unity.

Allāh gave the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ access to His religious commandments and Divine precepts so that he ﷺ would focus our attention on the destination of this life's journey. He ﷺ taught us how these relate to our 'well-being' or 'wretchedness' in the next world; how the blessing of everlasting happiness is achieved by putting those Divine precepts into practice; how dedicated and determined effort brings us closer to Allāh; and how, at the higher stages of closeness, human spirituality may approach truth and reality.



Thus, to travel the 'Path to Nearness' is to tread the path of servitude, humility, self-annihilation and non-being rather than mastery over the things of this world. Those who travel this route are like jewels with Allāh's power and strength at their core.

This is the position that Allāh refers to in the Qur'ān when He talks about the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ:

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent example for those who consistently remember Allāh and place their hope in Allāh and the Last Day.

**Qur'ān 33:21**

Say, if you love Allāh follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins . . .

**Qur'ān 3:31**

In these *āyat*, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is introduced as our exemplar for behaviour and morality — whose example we should take as our precedent. It evidences the Prophet's freedom from sin and error, for had this not been so, there would have been no value in Allāh Almighty presenting him as a leader and as a precedent. This position was passed from the Prophet ﷺ to his Household ﷺ, as is witnessed by *aḥadīth* reported by many scholars:

I leave among you two precious things: the book of Allāh and my progeny. These two will not be separated until they meet together at the pool of Kawthar [in paradise]. Always follow them otherwise you will perish, and do not attempt to instruct them, for they are wiser than you.

**Sunan of Abu Dāwūd**

**Khasa'is of Nisa'i, p.30**

**Şaḥiḥ of Muslim, Vol. 7, p.122**

**Sunan of Tirmithi, Part 2, p.307**

**Mustadrak of Ḥakim, Vol.3, pp.109 & 148**

**Musnad of Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, Vol.3, pp.14–17; Vol.4, pp.26 & 59;**

**and Vol.5, pp.182 & 189**

The Prophet ﷺ said:

I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its gate; so whoever wants to enter the city should come through the gate.

**Al-Ḥakim’s Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p.26**

Hubshi ibn Janadah reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

‘Alī is from me and I am from ‘Alī and no one represents me but ‘Alī.

**Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Number 119**

The Prophet ﷺ said to ‘Alī, Faṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ؑ:

I am at peace with those whom you are at peace with; and I am at war with those whom you are at war with.

**Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Number 145**

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

Whoever loves Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ؑ loves me, and whoever hates them hates me.

**Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Number 143**

In the language of the Qur’ān, the holder of ‘the degree of nearness’ — the one who links humankind to its Inner Reality — is called *Imām*. It is therefore the Prophet ﷺ and error-free Imāms ؑ who hold the reins of spiritual guidance on Allāh’s behalf, who transmit the light of Allāh to our hearts.

So believe in Allāh and His messenger and the light We have sent down . . .

**Qur’ān 64:8**

From the *āyah* below it is clear that Allāh ordered the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ to direct Muslims to establish a special closeness vis-à-vis his ؑ progeny:

Say [O Muḥammad]: I do not ask you for any reward [for the toils of Prophethood] but love of my progeny.

**Qur’ān 42:23**

This facet of *wila* — closeness — that relates to his ﷺ progeny is reiterated in the *ḥadīth* of *Ghadir Khum* in which the Prophet ﷺ said:

For those of whom I am mawla [those over whom I have authority]  
‘Ali is also mawla.

Al-Amini’s *Al-Ghadir*, Vol.1, pp.14–18

It also appears in the Qur’ānic *āyah*:

Truly, truly, your guardian [waliy] is Allāh, His messenger  
[Muḥammad] and those who believe, establish the prayer,  
and give to the poor while they bow [in prayer].

Qur’ān 5:55

No Muslim scholar understands this *āyah* to be a universal instruction for all Muslims to give *zakat* while in *rukū’*. Al-Ṭabari, Al-Zamakhshari and Fakhru’d-Din āl-Rāzi clarified that ‘pay *zakat* while they bow in prayer’ refers specifically to the occasion on which, while, bent directly forwards from the waist during prayer — *rukū’* — ‘Alī ؑ was asked for charity — and took off his ring and gave it. The revelation of this *āyah* identifies the specific person who, in addition to Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, is the leader of the Muslims. Leader in this sense denotes ‘guardian of’, or ‘one who has authority over the affairs of others . . .’

Another facet of closeness refers to the ‘Wila of Love’ — *maḥabbah* — and the ‘Wila of Kinship’ — *qarabah*. The ‘Wila of Love’ and the ‘Wila of Kinship’ indicate that people should cultivate love and closeness to the Prophet’s progeny over and above the love and closeness they should have for other Muslims. Qur’ānic and *aḥadīth* references, narrated by all Muslim sources, confirm that love for the Prophet’s progeny is a basic precept of Islam.

Every Islamic precept has an underlying philosophical and spiritual reason. The reason and benefit of the need to love and feel close to the Prophet’s progeny ؑ is that it is bonds of love that truly connect people to ‘them’. It is those bonds that make people yearn to learn from them, to emulate their behaviour and manner, and to draw benefit from their purity and closeness to Allāh. Two famous scholars, Al-Zamakhshari and Fakhru’d-Din al-Rāzi, both narrate the *ḥadīth* on the ‘Wila of Love’. Al-Rāzi quoting al-Zamakhshari relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

**Whoever dies while in love with the progeny of Muḥammad —  
has died a martyr;**

**Whoever dies while in love with the progeny of Muḥammad —  
has died in forgiveness;**

**Whoever dies while in love with the progeny of Muḥammad —  
has died a believer in the perfection of their faith.**

**Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Al-Razi, Vol. 27, p.166**

***Wila*, in its sense of the Imāmate or leadership of the 12 error-free Imāms, is the position of authority in the faith to which matters are referred for decision. That is, it is a position that others should follow, should adopt as their example for action and behaviour, and from which they should learn the precepts of the faith. Such a position is necessarily one that is free from sin — *‘iṣmah* — so that the speech and actions of such Imāms are safe guidance for others.**

**Thus, the 12 error-free Imāms of *Ahl al-Bayt* are acknowledged as the authoritative source of what the Prophet ﷺ said and did. Had they been associated with unrighteousness or ignorance, had they had ceased to be the complement of the Qur’ān, and had they not been, like the Prophet ﷺ himself, free from sin and error, they could not have been exemplars and leaders in the Prophet’s place.**

**In the second year after the Prophet ﷺ had migrated to Madinah revelations established the**

**Call to prayer — *athān***

**Mental and physical purification that conditions and readies one to commune with the Lord — *wuḍū’*,**

**Mandatory prayers — *ṣalāt*, and**

**Direction to face in order to align one’s being with the earthly core of Islam — *qiblah*.**

**The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ taught people how to pray — and this section is for those who seek to follow the path of servanthood taught by him ﷺ,**

and who desire to adhere as accurately as is possible to his ﷺ teaching — for Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān,

In Allāh’s Messenger you certainly have an excellent example for those who place their hope in Allāh and the Last Day, and are constant in the remembrance of Allāh.

Qur’ān 33:21

Allāh’s final Prophet ﷺ departed this world in the year 11 AH at the age of 63.

### 9.3 Why we pray

O you who believe! Seek help through patience and prayer . . .

Qur’ān 2:153

#### The significance of prayer in our lives

##### As individuals

Prayer is the most highly esteemed communication between human beings and their Creator.

It develops our ‘greatest faculty’s’ capacity for concentration — and evidences the highest level of submission to Allāh Almighty.

It purifies the soul and provides a framework for life’s daily discipline — in particular, prayers offered at their specified times.

Prayer affords the satisfaction of having fulfilled daily obligations, and affords a spiritual taste of the sweetness of being in Allāh’s presence.

Recitation and remembrance maintain ‘Awareness of Allāh’ and encourage perception of the — everywhere evident — ‘signs’ of His mercy and wisdom.

##### As families

As Islam’s first preference is for prayer to be offered in a mosque, its second is for prayer to be offered in congregation, while prayer within the family has lesser significance. Nonetheless, parents have responsibility to encourage children to fulfil this most essential pillar of Islam. When toddlers watch parents perform *wuḍū’* and offer daily prayer, they inevitably copy them and adopt these practices.

### **As a community**

Prayer strengthens bonds between community members who assemble to share common experiences five times a day (or three times — when *Duḥr* and ‘*Aṣr*, or *Maghrib* and ‘*Ishā*’, are contiguously offered; ref. Qur’ān 17:78).

The community coheres and is unified by being together at the mosque.

As congregational prayers are often accompanied by discussions of Islamic rulings and lectures on the Qur’ān and *aḥādīth*, the educational value and influence of community prayer is compounded.

Mosques are not merely places of worship, but also places in which social problems are often solved, fellow Muslims consulted about community affairs and crucial decisions apropos the community determined.

### **As an ummah**

Prayer increases awareness of the needs of the ‘worldwide’ *ummah*, for whose contentment Muslims pray.

All Muslims face one *qiblah*, communicate with the One Divinity — Allāh Almighty — and are all united by common goals and objectives.

### **Historical aspects of faith**

The first prayer ever offered in Islam was when the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ stood in the Holy Mosque of Makkah with Khadijah ؓ and the young boy ‘Alī ؑ behind him. From this event the apparent strength of Islam encouraged others to profess faith also. When the Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madinah his first action was to build a mosque. That mosque has remained the representative symbol of Islamic heritage throughout the centuries.

### **The significance of prayer for Muslims today**

As secularism offers no solution to spiritual problems, all the hopes, aspirations and prosperity of human beings rest with faith and regular communication between human beings and their Creator. Prayer plays a central role in uplifting the spiritual standing of humanity.

### **The ongoing relevance of discipline**

Consistency and regularity of daily prayer contribute to discipline and organization — the secret of every success. For Muslims the discipline of prayer is as automatic as brushing the teeth — which similarly refreshes

and contributes to feelings of 'well-being'. As with the brushing of teeth, rewards — although long-lasting — yield their benefits over time.

### **The ongoing relevance of unity**

Congregational prayers at central mosques — to which all must travel — are effective in establishing unity amongst those who attend. This serves to crumble the artificial barriers of society, professions, wealth, class and neighbourhood, and to re-establish the equality of all human beings before Allāh.

### **The ongoing relevance of identity**

Congregating with others strengthens the individual's identity as a component of a larger group — in the same way that supporters identify with their football team. In the Western world in particular, congregational prayers reinforce bonds and relationships with the worldwide Muslim *ummah*. During the last decades of the 20th century Muslims were accused of being terrorists and attacking civilization. The new century will, '*Inshā'a-Allāh*', witness the opposite and demonstrate the tolerance and broadmindedness of Muslims who participate and contribute to society — as their ancestors did. Politicians in the Western world have begun to realize this and to count on younger Muslims for positive contributions.

### **The fruits of remembrance**

The essential teaching of Islam is to strive to feel the Omnipresence of Allāh during every single moment of life as the Qur'ān and 'Traditions' emphasize:

Remembrance of Allāh satisfies the heart.

**Qur'ān 13:28**

Remembrance of Allāh illuminates the heart.

**Ghorar al-Ḥikam**

Remembrance of Allāh leads to the love of Allāh.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 93, p.160**

Remembrance of Allāh is the key to prosperity.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 77, p.199**

Remembrance of Allāh is nourishment for the soul.

**Ghorar al-Ḥikam**

Remembrance of Allāh is a cure.

**Kanz al-Ummāl, Tradition 1751**

Remembrance of Allāh keeps Shayṭān away.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon No. 2**

Remembrance of Allāh prevents hypocrisy.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 77, p.290**

Remembrance of Allāh's omnipresence inspires people and effectively deters them from succumbing to temptations and doing wrong.

### **The disadvantage of neglecting to remember Allāh**

Some advantages of the remembrance of Allāh, essential elements in the building of Islamic personality, are listed above and some consequences of the failure to remember Him are listed below:

The lives of those who turn from My remembrance will be circumscribed and they shall be raised blind on the Day of Judgement.

**Qur'ān 20:124**

We will appoint a devil as intimate companion of those who withdraw themselves from the remembrance of The Most Gracious.

**Qur'ān 43:36**

Shayṭān plans to create hostility and hatred between you, and to use intoxicants and gambling to hinder your remembrance of Allāh.

**Qur'ān 5:91**

It is not those who leave art exhibitions with blurred memories of pretty pictures who appreciate or understand the stature and achievement of an artist. It is those who grasp the significance, and appreciate the artist's achievement, who in reality understand and esteem the artist's work. And it is only those of us who grasp the significance of the signs of creation in the heavens and the earth, who genuinely glorify Allāh Almighty and remember Him.



## 9.4 Purity of body and soul

The manufacture of detergents and cleaning materials is a highly profitable business. Millions are spent on advertising soaps, shampoos, conditioners, washing powders etc. Families that maintain clean, wholesome and healthy homes also ensure that their bodies, clothing, bed linen, soft furnishings and houses are kept clean. That cleanliness is of the utmost importance is illustrated by a tradition of Allāh's final Messenger ﷺ in which he said, 'Cleanliness is part of faith.' The question is — why do we assume such traditions refer only to bodily cleanliness when purification of the soul is the very objective of our existence?

Many *āyat* of the Qur'ān refer to purification of the soul as the essential element in the attainment of prosperity, see Qur'ān 91:9 and 87:14. This is realized in two ways — one positive, one negative. The negative is to keep away from sin, the positive is to pray.

A 'true believer' may achieve inner wisdom and knowledge of spiritual truths through her/his inner heart. The heart and 'inner heart' are closely linked. The difference between them is that the heart 'knows' while the inner heart 'sees'. When knowledge and vision combine, the unseen becomes visible and certainty is achieved. This was the goal of the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام when he saw the '*Malakūt*' of the heavens and the earth referred to in Qur'ān 6:75. There is no point in knowledge without vision, nor in vision without knowledge. It is analogous to visiting a foreign country without understanding its language, history or customs.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

Worship Allāh as if you see Him for even if you do not, He truly sees you.

*Biḥar al-Anwār*, Vol. 77, p. 74

Once, when the Prophet ﷺ explained the significance of daily prayer to his companions, he asked, 'Do you think traces of filth adhere to the body of a person who has a flowing spring at the entrance to his house and is able to wash five times a day?' His companions thought not. He ﷺ continued, 'In like manner, the five daily prayers remove dirt, filth, corruption and uncleanness from souls.'

When we have decided where we want to go, and have agreed to adhere to the regulations that govern that course, we may become comfortably established — in the ‘carriage’ of prayer — and be transported to our destination as it travels.

### **The heart’s presence during prayer**

Prayer is a celestial formula and ‘Divine Electuary’. Every part contains a hidden ‘Mystery’. Prayer is an expression of love, communication, and remembrance of the Lord of the Universe. It is the most excellent channel for spiritual perfection, ascension, and nearness to Allāh. In one tradition, prayer is referred to as being the believer’s ‘Heavenly Journey’ — *Mi`rāj*.

Prayer is such a pure sparkling stream of spirituality that those who enter it five times a day purify their souls of every category of pollution and contamination. It is the key aspect for Allāh Almighty and is the criterion for acceptance of all other deeds and acts of worship. However, none of the above advantages, or fruits of prayer, are achieved without the heart being present — that is, without devoting its full attention to Allāh Almighty with utmost humbleness.

All the elements of prayer — *wuḍū’*, invocations, recitals of Qur’ānic *āyat*, bowing with deference, prostration in submission, bearing witness and salutation — constitute the ‘face and body’ of the prayer, while the heart’s presence and attention to the Creator express its ‘spirit’. Just as a body without a spirit is acknowledged to be dead, prayer that is offered without the heart’s presence — even though it might satisfy the performance of an obligatory act of worship — does not contribute to the achievement of any higher spiritual position. Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān,

**Establish Worship for My Remembrance.**

**Qur’ān 20:14**

The Friday prayer has been described as an invocation:

**O you who believe, when the call for the prayer on Friday is heard, hasten to the remembrance of Allāh.**

**Qur’ān 57:9**

In one tradition the Prophet ﷺ emphasized the above saying,

Sometimes only half a prayer is accepted — at others, possibly only a third, a quarter, or a tenth — while some prayers, like crumpled clothes thrown by a careless child, are completely rejected.

**Biḥar al-Anwār, Vol. 84. p.260**

### **The link between remembrance and prayer**

Remembrance of Allāh — *Dhikr Allāh* — is evidenced by the heart, by the tongue and by the limbs and — when all are combined altogether in a single communication with Allāh Almighty — by *ṣalāt*.

### **How to obtain the spiritual advantages of ṣalāt**

The Prophet ﷺ showed his companions how to pray and ordered them to follow his example. He ﷺ, his progeny عليه السلام and his faithful companions then initiated them into how to derive the utmost spiritual advantage from prayer. They highly recommended the following:

1. To remind oneself that the prayer being offered might be our final one. The effect is to increase the intensity of concentration in the hope that the maximum benefit from this opportunity is achieved.
2. To intend to express the utmost submission and humility during prayer. None are able to 'draw close' to Allāh Almighty until they are aware and have accepted that they themselves are insignificant creatures. The Prophet ﷺ once commented on the carelessness of someone who was praying, saying, 'Had he been truly humble he would have remained aware of the awesomeness of his communication and been more measured in his actions.'
3. To understand, while declaring *Allāhu Akbar*, that He is far greater than these words are able to express. Alternately, to have consciously and sincerely placed one's absolute reliance on the Greatest and Mightiest Power.
4. To manifest during bowing with deference — *rukū'* — absolute faith and total submission, regardless of whether He should decide to behead you or not.

5. While in prostration — *sujud* — to concentrate on the fact that we have been created from earth, are returned to it by burial and will, on the Day of Judgement, be again raised from it.
6. It is highly recommended: while standing upright, for eyes to be focused on the point where the forehead will meet the earth; while bowing with deference, for eyes to be focused between one's feet; while sitting between prostrations and while bearing witness — *tashahud* — for eyes to be focused on one's lap; and while offering the invocation — *qunūt* — for eyes to be focused on the palms of one's hands.
7. It is also highly recommended that the nose touch the earth during prostration. In many traditions this act is expressed as defiance to Shayṭān — his intention being to divert submission from Allāh — for this act is an expression of utter submission to Him.
8. And, when raising hands to the ears and uttering *Allāhu Akbar*, to be conscious of surrender to Supreme Authority; when standing upright, to relax the arms with palms in contact with the thighs; when in prostration, for males to keep hands directed inwards and elbows outward — forming the arms into 'wings', *tajniḥ* — and for females, to keep hands pointing forwards with elbows close to their sides.

Al-Kāfi, Vol. 3, pp. 310–363

## How to pray

There are three aspects to discuss: how to prepare for worship; conditions to be complied with during worship; and the offering of the prayer. In addition, some prayers are obligatory while others are voluntary.

## 9.5 Obligatory prayers

### Preparation

This includes:

Ablution, ablution with water — *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*, and ablution when water is not available — *tayamum*.

### *Wuḍū'*

The Arabic word used in aḥadīth references — *wuḍū'* — cleanliness, encompasses mental as well as physical cleansing. When used as a technical term, it refers to 'preparation for worship'. This, when done in a quiet prayerful manner, is regarded as being a part of the act of worship.

### Requirements of *wuḍū'*

- The following presumes that hands, face, head and feet are physically clean and free from impurity.
- Specific intention to achieve closeness with Allāh Almighty. Thus, if the actions of *wuḍū'* are done for any reason other than this, they are not considered suitable preparation for an act of worship.
- To rinse hands and the face, pour a little water into the cupped hands and, with the right-hand palm drawn in a downward movement, clean the face from the hairline to the extremity of the beard. The area required to be cleansed is the distance between the end of the extended thumb and end of the extended middle finger. To ensure that the complete area is covered, it is recommended to overlap on each side. Water should be used sparingly as the requirement is to cleanse — not to drench. Regardless of the number of hand movements that are needed to satisfy this requirement, all are considered to be part of one complete action.
- While it is obligatory to 'cleanse' the face and hands once, and recommended to do that twice — it is considered inappropriate to do it three or more times, for Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام prohibited this being done.<sup>1</sup>
- The 'cleansing' that follows immediately after an intention to make *wuḍū'* is considered the 'first'.
- If one intends to perform *wuḍū'* subsequent to having a bath, shower or other wash, it is recommended that such 'cleansing' is done only once after the intention to make *wuḍū'*.
- After 'cleansing' the face, 'cleanse' the right arm and hand from elbow to fingertip, and then the left arm and hand. To ensure that the elbows are

1. We may deduce that this was on the grounds that it would incur unnecessary water usage and encourage people to doubt that they had carried it out properly.

adequately cleansed, it is recommended to start this process a little way above the elbows.

- With moistened right palm, wipe the hair from the centre of the head to the hairline, and the upper part of each foot starting at the toes and ending at the ankle.
- While it is required to moisten any scalp visible through the hair, there is no requirement to moisten any that is not. It is not acceptable, for those with very long hair, to moisten only the tips of their hair — the requirement is to wipe the head.

### *Ghusl*

To have a shower — *ghusl* — sometimes also called ‘the greater ablution’, is obligatory prior to prayer and other acts of worship in the following circumstances:

Sexual intercourse and the emission of semen — *janābah*.

After semen is discharged, regardless of whether this occurs during sleep or wakefulness, or when penetration occurs during sexual intercourse, if ejaculation occurs or not, a shower becomes necessary to prepare one for any act of worship.

Menstruation — *ḥayḍ*

After the menstrual flow has stopped, a shower becomes necessary to prepare a woman for any act of worship.

Non-menstrual bleeding — *istiḥāḍah*

There are three categories of such occurrence:

#### 1. Slight

*Requirement:*

To cleanse — change sanitary towel and make *wuḍū'* prior to offering each of the five *ṣalāt*.

#### 2. Heavy

*Requirement:*

To perform *ghusl* before offering *Fajr ṣalāt*. Cleanse — change sanitary towel and make *wuḍū'* prior to offering *Ḍuḥr*, *'Aṣr*, *Maghrib* and *'Ishā'* *ṣalāt*.

### 3. Very heavy

#### **Requirement:**

To perform *ghusl* before *Fajr*, before *Ḍuḥr* and before *Maghrib ṣalāt*. Cleanse — change sanitary towel and make *wuḍū'* prior to offering 'Aṣr and 'Ishā' *ṣalāt*.

#### Childbirth — *nifās*

After any bleeding occurs while giving birth — *nifās* — which may be for a few minutes or continue for some ten days, a shower becomes necessary to prepare the mother for any act of worship.

#### Death — *mawt*

Before burial, the bodies of Muslims are washed three times: once with water in which the leaves of the 'Lote tree' — *sidr* — have been soaked, once with water to which camphor has been added, and once with plain water.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Tayamum*

*Tayamum* is performed in place of *wuḍū'* or bathing the whole body — *ghusl* — in the following six circumstances:

1. When it is not possible to obtain a sufficient quantity of water to perform *wuḍū'* or *ghusl*.

People are required to resolutely seek water for *wuḍū'* and *ghusl* wherever they may happen to be. In populated areas, this means *tayamum* may only be performed when all possibility of finding water has been exhausted. In desert areas, people are required to search for water — on their route and in the surrounding area. In areas of rough terrain or dense forests — where movement may be severely hindered — they should, if conditions permit, search north, south, east and west to a distance of 400 steps — if not, to a distance of at least 200 steps. However, they need not look for water in directions in which they are certain no water is to be found.

2. Prior to the availability of soaps, readily available leaves of the Lote tree were used as a detergent with camphor being employed to preserve the deceased from decay. Despite contemporary soaps and shampoos being equally efficient, in order to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, the consensus of jurists is to retain the use of these substances. This has the secondary benefit of helping those who lack funds or live in remote areas.

If there is sufficient time before the next prayer is due — and some certitude that water is to be found a relatively short distance away — they should, if it is not going to be exceedingly difficult, set out to obtain it. However, there is no necessity to set forth on a slim possibility that water may be found. One person may be delegated to bring water for others.

If a person concludes that there is insufficient time to search for water and prays after performing *tayamum* — but later discovers that they would have had ample time — they should repeat the prayer in question.

2. If — due to age, infirmity, danger, extreme difficulty, or lack of receptacle — a person is not able to obtain water, they should perform *tayamum*.
3. People should perform *tayamum* if they have reason to fear that water may endanger their life, or prolong, complicate or aggravate an ophthalmological or other medical condition. However, if warm water for *wuḍū'* and *ghusl* circumvents such danger, it should be used.
4. Those who fear subsequent shortage of drinking water if supplies of water are used for *wuḍū'* and *ghusl* — should perform *tayamum*. This is specifically applicable if consequential shortages are likely to result in humans and animals — for whom one is responsible — suffering intolerable hardship, dehydration or death.
5. If the only water or receptacle available are unsuitable — having been appropriated, for example — *tayamum* should be performed instead of *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*.
6. As it is not appropriate to miss a prayer during its prescribed time — if the performance of *wuḍū'* or *ghusl* would cause this to occur — *tayamum* has to be performed.

The substances that may be used for *tayamum*

*Tayamum* is performed on clean soil, sand, dried clay or, if necessary, stone.

Requirements of *tayamum*

- The primary requirement is the 'specific intention' to perform *tayamum* — that is, to purify oneself mentally as well as physically in this manner.
- For the palms and fingers of both hands to simultaneously touch or pat the substance being used.



- With the heel of both hands to wipe the entire forehead — from the hairline to the bridge of the nose.
- Then — in one action — to rub the palm of the left hand over the back — from wrist to fingertip — and to do that also with the palm of the right hand over the back of the left hand.

### **Direction of the Ka'bah – qiblah**

*Qiblah* is the Arabic word that denotes the direction of the Ka'bah — the sacred cube-shaped building in Makkah — towards which all Muslims face when they pray. This action is an exemplification of the Islamic principle, that every human action should be focused upon the single objective of seeking the pleasure of our Almighty Creator. Indeed, facing the direction of the *qiblah* is required for other actions such as circumambulation of the Ka'bah, burial, the slaughter of beasts and prayers of supplication — *du'ās*. It is also highly recommended that those who recite or read the Qur'ān face in the direction of the *qiblah*.

- While standing or sitting in prayer, the frontal aspect of the body — from head to toe — is aligned to face *qiblah*, the face not being turned away from it. This applies equally to those not able to stand or sit, who should lie, preferably on their right side, but if that too is not possible, on their left side. If neither is possible for them, they should be placed on their back with the soles of their feet aligned to face *qiblah*.
- If a person is required to offer prayer while aboard an aircraft, train or ship they may employ a compass to establish the direction of the *qiblah*. If they do not have a compass available, it is appropriate for them to pray in the approximate direction of the *qiblah*. For example, in North America to face NE, in the United Kingdom to face SE, in Paris, and other European cities on the same latitude, to face E.
- The direction of *qiblah* may be determined by compass, the informed guidance of others, or indicatory niches — *miḥrābs* — of local mosques. However, when no means by which to determine *qiblah* is available, prayer may be offered facing any direction. In spite of this, if time permits, it is recommended that such prayers be offered four times — with the alignment of the body being changed 90° to the right between each prayer.

- If a person believes that the *qiblah* is in one of two directions, they should offer the prayer twice, facing first in the one, and then in the other direction.

### Timing for obligatory daily prayer

Within each period of 24 hours it is incumbent on every Muslim to offer five prayers — *ṣalāt* — in their prescribed sequence. Each *ṣalāt* comprises an intention — *niyyat* — and a specific number of cycles of standing upright, bowing with deference and prostration — *raka'ah* (pl. *raka'āt*). It is insufficient simply to go through the motions of prayer. Prayer must inform and motivate all aspects of the believer's existence. It is highly recommended that each prayer be offered at the commencement of the 'preferred time specified in the *aḥadīth*' — *faḍilat al-waqt*.

The time for each prayer is outlined below:

1. *Zuhr* — four *raka'āt* — at midday.
2. 'Aṣr — four *raka'āt* — in the late afternoon.
3. *Maghrib* — three *raka'āt* — at dusk, as the sky darkens before nightfall.
4. 'Ishā' — four *raka'āt* — after dusk when full darkness has set.
5. *Fajr* — two *raka'āt* — at 'true' dawn — *Fajr al-Ṣadiq*.

For example, if we assume that on a particular day, the time in London for *Zuhr* is 12.04 and that sunset is at 4.02:

- The first ten minutes after 12.04 are designated as being the specified time in which to offer *Zuhr* — in other words, those ten minutes are exclusively reserved for *Zuhr* prayers, and no other prayer may be offered during that time.
- The last ten minutes prior to 4.02 are designated as being the specified time in which to offer 'Aṣr — in other words, those ten minutes are exclusively reserved for 'Aṣr prayer, and no other prayer may be offered during that time.

However, both *Zuhr* and 'Aṣr may also be offered at any time between those two specified periods.

In many *aḥadīth*, to pray as early as possible is highly recommended. The Prophet ﷺ once described the reward for a prayer offered at the commencement of each *ṣalāt* time as equivalent to the size of a large camel whilst the reward for prayer offered towards the end of that prayer's time is equivalent to the size of a tiny bird.

Thus, there is a preferred time for each *ṣalāt* to be offered referred to as *faḍilat al-waqt*, explained below:

1. The *faḍilat al-waqt* for the *Ẓuhr* prayer is established in the following manner:
 

A rod placed vertically on level ground casts its shadow towards the West as the sun rises. The length of the shadow cast reduces in size as the sun approaches noon and, in places where it is directly overhead, disappears completely. (In Makkah, for example, this occurs on 28th May and 14th July.) The time to start *Ẓuhr* is defined as the moment that the sun passes its highest point and begins to cast its shadow towards the East. The time in which to offer — *faḍilat al-waqt* — the *Ẓuhr* prayer continues until the shadow of the rod reaches four-sevenths of the length of the rod, i.e. just over half its length.
2. The *faḍilat al-waqt* for the *‘Aṣr* prayer starts when the shadow of the rod reaches two-sevenths of the rod's length, and continues till it is equivalent to six-sevenths of the rod's length.
3. The *faḍilat al-waqt* for the *Maghrib* prayer starts when the redness of sunset in the Eastern horizon is at its peak. That is, when the redness of the setting sun has shrunk to cover only the western half of the sky. This *faḍilat* continues until the redness has disappeared completely from the western sky.
4. The *faḍilat al-waqt* for the *‘Ishā’* prayer begins immediately after this, and continues for the first third of the night.
5. The *faḍilat al-waqt* for the *Fajr* prayer is ‘true’ dawn — *Fajr al-Ṣadiq*. This appears first as a horizontal white thread on the horizon, and then broadens into a ‘river of light’ of ever increasing clarity and brilliance (... eat and drink until dawn when the whiteness of day becomes distinct from the blackness of night. Qur’ān 2:187). True dawn is not to be

confused with 'first' or 'false' dawn — *Fajr al-Kathib* — that appears as a column of light that increases and diminishes until it finally withers away completely. *Fajr al-Şadiq* is technically defined as the instant in the morning when the upper edge of the sun's disc is 18 degrees below the horizon. At certain times of the year, in cities located on 48 degrees of latitude or above, the sun's disc does not descend 18 degrees below the horizon, and for those times, *Fajr al-Şadiq* occurs when the upper edge of the sun's disc is 12 degrees below the horizon. This applies in London and similarly located cities between 22 May and 23 July each year.

The details of all these circumstances are explained by Ayatollah Sayyid Fadhel Milani in his *Frequently Asked Questions on Islam*, pages 57–59 (Islam in English Press, London 2001).

- A prayer not offered until after the specified time of its succeeding prayer is considered to be an unfulfilled duty and squandered opportunity. In such circumstance a 'surrogatory prayer' — *qaḍā* — must be offered. In other words, if a person has time to offer only one prayer of four *raka'āt* before the specified time for 'Aşr ends, they must offer their 'Aşr prayer, and immediately thereafter their *qaḍā* prayer for *Ẓuhr*.
- In the opinion of all Islamic scholars, a deliberate breach in the sequence in which prayers must be offered renders such prayers invalid.
- If, having made the intention — *niyyat* — and started the 'Aşr prayer, one realizes that *Ẓuhr* has mistakenly been missed, one should instantly transfer one's intention from offering 'Aşr to offering *Ẓuhr*, and continue the prayer as *Ẓuhr*. The 'Aşr prayer must be offered afterwards.

### **Rulings related to deficiencies during prayer – şalāt**

- Deliberate major or minor omissions, additions or changes to the obligatory acts of *şalāt* render such *şalāt* invalid.
- If one comes to realize, during or after *şalāt*, that one's *wuḍū'* or *ghuṣl* is no longer valid, one must abandon that prayer until *wuḍū'* or *ghuṣl* is again valid. If that prayer's *faḍilat al-waqt* has passed, the prayer should still be offered unless the specified time for the next prayer has come. If that is the case, the surrogatory prayer — *qaḍā* — must be offered.

- If it is realized, during or after *rukūʿ*, that a prostration — *sujud* — of the preceding *rakaʿāt* has been omitted, then that *ṣalāt* is invalid and must be offered correctly. If this is realized prior to *rukūʿ*, *sujud* should immediately be made, followed by all the obligatory actions of *ṣalāt*, from that stage of the prayer onwards. When an error has been corrected during *ṣalāt* it is recommended that two additional *sujuds* be made immediately after that prayer — *Sujud al-Ṣahw* — to correct that oversight.
- If it is realized before the salutation that a *sujud* of the final *rakaʿah* has been omitted, this should be then made and *tashahud* repeated before the salutation.
- If, before the *salām* at the end of the prayer, it is realized that something has been omitted, it should be performed prior to the *salām*.

### **Conditions to be fulfilled during prayer**

*Six conditions apply to where prayer may be offered*

1. To use a place for prayer it must either be owned, rented, or have the permission of the owner or leaseholder to be used for that purpose. Clearly, mosques and prayer facilities in public places such as universities, hospitals and airports have been provided for people to pray in. One may not knowingly use any thing or place without the legal right to do so.
2. Prayer must be offered in surroundings where it will not be disrupted.
3. There must be sufficient space in which to stand upright, bow and prostrate comfortably.
4. The place must be free of impurities and dry — so that body and clothes are not rendered impure.
5. The point where women place their forehead during prostration should be behind the men. In restricted spaces this may be as far forward as a point just behind the line of the men's knees during prostration.
6. During prostration, the point where the forehead is placed should not be more than the breadth of four fingers above that of the hands, knees and toes.

Islam places great emphasis on *ṣalāt* being offered in mosques. Considered foremost of these are, in the following order:

The Holy Mosque in *Makkah*

The Holy Mosque in *Madinah*

The Holy Mosque in *Kufa*

The Holy Mosque in Jerusalem — *Masjid al-Aqṣā*

These four mosques are followed in preference by the central — *jami'* — mosque of the city, the local mosque and the street market or borough mosque.

*Six conditions apply to clothes that are worn during ṣalāt*

1. They should not be contaminated by anything that is 'impure in itself' — *Najis al-'Ayn*.
2. They must be permissible for use during prayer, i.e. not stolen or unlawfully obtained.
3. They must not be made of any material from creatures that have not been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. Hence leather belts and jackets that may have been made from such materials are removed prior to prayer.
4. They must not be made of material from creatures whose flesh is unlawful to consume, such as carnivores or reptiles.
5. For males — they must not be made of material that includes any silk.
6. For males — they must not be embroidered with gold thread.

*Covering of private parts — 'awrah*

- While male pudenda must always remain concealed, this is especially true for *ṣalāt*. It is strongly recommended also to cover the body between navel and knee.

- With the exception of faces and hands, women's bodies and limbs are required to be covered during *ṣalāt*. This clearly requires that clothes should not be, or become, 'see through' in varying lighting conditions.

### **Acts that invalidate prayer**

Prayer is invalidated in twelve circumstances:

1. When realization dawns that an essential requirement of prayer has not been satisfied.
2. When, by accident or intention, *wuḍū'* is invalidated.
3. If, while standing upright, palms are deliberately removed from the thighs in order to fold the arms. Neither the Prophet ﷺ nor the Muslims at the time of the first Caliph folded their arms during *ṣalāt*. This innovation of the second Caliph was prohibited by Imām Ṣādiq ؑ when he declared it to be a Magian but not Muslim practice.
4. When *Āmin'* is uttered after *Surat al-Fatiha*. The Prophet ﷺ taught Muslims how to pray and ordered them to 'copy' him. He never uttered *Āmin* after *Surat al-Fatiha* and the only narration that maintains that he ﷺ did so is not regarded as authentic.
5. When a person voluntarily turns away from the *qiblah*.
6. While in prayer it is not legitimate to articulate words or phrases not included in the Qur'ān or used for *dhikr*. If, however, someone greets those in prayer with the words *Salamun Alaikum* — a greeting that demands an obligatory response — it must be done using the phrase *Salamun Alaikum* — words included in the Qur'ān in a variety of places, for example Qur'ān 16:32.
7. When one voluntarily laughs aloud. However, a smile or a small chuckle do not invalidate prayer.
8. The value of any prayer is directly linked to the quality of communication with the Creator. While tears or sobs of fear engendered by Allāh's awesome Omnipotence and Omnipresence do not detract attention from Him, tears shed over the affairs of this world clearly indicate that thoughts and actions are no longer focused on Him — a situation that renders such prayer meaningless.

9. When untoward actions alter the prescribed form of the prayer. The form of prayer is clearly altered if a coat is removed, shirtsleeves rolled up or other such action not associated with prayer. However, small gestures that contribute to reducing a disturbance and promote concentration, for example one to silence a child or indicate that someone who is not praying should answer a knock at the door, are acceptable.
10. When one eats or drinks anything — other than during a recommended *ṣalāt* before *Fajr* — on a day that intention has been made to fast, and the time for fasting is due to commence prior to the prayer ending. In this specific circumstance — providing water is within reach and that all acts that invalidate prayer are avoided — water may be drunk.
11. When continuing doubts are entertained regarding the number of *raka'āt* that have been offered during any prayer — because such doubt evidences the absence of concentration.

Doubts regarding the number of *raka'āt* for *Fajr* and *Maghrib* prayers invalidate *ṣalāt*. However, doubts over the number of *raka'āt* offered during *Zuhr*, *'Asr*, and *'Ishā'* are effaced by the offering of *Ṣalāt al-Iḥtyāṭ* — precautionary prayer — after the prayer has been completed.

12. If deliberate omissions/additions are made to any element of prayer.

## Prayer itself

### *Athān and iqamāh*

The history of the *athān*.

Although the *athān* was amongst the very first practices of the Muslim community there are contradictory reports in the *aḥādith* over how this custom came into being.

- Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmithi and Nissa'i narrate on the authority of Abdullah ibn 'Umar that when Muslims in Madinah were gathering for *ṣalāt* they had no means to announce to others that the prayer was about to commence. Some suggested bells, as used in Christian churches, others



a ram or ibex horn — *Shofar* — as used by the Jews. But ‘Umar suggested that one member of the congregation call the others to prayer. At this point, the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘O Bilal, go and call them to prayer.’

Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri, Vol 1, p.306

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Vol 1, p.285

Sunan al-Tirmithi, Vol 1, p.362

Sunan al-Nisa’i, Vol 2, p.2

Musnad of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Vol 2, p.148

- Tirmithi and Abu Dāwūd narrate on the authority that Abdullah ibn Zayd told them:

‘I dreamed about a man with a bell just as the Prophet ﷺ was ordering a bell be used to call people to prayer. I asked him, “Will you sell me your bell?” He asked why I wanted it and I replied, “To call people to prayer”. He then asked if I would like him to teach me a better way to do this. To my positive response he taught me the *Athān* and *Iqamāh*. In the morning I told the Prophet ﷺ about my dream and he, delighted by it, said that it constituted clear guidance on what to do, and promptly ordered Bilal to undertake that task’. When ‘Umar heard this story he too came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, ‘By He who sent the truth with you, I had precisely the same dream as Abdullah ibn Zayd.’ The Prophet ﷺ then praised Allāh for such bountiful blessings.

Sunan al-Tirmithi, Vol. 1, p.358

Sunan abi Dāwūd, Vol. 1, p.135

- The Imāmiyah and Zaydiyah accept that the first *athān* to be called was during the ‘Night Journey’ where the Prophet ﷺ learned its detail.

Al-Ḥalabi reports that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyah told him that he was incensed by the nonsense spoken of the *athān* and *iqamāh* being inspired by anyone’s dream. It is, he said, ‘sheer fantasy that these could be based upon images, of real or imaginary characters, places or events, that happen to pass through the mind of a sleeping person. The *athān* was taught to the Prophet ﷺ during the Night Journey.’

Al-Sirah al-Ḥalabiyah, Vol. 2, p.300

Numerous authentic *ahādith* in the collections of *Al-Kaḥfi*, *Biḥar al-Anwār* and *Wasa'il al-Shī'ah* consistently report that the Prophet ﷺ learned the *athān* and *iqamāh* from Jibrā'il during the Night Journey.

### **Prayer comprises:**

#### **Intention – Niyyat**

The foremost intention and sole motive must be to fulfil obediently a specific injunction of The Creator, and to remain aware of this throughout the prayer. There is no need to enunciate the intention but if the mind drifts and concentration is lost, the prayer is rendered meaningless.

#### **Announcing that prayer has commenced**

The words '*Allāhu Akbar*' — *Takbirat al-Iḥram* — must be clearly and accurately pronounced in order to announce that prayer has commenced. This specific requirement must be fulfilled while steadily standing upright. Those who are physically unable to articulate these words must try to fulfil the requirement as best they can.

It is recommended when enunciating the words '*Allāhu Akbar*' — at the commencement of prayer and also when they occur during the prayer — to signify surrender to the will of Allāh Almighty by raising both hands parallel to the ears, with palms facing the *qiblah*.

The three main postures of *ṣalāt* are: Standing upright, Bowing in deference and Prostration in humility. In profound theological discussion each is considered to reflect a different aspect of Islamic Belief in the Oneness of Allāh — There is no Divinity other than Allāh. Standing reflects Unity of Actions, Bowing Unity of Attributes and Prostration Unity of Essence.

#### **Standing upright – qiyam**

When Imām Muḥammad Al-Baqir asked his father 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ؑ why he turned pale while standing upright in *ṣalāt*, he replied, 'By Allāh, it is because I am conscious of whom I stand before' (*Wasa'il al-Shī'ah*, Vol. 4, p.685). This *ḥadīth* reveals the awesome significance of *qiyam* in submission to the Might and Majesty of Allāh. It is only achieved when the things of this world are completely overshadowed by consciousness of Allāh. While thus aware and while still in this position to recite Qur'ānic *āyat* before going into *rukū'*.

Those who are elderly or infirm are exempt from standing and may fulfil this aspect of the prayer while seated. However, if they are able to stand with the aid of a stick or chair they should do so.

### Qur'ānic recitation

This comprises the opening *sūrah* plus another short *sūrah* of the Qur'ān — *Qirāah*. The first and second *raka'ah* of every prayer must commence with the recitation of Qur'ān 1:1–7 (*Sūrat al-Fatiḥah* also known as *Sūrat al-Ḥamd*) and be followed by the recitation of any other complete *sūrah*.<sup>3</sup> A few of these are listed.

### AL-FATIḤAH — THE OPENER — QUR'ĀN 1

1. In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
2. Praise Allāh Lord of the Worlds
3. The Most Beneficent, Most Merciful;
4. Master of the Day of Judgement.
5. It is You whom we worship and Your support that we implore.
6. Guide us to the Straight Path,
7. The way of those whom You reward; not the way of those who incite Your wrath or go astray.

### *Al-Fatiḥah* phonetic transliteration

1. *Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

2. *Al-Ḥamdu li-Llahi Rabbil Ālamīn*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

3. According to the *aḥadith* of Ahl al-Bayt, *Sūrah* number 93 known as *Al-Ḍuḥā* and *Sūrah* number 94 known as *Al-Inshirāḥ* are regarded, for the purposes of *ṣalāt*, to be a single *sūrah*. This too applies to *Sūrahs* 105 and 106.

3. *Ar-Raḥmān ir-Raḥīm*      الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ﴿٥﴾
4. *Māliki Yawmid Dīn*      مٰلِکِ یَوْمِ الدِّیْنِ ﴿٥﴾
5. *Iyyaka na'abudu wa iyyaka nasta'in*      اِیَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِیَّاكَ نَسْتَعِیْثُ ﴿٥﴾
6. *Ihdinas şiraṭal mustaqīm*      اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِیْمَ ﴿٥﴾
7. *Şiraṭal Lathina an'amta*  
     *'alayhim; Ghairil Magḥḍubi 'alayhim*  
     *walaḍ ḍālīn*      صِرَاطَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ  
     عَلَيْهِمْ غَیْرَ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ  
     وَلَا الضَّالِّیْنَ ﴿٥﴾

### AL-TAWḤID — MONOTHEISM — ALSO CALLED AL-IKHLĀŞ — SINCERITY — QUR'ĀN 112

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. Say, 'He, Allāh, is Unique,
2. It is upon Allāh that all depend.
3. He fathers none nor has Himself been fathered.
4. And there are none like Him'.

#### *Al-Tawḥid* phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥīm*

- سُبْحٰنَ الْاِخْلَاصِ
- بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
1. *Qul huwa Allāhu aḥad*      قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ﴿٥﴾
2. *Allāhuş şamad*      اللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٥﴾
3. *Lam yalid wa lam yulad*      لَمْ یَكِدْ وَلَمْ یُولَدْ ﴿٥﴾
4. *Wa lam yakun lahu kufwan aḥad*      وَلَمْ یَكُنْ لَهٗ کُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ﴿٥﴾

### **Bowing in deference — rukū'**

Recitation — *qirat* — is followed by the intention to bow in deference, i.e. bend directly forwards from the waist, to the extent that fingertips rest upon the knees. When the body is steady in that position, to pronounce three times in Arabic, I glorify Allāh — *Subhāna Allāh*. If one prefers, this may be extended to, I glorify my Lord, who is Supremely Glorious and I praise Him — *Subhāna Rabbi al-‘Azīm wa bi ḥamdih*.

- *Rukū'* should convey absolute faith and submission to the Lord without regard for how He might treat you.
- After completing the above one stands upright and enunciates, Allāh hears those who praise Him — *Sami'a Allāhu Liman Hamidah*. When steady in that position, intention is made to prostrate oneself in humility and this is immediately thereafter done.
- (Those for whom it is not possible to bend directly forwards from the waist, should indicate their intention with their head. They may find it easier to pray while sitting on a chair.)

### **Prostration — sujud**

Two prostrations — *sajdah* — follow *rukū'* in every *ṣalāt*.<sup>4</sup> The intention should be to express utter humility with forehead, palms, knees and big toes touching the earth. When stable in that position to enunciate three times, I glorify Allāh — *Subhānā Allāh*. If one prefers, this may be extended to, I glorify my Lord the Most High and praise Him — *Subhāna Rabbi al-A'la wa bi ḥamdih*.

- This is done because, when 'Glorify your Lord who is Supremely Glorious' was revealed in Qur'ān 56:74, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Include this in *dhikr* for *rukū'*' and when 'Glorify your Lord who is Most High' was revealed in Qur'ān 87:1 the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Include this in the *dhikr* for *sujud*.'
- After the first *sajdah* one sits upon the legs with feet crossed and, when stable in this position, enunciates *Allāhu Akbar* before going into the prostration of the second *sajdah*.

4. The only prayers that do not include either *rukū'* or *sujud* are those offered for the dead — *Ṣalat al-Janazah*.

- After the second *sajdah* one stands up for the *qiyam* of a second and identical *raka'ah*.

### Offering (the invocation) — *qunūt*

It is recommended that *qunūt* be recited while standing upright — *qiyam* — just before the *rukū'* of the second *raka'ah* of every *ṣalah*. To do this, open hands are held before the face, fingers together, palms uppermost, and with eyes focused on them the *dhikr* of *qunūt* is enunciated (except for congregational prayers, in which this is done by the *Imām*). *Qunūt* may consist of any invocation such as, 'O Lord, grant us all that is good in this world and the world to come, and save us from chastisement by fire' — '*Rabbana ātina fid dunya ḥasanah, wa fil Ākherati ḥasanah, wa Qina 'athab an Nāār*' (Qur'ān 2:201).<sup>5</sup>

### Bearing witness — *tashahud*

In the second *raka'ah* of every *ṣalah* as well as in the last *raka'ah* of every *ṣalah* — while sitting on the left thigh with the upper part of the right foot rested on the sole of the left foot and with hands on thighs — one must enunciate:

#### Phonetic transliteration

*Al-ḥamdu li-Llah, ashadu an la ilaha il-allāh waḥdahu la sharika lah*

*Wa ashadu anna Muḥammadan 'abduhu wa Rasūluh*

*Allāhuma ṣalli 'ala Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad,*

*Wa taqabbal shafa'atahu warfa' darajatah*

#### Translation

All praise is for Allāh and I testify that there is no Divinity other than Allāh,  
the One who is without partner,

And I testify that Muḥammad is His Servant and Messenger,

O Allāh, send Your blessing to Muḥammad and his progeny,

Accept his intercession, and elevate his rank.

5. It is recommended for the *qunūt* of *Salāt al-Witr*, which is one single *raka'ah* of the voluntary midnight prayer, to ask Allāh forgiveness for forty believers.

## Ending the prayer — Salām

Once the affirmation — *tashahud* — is completed in the final *raka'ah* of a prayer, the closing act is to enunciate:

### Phonetic transliteration

*Assalamu 'alayka ayyuhan Nabi wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh*

*Assalamu 'alayna wa 'ala 'ibadillahi ṣālihin.*

*Assalamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.*

### Translation

O Prophet, Allāh's peace, blessings and grace be upon you,

Also Allāh's peace be on us and upon all pious servants of Allāh.

Allāh's peace and blessings be on you all.

## Special circumstances

There are circumstances in which flexibility is appropriate, namely:

### Prayer whilst travelling

Prayers of four *raka'āt* — cycles of standing upright, bowing and prostration — are shortened to only two *raka'āt* during travel, regardless of the purpose of the journey. This ruling is based upon the *āyah*, 'There is no blame on you for shortening your prayers during journeys, if fearful that disbelievers might harry you' (Qur'ān 4:101).

- Muslim reports in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that 'Umar asked the Prophet ﷺ the meaning of the phrase, 'there is no blame upon you' and he ﷺ replied, 'This is a concession that Allāh has granted, so accept it and be grateful.' Both Bukhāri and Muslim record that Anas ibn Mālik reported, 'We travelled from Madinah to Makkah with the Prophet ﷺ and throughout the journey he ﷺ only offered two *raka'āt* until we returned to Madinah.' This referred specifically to the *Ẓuhr*, 'Aṣr and 'Ishā' prayers.
- Thus, this concession applies to return journeys of 44 km/28 miles or more, but not to shorter distances.

- A traveller's intention, when setting off, must have been to undertake a return journey of 44 km/28 miles or more.
- The distance of 44 km/28 miles is calculated from one's town of residence regardless of where a journey may have started.
- It goes without saying that the purpose of the journey has to be lawful to benefit from Allāh's concession.
- People whose livelihoods involve long-distance travel do not qualify for this concession.
- The benefit commences immediately after the outer reaches of the town of residence have been passed.

#### **Effects of the prayer being shortened**

- Those who start their journey prior to noon — during the month of Ramaḍan or during any other fast — break their fast and shorten their prayers. However, those who start their journeys after midday do not break their fast despite their prayer being shortened.
- Those who travel for six months of the year, or for three days or more each week, do not meet the criteria for prayers to be shortened.
- Travellers who stay the minimum of ten days or more in a town are considered temporary residents and thus do not meet the criteria for prayers to be shortened.

#### **Prayer at the time of solar and lunar eclipse and at times of disasters that are secularly described as 'Acts of God'**

There are differences between the events referred to in the items above.

- Solar and lunar eclipses are regular, predictable events observable from a wide variety of places throughout the world; 'Acts of God' are local incidents within specific regions.
- Prayers offered at times of solar or lunar eclipse are obligatory, regardless of people fearing such events or not.



- Prayers after uncontrollable events caused by natural forces, for example earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados or other disaster are only obligatory when the safety of the majority of people in a region is threatened by such an event, or its immediate consequences.

Such prayers were taught by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, whose religious guidance Muslims observe, and have nothing whatever to do with superstitious belief.

### How to offer such prayers

These prayers consist of two *raka'āt*. In each of them the opening *sūrah* and another short *sūrah* of the Qur'ān is recited five times, followed each time by a *rukū'*, prior to the first *sajdah*. The same procedure is repeated in the second *raka'ah*.

### 'Īd Prayer

All Muslims celebrate two special days each lunar year, namely *'Īd al-Fiṭr*, to celebrate the completion of one month of fasting, and *'Īd al-Aḍḥā*, to commemorate the sacrifice offered by the Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ. In the *aḥādīth* related by the error-free Imāms, followers of *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ are recommended to celebrate also *'Īd al-Ghadīr*. This *'Īd* commemorates the event at Ghadīr Khum where Imām 'Alī ؑ was appointed to be the successor to the Prophet ﷺ. A congregational *'Īd* prayer is only offered at *Fiṭr* and *Aḍḥā*.

### How to offer 'Īd prayers

The *'Īd* prayer consists of two *raka'āt*. It is highly recommended that in the first of these, the Imām recite the Opening *sūrah* (*Al-Fatiḥah*) and *Sūrah* 87 (*Al-A'la*) — followed by five *qunūts* before the *rukū'* of the first *raka'ah*. And for the second *raka'ah*, the Opening *sūrah* (*Al-Fatiḥah*) and *Sūrah* 91 (*Al-Shams*) — followed by four *qunūts*.

**AL-‘ALĀ — THE MOST HIGH — QUR’ĀN 87**

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. Glorify the name of your Lord, Most High,
2. Who creates and gives shape and form [to all of His creation].
3. Who ordains [laws] and provides guidance.
4. Who brings forth pastures [and]
5. Then reduces it to arid brown stubble.
6. We enabled you to read so that you need not forget [what you learned]
7. Except for what Allāh wills [you to forget]. For He [alone] knows what [humanity is able to perceive] and what is concealed [from them],
8. We facilitate progress to your easy task.
9. So persevere in reminding [others of the truth, regardless of] whether such reminders [appear] to be beneficial [or not],
10. For those who fear [Allāh] will draw benefit,
11. And those who are arrogant will reject it.
12. [And in the life to come] will have to endure the great fire,
13. In which they neither live nor die.
14. Prosperity is granted to those who purify themselves,
15. And remember the name of their Lord and worship Him.
16. But you [normally] prefer the life of this world,
17. Despite [the life] to come being superior and more enduring,
18. This has been revealed in earlier scriptures,
19. The scriptures of Ibrāhīm and Mūsa.

**Al-‘Alā** phonetic transliteration

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ

**Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥīm**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. **Sabbiḥ isma rabbikal a‘lā** صَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى ①
2. **Allathi khalaqa fasawwā** الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَوَّى ②
3. **Wal lathi qaddara fahadā** وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى ③
4. **Wal lathi akhrajal mar‘ā** وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى ④
5. **Faja‘alahu ghuthā’an aḥwā** فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاً أَحْوَى ⑤
6. **Sanuqri ‘uka falā tansā** سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى ⑥
7. **Illa mā shā’a Allāhu innahu ya‘lamul  
jahara wa mā yakhfā** إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ  
الْجَاهِرَ وَالْخَفِيَّ ⑦
8. **Wa nuyassiruka lil yusrā** وَيُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى ⑧
9. **Fathakkir in nafa‘atith thikrā** فَذَكِّرْ لِنَفْعَتِ الذِّكْرِ ⑨
10. **Sayath-thakkaru man yakhshā** سَيَذَكَّرُنَّ مَنْ يَخْشَى ⑩
11. **Wa yatajannabuhā ashqā** وَيَنْجِنَهَا مِنَ الشَّقَى ⑪
12. **Allathi yaşlan nāral kubrā** الَّذِي يَصِلُ إِلَى الْكُبْرَى ⑫
13. **Thumma lā yamutu fihā wa lā yaḥyā** ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى ⑬
14. **Qad aflaha man tazakkā** قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ⑭
15. **Wa thakaraāsmā rabbihi faşalā** وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ⑮
16. **Bal tu’thirunal ḥayātad dunyā** بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ⑯

17. *Wal akhiratu khayrun wa abqā*

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى ﴿٧﴾

18. *Inna hāthā lafiṣ ṣuḥufil ūlā*

إِنَّ هَذَآلَئِىَ الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ﴿٨﴾

19. *Ṣuḥufi Ibrāhima wa Mūsā*

صُحُوفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى ﴿٩﴾

## AL-SHAMS — THE SUN — QUR'ĀN 91

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. Consider the sun and its radiance,
2. And the moon that reflects the sun!
3. Consider the day as it illumines the world,
4. And the night that enshrouds it in darkness!
5. Consider the wonder of the heavens,
6. And the earth in all its expanse!
7. Consider the soul in all its perfection,
8. Equipped with the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.
9. Prosperity is attained by it [the soul] being purified,
10. And failure is the result of it being corrupted.
11. The Thamud [tribe] rejected Truth and rebelled,
12. When their vile member rose to [slay the she camel],
13. Despite Allāh's messenger telling them, 'This is Allāh's creature, let her drink'.
14. They denied the truth of what he said and hamstrung it. As a result, the Lord witnessed their being completely obliterated.
15. It was not He who was to blame for what they [brought upon themselves].

**Al-Shams phonetic transliteration**

سُبْحَانَ الشَّمْسِ

**Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. **Wash shamsi wa ḍuḥāha** وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ①
2. **Wal qamari itha talāha** وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ②
3. **Wan nahāri itha jallāha** وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا ③
4. **Wal layli itha yaghāshāha** وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ④
5. **Was samā'i wamā banāha** وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ⑤
6. **Wal arḍi wamā ṭaḥāha** وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَعَنَاهَا ⑥
7. **Wa nafsīn wa mā sawwāha** وَقَسْرٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ⑦
8. **Fa'alhamahā fujūrahā wa taqwāha** فَالْحَمَاهُ جُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ⑧
9. **Qad aflaha man zakkaha** قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ⑨
10. **Wa qad khāba man dassāha** وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ⑩
11. **Kaththabat Thamuudu bi ṭaghwāha** كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا ⑪
12. **Ithin ba'atha ashqāha** إِذِ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا ⑫
13. **Faqāla lahum rasūlul lāhi nāqatal lāhi  
wa suqyāha** فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ⑬
14. **Fakaththabūhu fa 'aqarūhu fadamdama  
'alayhim rabbuhum bithan bihim fasawwāha** فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهُ فَادَمَدَمُوا  
عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا ⑭
15. **Wa lā yakhāfu 'uqbāha** وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا ⑮

Then, a specific *du'ā* is recited during *qunūt* namely:

#### Translation

O Lord of Grandeur and Might, Lord of Generosity and Omnipotence, Lord of Pardon and Mercy, Lord of Righteousness and Forgiveness, I beseech you on this auspicious day you have made celebratory for the Muslim community, for You to grant Your Mercy and Blessing to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his progeny and bestow upon me every goodness that You bestowed upon the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his progeny and safeguard me from every misfortune that You safeguarded the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his progeny from. O Allāh, I ask you for the best of what Your most pious and devout servants asked, and seek the same protection that Your most pious and devout servants sought.

#### Phonetic transliteration

*Allāhumma ahl al-Kibriyā' wal 'Aẓamah, wa ahl al-Judi wal Jabarūt wa ahl al-'Afwi wal Raḥmah, wa ahl al-Taḳwa wal Maghfīrah, asa'luka bihaqqi hatha alyawm allathi ja'altahu lil Muslimīna 'Idan wa li-Muḥammadin ﷺ thukhran wa maizda an tusallia ala Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad wa an tudkhlani fi kulli khairin adkhalta fihi Muḥammadan wa āla Muḥammad wa an tukhrejani min kulli sū' akhrajta minhu Muḥammadan wa āla Muḥammad. Allāhumma inni asaluka khaira ma sa'luka minhu 'ibaduka alṣalihūn wa a'uthu bika mima ista'atha minhu 'ibaduka alṣalihūn.*

اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلَ الْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْعِزَّةِ، وَأَهْلَ الْجُودِ وَالْجَبْرُوتِ، وَأَهْلَ الْعَفْوِ  
وَالرَّحْمَةِ، وَأَهْلَ التَّقْوَى وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ  
لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ عِيدًا، وَلِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ ذُخْرًا وَشَرَفًا وَمَزِيدًا، أَنْ  
تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ تُدْخِلَنِي فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ أَدْخَلْتَ فِيهِ  
مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ تُخْرِجَنِي مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ أَخْرَجْتَ مِنْهُ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ  
مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمْ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا سَأَلْتُكَ مِنْهُ  
عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحُونَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِمَّا اسْتَعَاذَ مِنْهُ عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحُونَ

After the *'īd* prayer, the Imām delivers two sermons with a short pause in between the first and the second.

- In the first he details the significance of the fast or the pilgrimage and the value of spiritual purification. The second is to emphasize the importance of the Muslim *ummah* remaining united and responsive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
- There is no *athān* or *iqāmah* called for *'īd* prayers. Repetition of the words '*aṣ-ṣalah*' three times suffices. The time for *'īd* prayer is from sunrise to midday and there is no *qaḍā* offered for a missed *'īd* prayer once its time has passed.

### **Congregational prayers**

Muslims are encouraged to offer prayer in congregation and it is considered that the larger the congregation, the greater the blessing of the prayer will be. Authentic *aḥadīth* record that congregational prayer has 25 times greater benefit than prayer not offered in congregation. Indeed, it is not considered appropriate for anyone to abandon congregational prayer without justifiable excuse. Even if one has already offered a specific prayer, it is highly recommended to join a congregation about to offer it. Those who frequently entertain doubts concerning the correctness of their prayers are required to alleviate such doubts by offering their prayers in congregation.

### **The qualifications required by those who lead congregational prayer**

To lead congregational prayer the Imām must be adult, sane, *Ithna Asheri Shi'ah* and *'Adil* — righteous. Further, the Imām needs to be well acquainted with rulings that relate to prayers in general and, in particular, those that relate to congregational prayer. A male may lead both genders but a woman may only lead other women. Those not able to stand, bow or prostrate may not lead congregational prayers.

- While the Imām delivers the opening *sūrah* and second short *sūrah* of the Qur'ān — in the first and second *raka'āt* — those who follow must remain silent. However, members of the congregation are required to participate in a soft voice, so as not to be overheard — '*sotto-voce*' — in the recitation of all the other passages the Imām recites.

- Those who join congregational prayer — prior to the Imām raising his head from *rukū'* in the first *raka'ah* — utter *Takbir al-Ihrām*, follow the Imām and are considered to have started the prayer together with the congregation. Those who join later than this must wait until the Imām stands for the next *raka'ah*.

### **Making up for missed prayers**

When any obligatory prayer is missed, whatever the reason, it must be made up for. It is highly recommended for this to be done as soon as is possible. However, if one is not absolutely clear about the precise number of prayers that need to be compensated for, to be on the safe side, one should adopt the maximum that one is certain will fulfil these missed obligations.

- Missed prayers are to be compensated for in the form that they were missed, e.g. those shortened during travel should be offered in shortened form. One has to specify in the *niyyah* that the prayer to be offered is in compensation.

### **The prayer for the departing soul (Ṣalāt al-Janāzah)**

*Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* should be offered as soon as possible after the deceased's body has been bathed, shrouded and anointed with camphor. The *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* may take place at home, in a mosque, graveyard or elsewhere in the open. Although women may not enter a mosque during periods of menstruation — *ḥayḍ* — they may enter Islamic centres not designated as mosques. A building is only officially recognized as a mosque after the owner, donor or charity — *waqf* — committee in charge of it, announces the intention for it to be designated as such. Although the state of ritual purity — *wuḍū'* — is a requirement of *ṣalah*, in circumstances in which the making of *wuḍū'* is likely to result in the *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* being missed, it may be offered even if one is not in the state of *wuḍū'*. This applies equally to women in *ḥayḍ*, absolved from the duties of *ṣalah*, who may join at one side of the congregation.

- This is a manifestation of Allāh's mercy for, no matter what their circumstance, all may participate in prayer for a departed soul. *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* is the only *ṣalah* for which no *athān* or *iqamāh* is called. The only time both *athān* and *iqamāh* are called and not followed by *ṣalāh*, is after the birth of a baby, when the *athān* is called softly in its right ear and the *iqamāh* in its left.



- Congregational *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* is offered standing facing the direction of the *qiblah*. The deceased's shrouded body, lying on its back, is laid on a bier or in a coffin, in front of the congregation. It is placed with the head to the right of the congregation and the feet to its left. The Imām positions himself in front of the chest area of a woman and the navel of a man. The congregation stands in lines behind the Imām, makes the intention to offer *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* for the deceased's soul, raise their hands to their ears to pronounce *Allāhu Akbar — takbir —* and follow the Imām in reciting the prayer in a low voice. Those unable to stand may of course sit while doing this.

### How to offer *Ṣalāt al-Janāzah*

According to *Imāmiyah fiqh*, both Imām and congregation pronounce five *takbirs* and between each, the Imām recites either the shorter or the longer passages aloud, with the congregation doing so silently. Imām Jafar as-Sadiq عليه السلام said, 'Allāh made five prayers obligatory, and appointed one *takbir* for the deceased in the place of each prayer.' He also referred to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم offering five *takbirs* for all the deceased, other than hypocrites, for whom he صلى الله عليه وسلم only offered four. However, the four Sunni schools of law only consider four *takbirs* to be necessary.

*Ṣalāt al-Janāzah* becomes obligatory once a deceased Muslim is six years or over.

### 1st Takbir

*Allāhu Akbar*

Then either:

I bear witness that there is no Divinity but Allāh and that Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger.

Phonetic transliteration

*Ashhadu an la ilaha illal lah, wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan Rasulullah.*

or:

I bear witness that there is no Divinity but Allāh the One, who has no associates. And I bear witness that Muḥammad is His Servant and Messenger,

sent to convey Truth, and give warnings and good tidings before the Day of Judgement.

Phonetic transliteration

*Ashhadu an la ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lah. Wa Ashadu anna Muḥammadan abdahu wa Rasuluh, arsalahu bil haqqi bashiran wa nathiran bayna yaday is sa'ah.*

**2nd Takbir**

*Allāhu Akbar*

Then either:

O Lord! Bestow peace and blessings upon Muḥammad and his progeny.

Phonetic transliteration

*Alla humma ṣalli 'ala Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad.*

or:

O Lord! Bestow peace upon Muḥammad and his progeny and bless Muḥammad and his progeny and send Your Mercy upon Muḥammad and his progeny as the best of Your peace, blessing and mercy was bestowed upon Ibrāhīm and his progeny. You are The Praised and The All-Glorious. Bestow peace upon all the Prophets, Messengers and martyrs.

Phonetic transliteration

*Alla humma ṣalli 'ala Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad wa barik 'ala Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad warḥam Muḥammadan wa āla Muḥammadin ka afzali ma ṣallayta wa barakata wa tarahamta 'ala Ibrahima wa āli Ibrahima innaka Hamidun Majid wa ṣalli 'ala jamī'il anbiya' wal mursalin, was-shuhada was-ṣiddiqin wa jamī'i 'ibadilla his-ṣalihin.*

**3rd Takbir***Allāhu Akbar*

Then either:

O Lord! Forgive all believing men and women.

Phonetic transliteration

*Allāh hummaghfir lil mu'minina wal mu'minat.*

or:

O Lord! Forgive all believing men and women and all Muslim men and women, alive or dead; join us with them by good deeds. You are the Listener of prayers The All Powerful.

Phonetic transliteration

*Allāhumma ghfir lil mu'minina wal mu'minat wal muslimina wal muslimat, alahya'i minhum wal amwat tabi' baynana wa baynahum bil khayrati innaka mujibud-da'wat innak 'ala kulli shay'in Qadir.***4th Takbir***Allāhu Akbar*

Then either:

O Lord! Forgive this dead person.

Phonetic transliteration

(For a male) — *Allāhumma ghfir li hazal mayyit.*(For a female) — *Allāhumma ghfir li hazihil mayyit.*

or:

O Lord, this is Your servant the son/daughter of Your servants, Your guest and You are the best of Hosts. O Lord, we know him/her by his/her good conduct but You know him/her better than we do. O Lord, if he/she was a doer of good, increase their good for them. If on the other hand he/she was a doer of evil, forgive him/her. O Lord, lift him/her to the highest level and console the bereaved. You are the All Merciful.

**Phonetic transliteration**

(For a male) — *Alla humma inna haza ‘abduka wabnu ‘abdika wabnu amatika nazala bika wa anta khayru manzulin bihi Alla humma inna la na‘lamu minhu illa khayra wa anta a‘alamu bihi minna. Alla humma in kana mohsinan fa zid fi ihsanihi wa in kana musi’an fatajawaz anhu waghfir lahu. Allāhumma j`alhu ‘indaka fi a‘la ‘illiyyin wakhluf ‘ala ahlihi fil ghabirin warhamhu bi-rahmatika ya ar hamar Rahimin.*

(For a female) — *Alla humma inna hazihi amatuka wabnatu ‘abdika wabnatu amatika nazalalat bika wa anta khayra manzulin bihi Allāhumma inna la na‘lamu minha illa khayra wa anta a‘alamu biha minna. Allāhumma in kanat mohsinatan fa zid fi ihsaniha wa in kanat musi’atan fatajawaz ‘anha waghfir laha. Allāhumma j`al ha ‘indaka fi a‘la ‘illiyyin wakhluf ‘ala ahliha fil ghabirin warhamha bi-rahmatika ya ar hamar Rahimin.*

**5th Takbir**

*Allāhu Akbar*

**9.6 Voluntary prayers**

In section 9.5 we discussed the obligatory — *farḍ* — prayers that constitute a ‘pillar’ of the Islamic religion. However, as constant communication with the Creator is highly recommended, additional prayers, over and above the obligatory, are commonly offered. Some additional prayers — *nāfilah* (pl. *nawāfil*) — are customarily appended to *farḍ* prayers, others are not.

Voluntary *raka‘āt* are invariably offered in pairs, i.e. four *raka‘āt* being made up of two sets of two *raka‘āt*.

*Voluntary prayers that are appended are:*

- Two *raka‘āt* prior to the *Fajr* prayer
- Eight *raka‘āt* prior to the *Zuhr* prayer
- Eight *raka‘āt* prior to the ‘*Aṣr* prayer
- Four *raka‘āt* after the *Maghrib* prayer

- Two *raka'āt* after the '*Ishā*' prayer while sitting — despite this being considered to equate to only a single *raka'ah* performed while standing.
- Eleven *raka'āt* for the midnight prayer

A total of 34 *raka'āt*

Thus, the *raka'āt* offered in any one day — 17 *farḍ* + 34 *nawāfil*: total 51.

Voluntary prayers include the following.

### **The prayer related to Jafar, son of Abu Ṭālib**

Numerous authentic reports refer to its outstanding effectiveness as an expression of contrition in seeking forgiveness for major sin. The most appropriate time to offer this four-*raka'āt* prayer is thought to be a half hour after sunrise on a Friday morning.

**The first pair:** In the first *raka'ah*, *Sūrah* 99 — *Al-Zilzāl* — is recited after *Al-Fatiḥah*, and in the second *raka'ah*, *Sūrah* 100 — *Al-'Adiyāt* — is recited after *Al-Fatiḥah*.

### **AL-ZILZĀL — THE EARTHQUAKE — QUR'ĀN 99**

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. When the earth rocks with dramatic quakes
2. And discharges its burdens
3. And humanity wonders what is happening
4. On that day, all its secrets will be exposed
5. As inspired by your Lord
6. On that day, people will leave [their graves] and assemble in groups to view their deeds
7. Whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it
8. And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it.

**Al-Zilzāl** phonetic transliteration

سُبْحَانَ الرَّحْمٰنِ

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1. *Itha zulzilat al arḍu zilzālahā*

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿٥﴾

2. *Wa Akhrajāt al arḍu athqāahā*

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

3. *Wa qāal insānu mā lahā*

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا ﴿٦﴾

4. *Yawma ithin tuḥadithu akhbārāhā*

يَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

5. *Bi anna Rabbaka awḥā lahā*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

6. *Yawma ithin yaṣḍuru annāsu ashtātan  
li yuraw a`mālahum*

يَوْمَ يُصْعَقُونَ فِي الْبُقْعَاتِ وَأَنثَابُ الْعَذَابِ لِيُؤْتُوا عَذَابَهُمْ ﴿٩﴾

7. *Faman ya`mal mithqala tharratin khairan yarah*

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿١٠﴾

8. *Waman ya`mal mithqala tharratin sharran yarah*

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿١١﴾

**AL-`ADYĀT — THE CHARGERS — QUR'ĀN 100**

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. By the snorting chargers,
2. By the sparks from their striking hooves
3. By those who invade at dawn
4. Generating clouds of dust
5. Penetrating deep [into the enemy's camp]
6. Truly, humans are ungrateful to their Lord
7. And they themselves are witness to this

8. Truly, humanity is devoted to wealth
9. Do they not know that what has been buried will again be brought forth?
10. And that which is in their breasts will be divulged?
11. Truly, their Lord will be aware of their deeds on that day.

### **Al-‘Adiyāt phonetic transliteration**

سُورَةُ الْعَادِيَاتِ

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Wal ‘Adiyāti ḍabḥā</i>                       | وَالْعَادِيَاتِ ضَبْحًا ﴿١﴾                                |
| 2. <i>Fal muryati qadhā</i>                        | فَالْمُورِيَاتِ قَدْحًا ﴿٢﴾                                |
| 3. <i>Fal mughrirati ṣubḥā</i>                     | فَالْمُغْرِرَاتِ ضُبْحًا ﴿٣﴾                               |
| 4. <i>Fa atharna bihi naq‘ā</i>                    | فَأَنْزَلْنَاهُنَّ نَقْعًا ﴿٤﴾                             |
| 5. <i>Fa wasatna bihi jam‘ā</i>                    | فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا ﴿٥﴾                                |
| 6. <i>Innal insāna li rabbihi lakanūd</i>          | إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ ﴿٦﴾                 |
| 7. <i>Wa innahu ‘alā thalika lashahīd</i>          | وَأَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾                     |
| 8. <i>Wa innahu li ḥubbil khayri lashadīd</i>      | وَأَنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾                  |
| 9. <i>Afala ya‘lamu itha bo‘thira ma fil qubūr</i> | ﴿٩﴾ أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٩﴾ |
| 10. <i>Wa ḥuṣṣila ma fiṣ ṣudūr</i>                 | وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٠﴾                          |
| 11. <i>Inna Rabbahum bihim yawmaithin lakhabīr</i> | ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِمَا يَكْمُورُ لَخَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾        |

**The second pair:** In the first *raka'ah*, *Sūrah* 110 — *Al-Naşr* — is recited after *Al-Fatiḥah* and in the second *raka'ah*, *Sūrah* 112 — *Al-Ikhlāş* — is recited after *Al-Fatiḥah*.

### AL-NAŞR — VICTORY — QUR'ĀN 110

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. When Allāh's help and victory come
2. And you see crowds of people accepting Allāh's religion,
3. Then glorify your Lord and ask His forgiveness, for He is truly forgiving.

*Al-Naşr* phonetic transliteration

سُورَةُ النَّصْرِ

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. *Itha jāa naşrul Allāhi wal fath*

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾

2. *Wa raaytan nāsa  
yadkhumuna fī dinil Lāhi afwaja*

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ  
يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾

3. *Fa sabbiḥ bi ḥamdi Rabbika  
was taghfirhu innahu kana tawwaba*

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ  
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

### AL-TAWḤĪD — MONOTHEISM — ALSO CALLED AL-IKHLĀŞ — SINCERITY — QUR'ĀN 112

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. Say, 'He, Allāh, is Unique,
2. It is upon Allāh that all depend.
3. He fathers none nor has Himself been fathered.
4. And there are none like Him'.



**Al-Tawhīd** phonetic transliteration

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥīm*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. *Qul huwa Allāhu aḥad*

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

2. *Allāhuṣ ṣamad*

اللَّهُ الْعَزَّ وَجَلَّ

3. *Lam yalid wa lam yulad*

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

4. *Wa lam yakun lahu kufwan aḥad*

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

In both pairs of *raka'āt* the following is repeated — as outlined below:

## Translation

Allāh is glorified and praised, there is no Divinity but Him, He is The Most Great.

## Phonetic transliteration

'*Subḥana Allāhi wal Ḥamdu lilahi wa La ilaha illa Alahu wa Allāhu Akbar*'.

15 times after recitation of the two *sūrahs*,

10 times during each *rukū'*,

10 times while standing after *rukū'*,

10 times during each *sajdah*,

10 times while sitting between the two *sajdahs*,

and,

10 times while sitting after the second *sajdah*.

The above glorification — *tasbiḥ* — is thus recited 75 times in each *raka'āh* — taking the total number in this prayer to 300.

- Shaykh Koleini reports, on the authority of Imām Jafar as-Sadiq عليه السلام, that he taught one of his companions to recite the following supplication in the last *sajdah* of the fourth *raka'ah*, immediately after the completion of the ten *tasbih*.

#### Translation

Glorified is the One of Honour and Dignity, Glorified is the Sole source of every bounty, Glorified is the One to whom glorification exclusively belongs, Glorified is the Omniscient One who encompasses all, Glorified is the Sole source of Power and Generosity. O Allāh, I ask by the elements of Glory that uphold Your Throne, by Your abundant Mercy and Your Greatest Name to bestow Your Mercy and Blessing upon Muḥammad عليه السلام and his progeny and grant me . . . [mention your individual wishes].

#### Phonetic transliteration

*Subḥana man labisa al'izza wal waqār, Subḥana man ta'aṭafa bil majdi wa takarama bih, Subḥana man la yanbaghi al tasbiḥu illa lah, Subḥana man aḥṣā kulla shayin 'ilmuh, Subḥana thil manni wal niy'am, Subḥana thil qudrati wal karam. Allāhuma ini asaluka bi ma'aqid el'izz min 'arshika wa muntaha al raḥmati min kitabika, wa ismikal 'aḥam wa kalimatik al tāmmah al-lati tamat ṣidqan wa 'adlan salli 'alā Muḥammadin wa ahli baytihi waf'al bi . . .*

#### صلاة جعفر الطيار عليه السلام

سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لَيْسَ الْعِزُّ وَالْوَقَارُ، سُبْحَانَ مَنْ تَعَطَّفَ بِالْمَجْدِ وَتَكَرَّمَ بِهِ،  
 سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لَا يَنْبَغِي التَّسْبِيحُ إِلَّا لَهُ، سُبْحَانَ مَنْ أَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ  
 عِلْمُهُ، سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْمَنِّ وَالنَّعَمِ، سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْقُدْرَةِ وَالْكَرَمِ. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّي  
 اَسْأَلُكَ بِمَعَاقِدِ الْعِزِّ مِنْ عَرْشِكَ، وَمُنْتَهَى الرَّحْمَةِ مِنْ كِتَابِكَ، وَاسْمِكَ  
 الْاَعْظَمِ، وَكَلِمَاتِكَ التَّامَّةِ الَّتِي تَمَّتْ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا، صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَاَهْلِ  
 بَيْتِهِ وَاَفْعَلْ بِي....

It is considered to be particularly meritorious to recite the above prayer in the Holy Shrine of Imām Riḍa عليه السلام. Alamah Majlisi quotes from Shaykh Husayn ibn Abdul Ṣamad through his teachers that, if a visitor to the shrine of Imām Riḍa عليه السلام or other Imāms عليهم السلام recites the above prayer, there will be recorded for him many great rewards.

*Mafitih-ul-Jinan, Keys of Heavens, translated by Murtaza Lakha, p. 520*

### **The prayer for protection offered after Jumu' ah or Ḍuhr on a Friday**

Shaykh Ṭusi reported from Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام, that if a person recites two *raka'āt* on a Friday, after *Ḍuhr*, and in each, after *Al-Fatiḥah* recites *Sūrah* 112 — *Al-Ikhlās* — seven times, followed by the supplication below, protection from all afflictions is granted for the coming week, and that Allāh will ensure they remain in the company of Muḥammad عليه السلام and Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

#### Translation

O Allāh please place me in paradise that overflows with Your mercy and in the company of our Prophet Muḥammad عليه السلام and his forefather Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

#### Phonetic transliteration

*Allāhuma ij'alni min ahl al jannah al lati ḥashwuhā al-barakah wa 'ummaruhā al-malaikah ma'a nabiyna Muḥammadin عليه السلام wa abina Ibrahim عليه السلام*

#### أعمال يوم الجمعة

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي حَشَوْهَا الْبَرَكَةُ وَعَمَارُهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ مَعَ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَبِينَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

### **Prayer offered to implore the Lord for rain**

Although people do not need such prayers in those parts of the world in which there is seldom any shortage of water, many areas do suffer water shortage and drought.

The Prophet عليه السلام taught us how we may implore the Lord for rainfall and recommended that several acts be associated with this two-*raka'āt* prayer that is followed by an address.

- It is offered in the outskirts of cities, except in Makkah, where it is offered in *Masjid Al-Harām*.
- According to a *ḥadīth* reported from Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام, it is better if Muslims fast for three days and offer this prayer on the third.
- When he offered this prayer, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم put his cloak on ‘inside-out’, so that its right shoulder rested upon his left shoulder and vice-versa. When asked why this was so he صلى الله عليه وسلم said that it was to symbolize drought being overcome by abundance.
- It is recommended that the Imām face the *qiblah* and repeat ‘*Allāhu Akbar*’ 100 times, that he then turn his head to the right and repeat ‘*Subḥana Allāh*’ 100 times and then to the left, to repeat ‘*La ilaha illal Allāh*’ 100 times prior to facing the congregation and repeating the phrase ‘*Al Ḥamdu lilahi*’ 100 times.

Thereafter, the Imām leads the prayer and delivers his address.

History records that during a time of severe drought, Imām ‘Ali عليه السلام left the city in order to offer this prayer and deliver the following sermon:

Be aware, the earth that bears you and the sky that covers you are obedient to their Sustainer (Allāh). They do not bestow their blessing out of pity for you or for any good from you, but do so because that is what they have been commanded to do and they merely obey that command.

Allāh tries His creatures with regard to their evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and sealing treasures, so that those who wish to repent may, and those who were negligent may develop awareness. Allāh Almighty has made the seeking of His forgiveness a means for pouring livelihoods and mercy upon people, ‘Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, truly He is the Oft-forgiving, He will send down upon you clouds of abundant rainfall and will provide help for your wealth and offspring’ (Qur’ān 71:10–12). ‘May Allāh shower mercy upon those who repent and forsake sin. O Allāh, we come from the shelters we have built while our children and beasts cry out for Your mercy, hope for the generosity of Your bounty and remain in fear of

Your chastisement and retribution. Oh Allāh, let us drink from your rainfall, do not forsake us and let the drought take our lives, do not punish us for what the foolish amongst us have committed.’<sup>6</sup>

Oh Allāh, we have come to complain about something that is not hidden from You. Severe troubles have forced us, famine has driven us, distress and need have reduced us to helplessness. Oh Allāh, we beseech You not to send us back disappointed, not to make us return with downcast eyes and not to treat us according to our own deeds.

Oh Allāh, please pour Your mercy, blessing and sustenance down upon us and let us enjoy rain: to quench our thirst; to produce green herbage and bring to life again that which has withered; to bring about the benefits of freshness, plenitude and ripened fruits. With rain our rivers may flow again, our fields will be irrigated, our plants will regain foliage and the price of food will plummet. You certainly have power over whatever You will.

**Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon 143**

### **Prayer offered during each of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah**

Once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Makkah is obligatory for those who can afford it. However, those unable to go, and those who have already been but nevertheless yearn for the merits of pilgrimage, are recommended to offer two *raka’āt* – between the *Maghrib* and ‘*Ishā*’ prayers – during the first ten nights of Dhul-Hijjah. In both *raka’āt*, after reading *Sūrah Al-Fatiḥah* and *Sūrah Al-Ikhlās* the following *āyah* is recited:

We called Mūsa into Our presence for 30 nights and kept him with Us a further 10 after that to make his stay total 40 nights. Mūsa said to his brother Hārūn, ‘Take my place among my people, act appropriately and be cautious not to let mischief-makers influence you.’

**Qur’ān 7:142**

6. This is in reference to Qur’an 7:155 in which the Prophet Mūsa ﷺ selected 70 men of his people to be appointed by the Lord, who in their supplication said, ‘Will you destroy us for what the foolish amongst us have done?’

Phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmnir Raḥīm*

*Wa wā'andā Mūsa thalathina laylatan wa atmamnahā bi 'ashrin, fatamma miqatu Rabbihi arba'eena laylah. Wa qāla Mūsa li akhihi Haruna khulufni fī qawmi wa aṣliḥ wa la tattabīḥ sabilal mufsidīn.*

### **Prayers offered during the nights of the Holy Month of Ramaḍān**

It is highly recommended to combine the fast of Ramaḍān with nightly prayer. According to authentic *aḥādīth* one should offer 1,000 voluntary *raka'āt* over this month in the following manner:

Over the first 20 days offer 20 *raka'āt* each night — eight after *Maghrib* and 12 after '*Ishā*'.

Over the last ten days, offer 30 *raka'āt* each night — 12 after *Maghrib* and 18 after '*Ishā*'.

On the 19th, 21st, and 23rd offer 100 *raka'āt* each night.

#### *Important note*

The Prophet ﷺ only stipulated that 'obligatory' prayers be offered in congregation. The custom that was followed during his ﷺ lifetime was for the voluntary prayers of the nights of Ramaḍān to be offered alone by each individual — not in congregation. This practice was continued during Abu Bakr's period in office and, for the first year of his caliphate, 'Umar fasted over Ramaḍān and offered his prayers in the same manner as the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr had done before him.

However, in the 14th year of the Hijra, 'Umar and some of his companions entered the mosque in Madinah while those present were offering voluntary prayer — some bowing, some in prostration, some standing and others sitting. He felt displeased by the apparent disorder and was moved to stipulate that all those present offer voluntary prayers in congregation. He further demanded that this be done in all the mosques throughout his dominion. Such congregational prayers came to be known as *Tarāwīḥ*.

However, the error-free Imāms of *Ahl al-Bayt* ﷺ continue to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ and decline this, and all other innovation.

### **Prayer of greeting offered after entering any mosque**

It is recommended to offer two *raka'āt* each time one enters a mosque but there are no references to any particular *surahs* being recited. Abu Ḍar reports that he entered the mosque while the Prophet ﷺ was there and he said,

'O Abu Ḍar, there is a greeting to be offered to the mosque'; when I asked him ﷺ what that was he ﷺ replied, 'To offer two *raka'āt*.'

*Wasa'il al Shi'ah*, Vol. 5, p.248

### **Prayer offered on the first night after a burial (Ṣalāt al-Waḥshah)**

On the first night after burial, fellow Muslims are recommended to offer two *raka'āt* to comfort the soul of the deceased in its new surroundings.

The first *raka'ah*: *āyat* 2:255-7 — *Al-Kursi* — is recited after *Al-Fatiḥah*.

The second *raka'ah*: *Sūrah* 97 — *Al-Qadr* — is recited 10 times after *Al-Fatiḥah*.

After this, the request is made, 'O Lord, please bless the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and his progeny ﷺ and refer the benefit of this prayer to the grave of 'so and so' [the name of the deceased and her/his father].

### **AL-BAQARAH — THE COW — QUR'ĀN 2**

The frequently recited *āyat* — 255-257 — are jointly referred to as: 'Throne *Āyat*' — '*Āyat ul-Kursi*'.

#### **Translation**

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

255. Allāh! There is no Divinity other than He who is The Living, The Self-Subsisting, The Eternal.<sup>7</sup> He neither tires nor sleeps. It is He who creates all

7. For elaboration on these Divine names refer to *The Source of Islamic Spirituality*, Islam in English Press, 2004, pp. 175-250.

the things in the heavens and on the earth. Who is there who may intercede with Him without His permission? It is He who knows all that is apparent to His creatures, in addition to all that is hidden from them. Without His willing it, none may acquire any of His knowledge. His Throne [Overall Control] encompasses heaven and earth, and He is not fatigued in maintaining them, for He is The Most High, The Supreme [in glory].

256. There can be no coercion regarding matters of faith. Truth has been made clearly distinct from error, hence those who have faith in Allāh and avoid what is false, have indeed clasped the hand of unfailing support that is never abandoned. And Allāh is All Hearing, All Knowing.

257. Allāh is the Guardian of those who believe. It is He who brings them out of darkness into the light. Those who disbelieve and place their faith in things not Divine place reliance on that which takes them from light into darkness and become destined to abide in the fire.

### Āyat ul-Kursī phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

255. *Allāhu la ilaha illa huwal Ḥayul Qayyum. La ta'khuthuhu sinatun wa la nawm. Lahu ma fis samwāti wa ma fil arḍ. Man thal lathi yashfa'u indahū illa bi ithnihi ya'lamu ma bayna aydihim wa ma khalfahum, wa la yuḥiṭūna bi shay'in min 'ilmihi illa bima shā'a wasi'a kursyuhu alāsamāwāti wal arḍa wa la ya'uduhū hiḍḍuhuma wa huwal aliyul aẓim.*

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا  
فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ  
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا  
شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا  
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

256. *La ikraha fid dīni qad tabayanal rushdu min alāghayy, fa man yakfur bil taghuti wa yu'min bil lāhi faqad istamsaka bil 'urwatil wuthqāla inḥisama laha, wal lahu sami'un 'alim.*

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ بَيَّنَّ الرَّشْدُ  
مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ  
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾



257. *Allāhu waliyul lathina āmanū  
yukhrijuhum min alāzulumāti ilal nūr, wal  
lathina kafaru awliya'uhum alātaghutu  
yukhrijunahum minal nūri ilal ḡulumāti  
'ulaika aṣṣhabul nāri hum fiha Khalidūn.*

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ  
النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا  
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

## AL-QADR — MEASURE — QUR'ĀN 97

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. We revealed this [Divine Writ] on the Night of Measure,
2. And how may you comprehend the Night of Measure?
3. For the Night of Measure is better than a thousand months,
4. During this night, by Allāh's permission, Angels, and the Spirit, bring down details of every matter,
5. And peace reigns till the break of dawn.

*Al-Qadr*, phonetic transliteration

سُورَةُ الْقَدْرِ

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. *Innā anzalnahu fi laylatil qadr*

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

2. *Wa ma adrāka ma laylatul qadr,*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾

3. *Laylatul qadri khayrun min alfi shahr*

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾

4. *Tanazzalul malaikatu war ruḥu  
fiha bi ithni rabihi min kuli amr*

تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ  
فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

5. *Salamun hiya ḥatta maṭla' il fajr.*

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ النُّجُومُ ﴿٥﴾

### Prayer of ghufailah

The name *ghufailah* is derived from the Arabic word for heedlessness — *ghaflah* — which implies that most people are not aware of its merits.

It comprises two *raka'āt* offered between the *Maghrib* and '*Ishā'* prayers. In the first *raka'ah* after *al-Fatiḥah*: the *āyat* 21:87—88 are recited. It is evident that the recitation of these *āyat* is to relieve believers of their woes.<sup>8</sup>

### AL-ANBIYĀ — THE PROPHETS — QUR'ĀN 21

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

87. Remember, Yunus left in anger with no thought of Our being strict with him but later cried from the darkness, 'There is no Divinity other than You. Glory be to You. Truly I was unjust.'
88. Then We responded and comforted him — thus do We relieve those who truly believe.

#### Al- Anbiyā phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

87. *Wa thanūni ith thahaba mughadiban  
faḍanna an lan naqdira alayh,  
fanādā fiḡ ḡolumati an la ilaha illa  
ant, subḡanaka inni kuntu min al  
ḡalimīn.*

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغْتَضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ  
فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي  
كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. *Fastajabnā lahu wa najjaynahu min  
al ḡhammi wa kathalika nunji al  
muminīn.*

فَأَسْتَجَبْنَا لِمُوجِبَاتِهِ  
مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

8. When Yunus became angry that his people did not respond to his teaching, Allah tested his fidelity within the whale. When engulfed, he cried out to the Lord to confess that he should not have become angry and left his people despite their waywardness.

In the second *raka'ah* after *al-Fatihah*: Qur'ān 6:59 *Al-An'ām*:

59. 'And with Him are the keys [to the treasures] of the unseen, none other than He is aware of them, and He alone knows all that is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls without His knowing it and not a grain, in the deepest recess of the earth, be it fresh or desiccated, is not recorded.

Phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

59. *Wa 'indahū mafatihul ghaibi la ya'lamuha illa huwa, wa ya'lamu ma fil barri wal baḥri wama tasquṭu min waraqatin illa ya'lamuha, wa la ḥabbatin fī ḡolumatil arḍi wala raṭṭbin wala yabisin illa fī kitabin mubīn.*

وَعِنْدَ مَفَاتِيحِ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

After this, the hands are raised in *qunūt* and the following is recited:

O Allāh, I beseech you by your Keys to the treasures unseen, to bless Muḥammad and his progeny and to grant me . . . [After stating one's desires one continues] O Allāh, You are my Guardian and Provider and know my desires, so I beseech you, in the names of Muḥammad and his progeny, to grant my request.

Phonetic transliteration

*Allāhuma inni as'aluka bi mafatih al ghaib al-lati la ya'lamuha illa ant an tuṣaliya 'ala Muḥammadin wa ālihi wa an . . .*

اللهم اني اسئلك بمفاتيح الغيب التي لا يعلمها الا انت ان تصلي على محمد واله وان تفعل بي كذا وكذا اللهم انت ولي نعمتي والقادر على طلبتي تعلم حاجتي فاسئلك بحق محمد واله عليه وعليهم السلام لما قضيتها لي ا

**Prayer on the first day of each month**

It is recommended to offer the following two *raka'āt* prayers at the start of each month.

The first *raka'ah*: *Sūrah* 112 — *Al-Tawhīd* — is recited 30 times after *Al-Fatiḥah*.

The second *raka'ah*: *Sūrah* 97 — *Al-Qadr* — is recited 30 times after *Al-Fatiḥah*.

### AL-TAWHĪD — MONOTHEISM — ALSO CALLED AL-IKHLĀṢ — SINCERITY — QUR'ĀN 112

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. Say, 'He, Allāh, is Unique,
2. It is upon Allāh that all depend.
3. He fathers none nor has Himself been fathered.
4. And there are none like Him.'

***Al-Tawhīd*** phonetic transliteration

سُورَةُ الْاِخْلَاصِ

***Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥīm***

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1. *Qul huwa Allāhu aḥad*

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾

2. *Allāhuṣ ṣamad*

اللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾

3. *Lam yalid wa lam yulad*

لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهٗ وَاٰلِهٖ مُشْرِكٌ ﴿٣﴾

4. *Wa lam yakun lahu kufwan aḥad*

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

### AL-QADR — MEASURE — QUR'ĀN 97

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

1. We revealed this [Divine Writ] on the Night of Measure,
2. And how may you comprehend the Night of Measure?
3. For the Night of Measure is better than a thousand months,

4. During this night, by Allāh's permission, Angels, and the Spirit, bring down details of every matter,
5. And peace reigns till the break of dawn.

**Al-Qadr** phonetic transliteration

سُورَةُ الْقَدْرِ

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. *Innā anzalnahu fī laylatil qadr*

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

2. *Wa ma adraka ma laylatul qadr*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾

3. *Laylatul qadri khayrun min alfi shahr*

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾

4. *Tanazzalul malaikatu war ruḥu  
fiha bi ithni rabiḥim min kuli amr*

تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ  
فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

5. *Salamun hiya ḥatta maṭla' il fajr.*

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

In a narration from Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام this offers excellent monthly protection.

### Prayer offered on 'Īd Al-Ghadīr

'Īd Al-Ghadīr falls on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah, the day that the Prophet Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم announced that Allāh had appointed 'Alī ibn Abu Ṭalib عليه السلام to be his successor and the first Imām. It is recommended to offer two *raka'āt* half an hour prior to noon and to recite in each *raka'ah*: *Sūrah Al-Ikhlās* 10 times, *Āyat Al-Kursi* 10 times, and *Sūrah Al-Qadr* 10 times after the recital of *Sūrah Al-Fatiḥah*. It is reported from Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام that the merit of this prayer equates to the benefits of going on thousands of major and minor pilgrimages and that our desires for this world, or that of the world to come, will be granted.

### Prayer for the fulfilment of specific desires

Despite Islamic guidance that every person is responsible for her/his own physical and worldly needs, Muslims are advised also to seek the Lord's help. Here are a few suggestions outlined by the Imāms عليهم السلام.

- To offer two *raka'āt* in the great mosque in Kufa and in each *raka'ah*, to recite *Sūrah* 113, *Sūrah* 114, *Sūrah* 112, *Sūrah* 109, *Sūrah* 110, *Sūrah* 97 and *Sūrah* 87 — after *Sūrah Al-Fatiḥah*. Thereafter to recite the *tasbiḥ* of Lady Faṭimah عليها السلام — ‘*Allāhu Akbar*’ 34 times, ‘*Al Ḥamdu lilah*’ 33 times and ‘*Subḥana Allāh*’ 33 times — before asking for one’s requests to be granted.
- Imām ‘Ali ibn Al-Ḥusayn عليه السلام advised a frail and financially straitened person to offer two *raka'āt* — to follow that with Allāh’s praise and sending the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his progeny عليهم السلام blessings — after which to recite the last three *āyat* of *Sūrah* 59, the first six *āyat* of *Sūrah* 57, and *āyat* 26 and 27 of *Sūrah* 3.<sup>9</sup>

### ĀYAT 22, 23, 24 OF SŪRAH 59 — AL-ḤASHR — RESURRECTION

22. He is Allāh, there is no Deity other than Him, the Knower of the seen and the unseen. He is the Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
23. He is Allāh, there is no Deity other than Him, the King (Sovereign), the Holy, the Giver of Peace, the Bestower of Faith, the Overall Controller, the Eminent (Almighty), the Compeller, the Splendid. Allāh is far above anything that they associate with Him.
24. He is Allāh, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner, His are All the Most Beautiful Names. All things that are in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. He is the Eminent, the Wise.

#### **Al-Ḥashr** Phonetic transliteration

22. *Huwa Allāhu al-lathi la ilaha illa huwa ‘alim alghaib wal shahada huwa al-Rahmān al-Rahim.*

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عِلْمُهُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ  
هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

9. Many of Allah’s Most Beautiful Names appear in these three groups of *āyat*. For a deeper understanding of these and the others refer to pp. 175–246, *The Source of Islamic Spirituality*, Islam in English Press 2004.



**Al-Ḥadid** phonetic transliteration

1. *Sabbaha lilahi ma fi assamawati wal arḍ wa huwa al-Aziz al-Ḥakim.* سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾
2. *Lahu mulku assamawati wal arḍ yuḥyi wa yumitu wa huwa ‘alā kuli shayin qadir.* لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾
3. *Huwa al-awwalu wal ākhiru wal zāhiru wal bāṭinu wa huwa bikuli shayin ‘alim.* هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾
4. *Huwa al-lathi khalaqa assamawati wal arḍa fi sittati ayām thuma istawā ‘ala al-‘arshi ya‘lamu ma yaliju fi al-arḍi wa ma yukhruju minha wa ma yanzilu min assamā wa ma ya‘ruju fiha wa huwa ma‘akum ayna ma kuntum wal lahu bima ta‘maluna baṣīr.* هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾
5. *Lahu mulku assamawati wal arḍi wa ila Allāhi turja‘u al umūr.* لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥﴾
6. *Yuliju al-ayla fi al-nahari wa yuliju al-nahari fi al-ayli wa huwa ‘alimun bithati al-ṣudūr.* يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُؤَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٦﴾

**ĀYAT 26 AND 27 OF SŪRAH 3 — ĀL-IMRĀN — THE FAMILY OF IMRAN**

26. Say, ‘O Allāh, Owner of the Kingdom, You give kingship to whoever You Like, and it is You who takes kingship from whomever You like. You honour whomever You like and humiliate whomever You like. You hold all things good in Your hand and truly it is You who has power over all things.



27. You cause night to replace day and day to replace night. You raise the living from the dead and the dead from the living and give sustenance without measure to whomever You like.'

### **Āl-Imrān** phonetic transliteration

26. *Qul Allāhuma Mālik al-Mulk tu'ti al-mulka man tashā' wa tanzi'u al-mulka miman tashā' wa tu'izu man tashā', wa tuthillu man tashā', biyadika al-khayru innaka 'ala kuli shayin qadir.*

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ  
مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُزِيلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُزِيلُ  
مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِإِذْنِكَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿٦٦﴾

27. *Tuliju al layla fi al-nahari wa tuliju al-nahara fi al layl wa tukhriju al hayya min al mayyit wa tukhriju al mayyit min al hayy wa tarzuqu man tashā'u bighayri hisāb.*

تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ  
فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ  
وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٦٧﴾

Imām 'Alī ibn al-Husayn عليه السلام said that after reciting the above, Allāh will grant your desires for this world and for the world to come.

**It is reported from Imām 'Alī عليه السلام that a four-raka'āt prayer should be offered to invoke Allāh to grant desires**

In the first *raka'ah* after *Al-Fatiḥah*, to recite Qur'ān 3:173 (*Āl-'Imrān*) seven times — 'Allāh is sufficient for us, He who protects us is Most Excellent.'

### Phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

173. *Ḥasbuna Allāhu wa ni'mal wakil*

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿٦٧﴾

In the second *raka'ah* after *Al-Fatiḥah*, to recite the following *āyah* of *Al-Kahf* seven times, 'Everything is as Allāh wills, there is no power other than Allāh's. If you see me as less than you in wealth and children . . . ' (Qur'ān 18:39).

## Phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

39. *Ma shāa Allāhu la quwata illa billah,  
in tarani ana aqalla minka mālan wa  
waladā . . .*

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ  
دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِن تَرَنِ أَنَا  
أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾

In the third *raka'ah* after *Al-Fatiḥah*, to recite the following *āyah* seven times, 'There is no Divinity other than You — limitless Glory beyond imperfection. Truly I was among the unjust . . .' (Qur'ān 21:87).

In the fourth *raka'ah* after *Al-Fatiḥah*, to recite the following *āyah* seven times, 'I entrust my affairs to Allāh, truly Allāh watches over His servants' (Qur'ān 40:440).

## Phonetic transliteration

*Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥim*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

44. *Wa ufawwiḍu amri ila Allāh, inna  
Allāha baṣīrun bil `ibād.*

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفْوِضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى  
اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْمَعَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾

He said that after reciting the above, Allāh will grant your desires for this world and for the world to come.

### Prayer for *istikhārah*

The word *istikhārah* — to petition Allāh for guidance to all that is good — is derived from the Arabic root word *khair* — good. Human beings, created with intelligence and the ability to reason, are well equipped to evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of actions and make informed decisions. However, at moments of stress, or when obliged to make decisions crucial to their future success, believers are advised to seek the guidance of Allāh — Knower of All that is Hidden and Manifest — to direct them to the 'best' solution via *istikhārah*.

- Scholars have dedicated chapters, even volumes, to this subject. The most famous work is the book of Al-Sayyid ibn Ṭawus (d. 664 AH)

**'Fath al-Abwāb'** (Opening the Doors) in which he records 20 different approaches to the seeking of *istikhārah* <sup>10</sup>

- Shaykh Saduq refers to Imām Ṣādiq عليه السلام saying, 'When one wishes to consult Allāh, pray two *raka'āt*, praise Allāh, send blessings to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his progeny and then say, "O Allāh if this action is beneficial in terms of religion or worldly matters, please make it easy for me to under-take; if it is not, please erase it from my thoughts.'" The narrator asked the Imām عليه السلام which *sūrah*s should be recited in the *raka'āt* and was told that both *Sūrah Al-Ikhlās* Qur'ān 112 and *Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn* Qur'ān 109 should be recited in the knowledge that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that the recitation of *Al-Ikhlās* is equal to the recitation of one-third of the Qur'ān. **Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 8, p. 66**

10. It is reported in a *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the paths to Allāh Almighty are equivalent to the 'breath of all creatures'. This illustrates that there are a never-ending variety of ways in which to communicate with one's Lord.

# Glossary

**‘Abaya/Chador** full-body cloaks sometimes with a smaller headscarf beneath them.

**‘Adil** righteous.

**Aḥadith** see ḥadīth.

**Ahl al-Bayt** household of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

**Al-Ḥaqq** The Ultimate Truth (One of Allāh’s Most Beautiful Names)

**Allāhu Akbar** Allāh is the Most Great.

**Amin** trustworthy

**Al-salāmu ‘alaykum** May Allāh grant you peace.

**Al-Yasa’** ﷺ Elisha.

**Aḥmad** commendable or laudable.

**Aḥwāl** level of attainment of a spiritual journey.

**‘Ash’arite** school of Islamic theology that supports tradition over reason.

**‘Aṣr, Ṣalat al-‘Aṣr** afternoon prayer.

**Athān** call to prayer.

**Āyah** (pl. āyat) lit. a sign. In Qur'ānic terminology, a verse.

**Ayūb** ﷺ Job.

**Bayt al-Mal** treasury.

**Chador** see 'Abaya

**Chingiz-Khan** Genghis Khan.

**Dāwūd** ﷺ David.

**Dhikr** remembrance.

**Dhikr Allāh** remembrance of Allāh

**Du'ā** prayer or supplication.

**Faḍilat al-Waqt** the preferred time for offering each prayer.

**Fajr al-Kathib** false dawn.

**Fajr al-Ṣadiq** true dawn.

**Fajr, Ṣalat al-Fajr** dawn, the prayer offered at dawn.

**Farḍ** obligatory.

**Fatwā** (pl. fatāwā) independent legal opinion/s.

**Fiqh** jurisprudence.

**Fiṭrah** innate. Pure nature of human beings.

**Gharar** risk, lack of information.

**Ghufailah** two voluntary *raka'āt* offered between *Maghrib* and '*Ishā'*.

**Ghusl** to bathe the whole body, also known as the greater ablution.

**Ḥadīth** (pl. aḥadīth) report or saying of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the error-free Imāms ؑ.

**Ḥajj** pilgrimage.

**Halāl** lawful.

**Ḥaqiqah** complete truth.

**Ḥarām** unlawful.

**Harūn** ؑ Aaron.

**Ḥasanah** good deed.

**Ḥayā'** modest behaviour.

**Ḥayḍ** menstruation and its period.

**Hijāb** (lit. complete protection) women's modest dress and head covering.

**Husn** beauty or goodness.

**Ibrāhīm** ؑ Abraham.

**'Īd** celebration

**Iḥsān** doing good.

**Ijtihād** to deduce rulings from their sources, that is the Qur'an and *aḥadith*.

**Ilyas** ؑ Elijah.

**Imāmiyah** Shī'ah. Those who defer to the Imāms ؑ from the Prophet's progeny.

**Injīl** the Bible.

**Inshā'a-Allāh** God willing.

**Iqāmah** call to stand up for prayer.

**‘Iṣmah** being free from error or sin.

**‘Isa** ﷺ Jesus.

**‘Ishā’, Ṣalāt al-‘Ishā’** evening prayer, which may be offered until midnight.

**Iṣḥāq** ﷺ Isaac.

**Ismā‘il** ﷺ Ishmael.

**Isnād** ‘chain’ of those who are known to have narrated a *ḥadīth*.

**Isra‘il** Israel.

**Istiḥāḍah** non-menstrual bleeding.

**Istiḥsan** preference of one kind of analogy over another.

**Istikhārah** to petition Allāh to guide one to all that is good.

**Jāmi‘** central mosque of a city.

**Janābah** religious impurity that is the result of sexual intercourse.

**Jibrā‘il** Gabriel.

**Juhd** strive.

**Ka‘bah** ‘house of God’ in Makkah.

**Kalām** Islamic theology, speech.

**Khair** good

**Khiḍr** a renowned person who is traditionally acknowledged to have received the Divine gift of great wisdom.

**Khimar** a long cape-like veil — from the head to just above the waist — that completely covers the hair, neck and shoulders leaving the face clear.

**Lūṭ** لوط Lot.

**Madinah** city, Islamically used for the city where the Prophet ﷺ lived and died.

**Maghrib, Ṣalat al-Maghrib** the prayer offered after sunset when dusk falls and the sky darkens.

**Maḥabbah** love.

**Maḥram** a person with whom marriage is not lawful, e.g. brother, sister, mother, father, aunt, uncle etc.

**Makkah** the holiest city in Islam where the Prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il ﷺ built the Ka'bah. The birthplace of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and place of pilgrimage for Muslims.

**Makkan** relating to Makkah.

**Malakūt** celestial realm.

**Maqāmat** spiritual position.

**Maryam** مريم Mary.

**Mathhab** school of law.

**Mawlā** guardian, being in charge, and master, as in 'Alī ﷺ is mawlā.

**Mawt** death.

**Miḥrāb** niche in the wall of a mosque to indicate the *qiblah*.

**Mi' rāj** the Prophet Muḥammad's journey to 'the heavens' and back.

**Mizān** beam-balance scale.

**Mujtahid** jurist.

**Mu'min** (pl. mu'minīn) true believer/s.



**Mūsa** ﷺ Moses.

**Mu'tazilite** in Islamic theology — supporter of reason.

**Nāfilah** (pl. Nawāfil) voluntary prayers.

**Najis al-'Ayn** impure in itself.

**Nifās** childbirth.

**Niqāb** a veil to cover a woman's face leaving only the area around the eyes

**Niyyah** intention.

**Nūḥ** ﷺ Noah.

**Qaḍā'** to make up for missed duties.

**Qarābah** kinship.

**Qiblah** the direction (of the Kab'ah in Makkah) that Muslims face when they pray.

**Qirāah** recitation

**Qiyam** standing upright.

**Qiyās** analogy.

**Qunūt** humble invocation.

**Quraish** a famous Arabian clan.

**Raka'ah** (pl. raka'āt) cycles for standing, bowing and prostrating during prayer.

**Rukū'** to bow before the Lord. A position during prayer.

**Ṣaḥabah** companion.

**Sajdah** (pl. sujud) to prostrate. A position during prayer.

**Sajdah al-Sahw** a prostration made for any mistake during prayer.

**Ṣalāh** (pl. ṣalāt) the canonical form of Islamic prayer.

**Salām** greetings of peace.

**Ṣalāt al-Ihtyāt** precautionary prayer.

**Sayyi'ah** bad deed.

**Shar'i** legal.

**Shari'ah** Islamic law.

**Shayṭān** Satan.

**Shi'ah** those who followed the Islamic teaching of 'Ali ؑ after the Prophet ﷺ.

**Sidr** leaves of the 'Lote Tree'.

**Silsilah** lit. chain, chronological list of teachers or guides.

**Subḥana Allāh** Allāh is glorified.

**Sujud** see Sajdah.

**Sulayman** ؑ Solomon.

**Ṣulh** amicable treaty or agreement.

**Sunnah** (lit. practice) in *ḥadīth* terminology, the Prophet's tradition, sayings and way of life.

**Sunni** those who follow the caliphs after the Prophet ﷺ.

**Sūrah** a division of the Qur'ān.

**Surat al-Fatiha** the opening *surah* of the Qur'ān.

**Tābi'ūn** the generation that succeeded the companions.

**Takbīr** to state that ‘Allāh is Most Great’ — Allāhu Akbar.

**Ṭarīqah** (pl. ṭuruq) way, path.

**Tasbiḥ** glorification.

**Tashahud** declaration of faith.

**Tawḥīd** belief in the Divine Unity of Allāh, Oneness.

**Tayamum** to perform ablution without water.

**Tazāḥum** table of priorities.

**Tazkyah** purification.

**Thaqalain** the Qur’ān and the progeny of the Prophet ﷺ.

**Ummah** the Muslim nation.

**‘Umrah** minor pilgrimage.

**Ut** properly oud, a musical instrument used by Arabs.

**Waliy** guardian.

**Waqf** charity or endowment.

**Wila** (see Wilayah)

**Wilayah** authority, assistance, love, guardianship.

**Wuḍū’** ablution in preparation for prayer.


**Yaḥya** ﷺ John.

**Ya’kūb** ﷺ Jacob.

**Yunus** ﷺ Jonah.

**Yusuf** ﷺ Joseph.

**Zakāh** (pl. zakat) an Islamic religious annual welfare tax due on specific commodities.

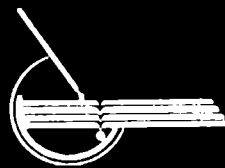
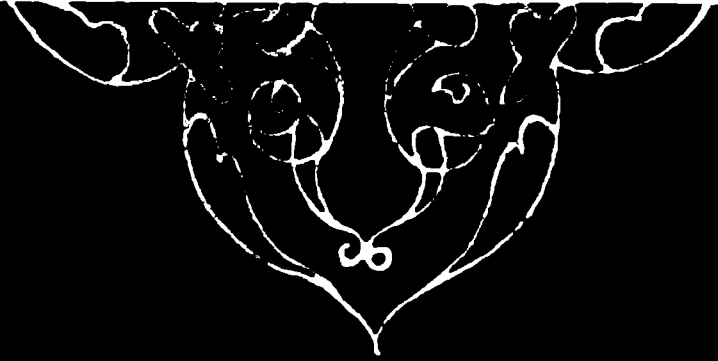
**Zakaria**  Zacharias.

**Zina** adultery.



اصالت و جوهره اسلام

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