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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	5
THE WILL OF ALLAH AND OUR DESTINY/ VAHID MAJD	7
NATURE-BASED RELIGION (THE INNATE NATURE OF RELIGION IN ISLAMIC THEOLOGY/ REZA BERENJKAR.....	24
MAHDAVIYAT AND GOD'S SUNNAH IN QURAN/ MAHNAZ FARAHMAND.....	31
RESPONSIBILITIES OF AWAITORS FOR IMAM MAHDI/ FERESHTE CHAMANI	47
EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTION FROM QURAN AND TRADITIONS POINT OF VIEW/ FEAZEH AZIMZADE ARDEBILI/ TAYEBEH IBRAHIMI/ MASOMEH SARBAZ VATAN.....	58
SOME EFFECTS OF PRAY IN PURIFICATION OF SOUL AND ACQUIRING ETHICAL VIRTUES/ FOROUGH AL-ZAMAN AGHDAEE.....	75
AHLUL BAYT'S MANNER OF CONFRONTATION WITH AHL-E-KITAB/ MOHAMMAD ZARE'	82

Transliteration:

		Long Vowels
ء - '	ع - '	آ - <u>a</u> , ā
ب - b	غ - gh	و - <u>u</u>
ت - t	ف - f	ي - <u>i</u>
ث - th	ق - q	
ج - j	ك - k	Short Vowels
ح - <u>h</u>	ل - l	ا - a
خ - kh	م - m	و - u
د - d	ن - n	ي - i
ذ - dh	ه - h	
ر - r	و - w	Diphthongs
ز - z	ي - y	او - aw
س - s		اي - ay
ش - sh		
ص - <u>s</u>		
ض - <u>d</u>		
ط - <u>t</u>		
ظ - <u>z</u>		
ة - ah; at		

Editorial

Amongst the very first verses revealed to the holy Prophet were these verses,

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

***“Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous,
who taught by the pen,
Taught the human what he did not know.”*** (96:3-5)

These verses show that God knows one of the most significant ways of respecting human beings is “teaching him”, a teaching by pens. This verse had been sent to prophet when the environment around him was stranger to science. When they talked about their ancestors or previous tribal wars, they were not to solve individual or social

problems but they were seeking priority over other tribes or taking pride.

In this atmosphere, talking about science, especially the part of science related to pedagogy, the teaching which is by pen which gives eternity to cultural works and puts them in the heart of history, was a different message which showed the depth of messenger’s mission and showed that messenger was not influenced by the current culture of the people of the time. All fair elites unite that the source of this message mentioned at the beginning of our discussion should be God’s revelation.

The impact of this divine message among Muslims was so huge that Prophet, according to authentic traditions, ordered his words be written so as not to be forgotten after him. In addition, Muslims value the precious

cultural heritage of scholars in other fields like medical studies – which were the result of their long experiences-. The exception in this domain was cruelty of some Muslim military forces who entered countries like Egypt and Iran and faced the scientific heritage of human beings thoughtlessly. These exceptions which are rooted in tendencies of ignorant time should not be accounted as all Muslims’ fault in general or an order of Islam. Islam regardless of race or political tendencies has been always supporting the scientific and cultural works. Unfortunately, in recent years, by appearance of some groups who claim to be Muslim, the behavior of some of their ancestors is being repeated by the claimers. And the highest sorrow is when some media show appearance of Islam and Muslims to be this.

Let’s return to our words. Muslims, to put Qurānic teachings and the words of

Prophet in practice, did their best to spread knowledge and founded libraries. Donated small and big lands to found libraries, and established *Darul-Ilms* (each one a type of academy – as we say today-). When we look at the responsibilities of each of these places, we find, in fifth and sixth century, a kind of advanced “*knowledge management*” in that time which are even unique these days.

The present time is the time when Muslims, from one hand, should revive these academic and scientific glories of the past and value *ilm* (knowledge) more than any time and from the other hand, non-Muslims should try to know real Islam, not the extremists’ version of Islam which is advertised and to reach this, they should notice the main trend of majority of Muslims during history.

THE WILL OF ALLAH AND OUR DESTINY

Part VII: The Place of Allah's Attributes

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Aug. 2017

Abstract: *In this part, it is shown that Allah's names (Asmaa) and attributes (Sifaat) are of His supreme creations. The place of the manifestation of the Allah's attributes and qualities is discussed, including the states of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, mercy, wrath, sadness, etc., which are all parts of Allah's created will. Moreover, the meanings of medium of Allah, such as the face, eye, hand, and side that Allah attributed to Himself are discussed based on the evidence from the holy Quran and Hadith.*

Keywords: *The names of Allah; His attributes, His medium, His actions*

Introduction

As we discussed in the previous sections with evidence, the heart of *the proof of Allah* is the vessel of the will of Allah for both the will of knowledge and the will of command. In other words, the

will of Allah is Allah's creation in the heart of the Imams (*PBUT*). Consequently, their knowledge is the divine knowledge, and their command and satisfaction are the command and satisfaction of Allah. It is a rational fact that the actions, qualities, conditions,

and the states that have been attributed to Allah in the holy Quran are not eternal as they vary in time and place. Moreover, we discuss that the names of Allah and His attributes are the medium and channel of connection to Allah, and are His creations. They are the interfaces that He has chosen such that all His actions over the rest of creation manifest through them. Allah is free of needs and interface, but He willed and designed the creations such that they need this medium to call upon Him and to receive His bounties, just as He willed that human require oxygen to remain alive. The oxygen acts as the medium of the life planned by Allah. In this section, we provide some evidence that explain the reality and function of this medium and system devised by Allah in the creation and in the religion.

The conditions and states attributed to Allah

In a very inspiring Hadith which includes several verses of the holy Quran as its supportive evidence, Hamza Ibn Bazi' narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فَلَمَّا اسْتَفُونَا
انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ لَا يَأْسِفُ كَأْسِفِنَا وَ
لِكُنْهُ خَلَقَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِنَفْسِهِ يَأْسِفُونَ وَ يَرْضُونَ وَ هُمْ
مَخْلُوقُونَ مَرْبُوبُونَ فَجَعَلَ رِضَاهُمْ رِضًا نَفْسِهِ وَ
سَخَطَهُمْ سَخَطَ نَفْسِهِ لِأَنَّهُ جَعَلَهُمُ الدُّعَاءَ إِلَيْهِ وَ الْأَدِلَاءَ
عَلَيْهِ فَلِذَلِكَ صَارُوا كَذَلِكَ وَ لَيْسَ أَنَّ ذَلِكَ يَصِلُ إِلَى

اللَّهِ كَمَا يَصِلُ إِلَى خَلْقِهِ لَكِنْ هَذَا مَعْنَى مَا قَالَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ
وَ قَدْ قَالَ مَنْ أَهَانَ لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ بَارَزَنِي بِالْمَحَارَبَةِ وَ
دَعَانِي إِلَيْهَا وَ قَالَ مَنْ يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَ
قَالَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ
أَيْدِيهِمْ فَكُلُّ هَذَا وَ شَبِيهُهُ عَلَى مَا ذَكَرْتُ لَكَ وَ هَكَذَا
الرِّضَا وَ الْغَضَبُ وَ غَيْرُهُمَا مِنَ الْأَشْيَاءِ مِمَّا يُشَاكِلُ
ذَلِكَ وَ لَوْ كَانَ يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْأَسْفُ وَ الصَّجْرُ وَ هُوَ
الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمَا وَ أَنْشَأَهُمَا لَجَانَ لِقَائِلِ هَذَا أَنْ يَقُولَ إِنَّ
الْخَالِقَ يَبِيدُ يَوْمًا مَا لِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْغَضَبُ وَ الصَّجْرُ
دَخَلَهُ التَّغْيِيرُ وَ إِذَا دَخَلَ التَّغْيِيرُ لَمْ يُؤْمَرْ عَلَيْهِ الْإِبَادَةُ
ثُمَّ لَمْ يُعْرَفِ الْمَكُونُ مِنَ الْمَكُونِ وَ لَا الْقَائِدُ مِنَ
الْمَقْدُورِ عَلَيْهِ وَ لَا الْخَالِقُ مِنَ الْمَخْلُوقِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَنِ
هَذَا الْقَوْلِ غُلُوبًا كَبِيرًا بَلْ هُوَ الْخَالِقُ لِلْأَشْيَاءِ لَا لِحَاجَةٍ
فَإِذَا كَانَ لَا لِحَاجَةَ اسْتَحَالَ الْحَدُّ وَ الْكَيْفُ فِيهِ فَافْهَمْ إِنَّ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى.

On the commentary of the saying of the Lord of might and majesty: “When they made Us sad, We took revenge from them,” (43:55) Imam al-Sadiq (PBUH) said, “Certainly, the Lord of might and majesty does not sorrow like we sorrow. However, He has created friends (Awliyyaa) for Himself who become sad and become delighted (on His behalf). They are created, trained, and raised (by Him to act as such). Therefore, He made their satisfaction (as sign of) His Own satisfaction, and their dissatisfaction His Own dissatisfaction. It is because they are the callers to Him and the guides towards Him (i.e., His religion). For this reason, (based on the reactions of people) they transfer to such states and such conditions belong to them. It is not

that such a state (i.e., sadness) would strike Allah as it strikes His creations. And this is the meaning of His saying (in the token of holy Quran mentioned above). He also said, ‘He who insults a friend of Mine, he has indeed challenged Me to combat and called Me to it’. Moreover, He said, ‘Whoever obeys the Messenger, he has indeed obeyed Allah.’ (4:80) In addition, He said, ‘Verily those who pledge allegiance to you, they have indeed pledged allegiance to Allah; the hand of Allah is over their hands.’ (48:10) All of these issues and any other issues similar to them should be explained according to what I just mentioned. The same is the case with satisfaction, anger, and other things like them. If the state of sadness and frustration could have reached Allah while Allah is their creator and their originator, it would be possible for the person who holds such an idea to say that one day the creator would vanish. It is because if anger and frustration could get into Him, changes have taken place in Him, and if He is subject to change, He is not safe from destruction. Besides, in that case, no distinction would exist between the originator and the originated, between the mighty and the dominated, and between the creator and the created. Allah is far above such a thought, with a great glory. He created things without needing them. Since He does not need His creations, limit, state or condition is impossible for Him.

Understand what I said if Allah, the glorious, so wills.”¹

Thus, the pleasure of the Imam (*PBUH*) is the manifestation and indication of the pleasure of Allah and it is a sign that defines “the pleasure of Allah” for us, because there is no change in the Essence of Allah from wrath to pleasure and vice versa. Allah does not need His creations since he was pre-existent. He creates these conditions and the states as signals to guide His servants. If Allah enters into a state or condition, His creation limits Him, and Allah is far above such a saying. Allah is distinct from His creations and their attributes. Therefore, it is logical that all such states or qualities that have been attributed to Allah in the holy Quran would belong to His vice-regents (*Khulafaa Allah*) among His creation. They are the places of His created attributes including mercy and wrath.

In another token in the holy Quran, Allah, the glorious, states:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا.

Those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating Punishment. (33:57)

Allah is far above from getting into the state of annoyance and irritation. Rather,

He has defined the annoyance of Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*) as His. Allah has created them, and knew their full submission to His will. Thus, He created the states and the conditions to which their heart turn according to His will when facing different situations, and then He called those states as “His states”. Hence, the meaning of the above token of the holy Quran becomes: “those who annoy the Messenger of Allah (*PBUH&HF*) and his Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*) ...” Both Shia and Bakri (with some slight variations) narrated:

يَوْمَ شَكَاهُ بُرَيْدَةَ ... فَوَقَفَ بُرَيْدَةُ قُدَّامَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ابْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ أَخَذَ جَارِيَةً مِنْ الْمَغْنَمِ دُونَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَ تَمَّ جَاءَ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ فَقَالَتْهَا فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَجَاءَ عَنْ يَسَارِهِ فَقَالَتْهَا فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَ جَاءَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ فَقَالَتْهَا فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ تَمَّ عَادَ إِلَى بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَتْهَا فَغَضِبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ غَضِبًا لَمْ يَرِ قَبْلَهُ وَ لَا بَعْدَهُ غَضِبَ مِثْلَهُ وَ تَغَيَّرَ لَوْنُهُ وَ انْتَفَحَتْ أَوْدَاجُهُ وَ ارْتَعَدَتْ فَرَائِصُهُ وَ قَالَ يَا بُرَيْدَةُ مَا لَكَ آذَيْتَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُنْذُ الْيَوْمِ إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَقُولُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَ رَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ وَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا وَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَ إِثْمًا مُبِينًا قَالَ بُرَيْدَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ أَنِّي قَصَدْتُكَ بِأَدَى قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَ أَوْ تَطَّنُ يَا بُرَيْدَةُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُؤْذِينِي إِلَّا مَنْ قَصَدَ ذَاتَ نَفْسِي أَمَا عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا مِنِّي وَ أَنَا مِنْهُ وَ أَنْ مَنْ آذَى عَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَانِي وَ مَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ وَ مَنْ آذَى اللَّهَ فَقَدْ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُؤْذِيَهُ بِأَلِيمِ عَذَابِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ.

... One day Buraida al-Aslami criticized the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali (*PBUH*) before the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*) on an issue several times. The Messenger of Allah (*PBUH&HF*) became so angry that has not been seen before, to the extent that his color changed, his jugular veins swelled, his limbs shook, and said, “What is wrong with you, O Buraida, that you have annoyed me since the morning? Haven’t you heard the saying of the Lord of might and majesty ‘Those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating Punishment. And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, bear (on themselves) a calumny and a glaring sin.’ (33:57-58)” Buraida replied, “I did not think it would annoy you.” The Messenger of Allah (*PBUH&HF*) said, “Do you think you do not annoy me unless you intend (to annoy) me personally? Don’t you know that Ali is from me and I am from Ali, and that he who annoys Ali, he has indeed annoyed me, and he who annoys me, he has indeed annoyed Allah, and he who annoys Allah, it is for Allah to annoy him with His most painful punishment in Hellfire?”²

A concise version of the above exchange is reported by the Bakri’s. However, they have given the name of Amro Ibn

Shaas al-Aslami as the person who irritated the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*).³

The same explanation applies to the universally accepted Hadith in which the Messenger of Allah (*PBUH&HF*) said about his daughter:

يَا فَاطِمَةُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى لِيُغْضِبُ لِغَضَبِكَ وَ
يَرْضَى لِرِضَائِكَ.

“O Fatima! Most certainly Allah— Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high— becomes angry due to your anger and becomes pleased due to your pleasure.”⁴

The above Hadith does not necessarily imply that Allah’s will is the subject of the will of Lady Fatima (*PBUH*), rather it stresses the fact that her feelings are always in line with what Allah expects from her so much so that her feelings should be viewed as “the feelings attributed to Allah”. It naturally follows that such divinely-talented individuals who enjoy such a high status and represent the created attributes of Allah should be protected by Allah from any wrong feeling and wrong action. Allah has trained their hearts to feel and respond perfectly and they voluntarily submit to these inspired feelings. Although due to their volition, the actions of these protected individuals are not the actions of Allah in reality, Allah attributes their actions to Himself, because they always choose to do

exactly as Allah commanded them to do through inspiration of His will in their submissive heart. As the Imam (*PBUH*) explained in an earlier Hadith, we should regard the Essence of Allah pure from such qualities and descriptions. Since these attributes and descriptions are proven facts in the holy Quran and collections of Hadith, the existence of such protected individuals is, therefore, proven.

Allah’s names and His attributes of actions

The Hadiths of Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*) make it quite clear that unlike the Essence of Allah, His name and His attributes are not eternal, and are created. They are called His attributes because they belong to Him and are His chosen creation with supreme functionalities. Moreover, unlike His creation, His names are the same as His attributes. This is because Allah’s Essence is free of attributes, and the created attributes merely act as the signs for Him as their owner and possessor, and are the means of addressing Him just as names do. However, Eternal knowledge, power, hearing, and sight, which are the same as the Essence of Allah, should not be called His attributes. There is no difference between the Eternal hearing, Eternal sight, and Eternal power. *We must only acknowledge and praise Allah with what He praised His Essence in the*

holy Quran, but we should regard Him pure from any meanings of common terms that apply to His creation since nothing is like Him. Unlike the creation, Allah knows without mind, sees without eyes, hears without ear, etc. By these statements, we only mean He is undeniable and is not weak, nor is He ignorant of what can be heard or seen. Allah sees as He hears and as He is powerful. This statement looks meaningless due to lack of concept for the Essence Allah. The concepts of knowledge, power, hearing and sight that are familiar with us have meanings and diversity because they are created attributes by Allah and they do not have any similarity with His Essence. Any imagination or perception of Allah's Eternal knowledge, power, hearing and sight by us is a creation of our mind and their features cannot be attributed to Allah. We should regard His Essence (*Dhat*) pure (*Munazzah*) from all attributes of perfection because they are created entities which have quality (*Kayfiyya*) and quantity (*Kammiyya*). Allah is the creator of all such qualities, and Allah is not limited by the extension of qualities and concepts that we imagine. Allah does not need His creation.

The concept of power that we know is a quality created by Allah and has no similarity whatsoever with the Eternal Power, otherwise we have likened Allah

to His creation. The power that we know is still deficient and implies weakness, because it is captured, sensed or perceived in the domain of creation. But Allah's Eternal Power does not have any limitation and weakness, and therefore by saying Him Powerful, we only mean He is pure from any type of weakness. However, we should not consider any opposite for Allah as He is the creator of opposite things. Although the literal negation of weakness is power but since the concept of power in the domain of creation involves weakness (because it is perceived by us in the domain of creation, needs means for manifestation, has features by which it can be compared), we cannot say logically that the negative of weakness is the concept of power that we know. Thus, it will be irrational and illogical to go beyond confirming purity for the Essence of Allah from all known and comprehensible concepts.

What we can perceive or imagine of knowledge, power, hearing and sight in their perfect sense are the created names and attributes of Allah and have been placed in His best creation, which is the sole or light of the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*) and His Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*). We purify Allah from all such attributes even in their perfect senses. Several Hadiths make it clear that whoever believes that the name and attributes are the same as the Essence of Allah is a disbeliever and

a polytheist, and that maintaining purity of Allah from is His attributes, is the foundation of belief in the Unity of Allah (*al-Tawhid*). Hear we provide some evidence in this regard. Let us study some Hadiths in this regard. It has been narrated that Imam Sadiq (*PBUH*) said:

مَنْ عَبَدَ اللَّهَ بِالتَّوَهُُّمِ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ وَ مَنْ عَبَدَ الْإِسْمَ دُونَ الْمَعْنَى فَقَدْ كَفَرَ وَ مَنْ عَبَدَ الْإِسْمَ وَ الْمَعْنَى فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ وَ مَنْ عَبَدَ الْمَعْنَى بِإِيقَاعِ الْأَسْمَاءِ عَلَيْهِ بِصِفَاتِهِ الَّتِي وَصَفَ بِهَا نَفْسَهُ فَعَقَدَ عَلَيْهِ قَلْبَهُ وَ نَطَقَ بِهِ لِسَانَهُ فِي سِرَائِرِهِ وَ عَلَانِيَتِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع حَقًّا وَ فِي حَدِيثٍ آخَرَ «أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا».

“He who worships Allah based on (the names and symbolic concepts developed by his) thoughts, has indeed disbelieved (Allah). He who worships the name (or attribute) instead of what it refers, has disbelieved as well, and he who worships both the name and its reference (i.e., the owner of name), has indeed associated (the names) with Allah. He who worships what is intended (by the names) by employing the names for Him (which are) the attributes that Allah praised Himself by them, and his heart believes in (worshipping Him through His name) and his tongue utters it secretly and openly, He is truly of the companions of the Leader of the Faithful, and ‘they are the real believers’ (8:4).”⁵

Abdurrahman bin Abi Najran narrated:

قُلْتُ لَهُ: جَعَلَنِي اللَّهُ فِدَاكَ نَعْبُدُ الرَّحْمَنَ الرَّحِيمَ الْوَاحِدَ الْأَحَدَ الصَّمَدَ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّ مَنْ عَبَدَ الْإِسْمَ دُونَ الْمَسْمَى بِالْأَسْمَاءِ أَشْرَكَ وَ كَفَرَ وَ جَدَدَ وَ لَمْ يَعْبُدْ شَيْئاً بَلْ اعْبُدَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدَ الْأَحَدَ الصَّمَدَ الْمُسَمَى بِهِذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءِ دُونَ الْأَسْمَاءِ إِنَّ الْأَسْمَاءَ صِفَاتٌ وَصَفَ بِهَا نَفْسَهُ.

I asked Imam Javad (*PBUH*), “Do we worship (the names of) the beneficent, the merciful, one, unique, and needless?” The Imam (*PBUH*) answered: “He who worships the name instead of Who is named by those names is a polytheist and disbeliever, and denied and worships nothing. Instead of worshipping names, worship (the Essence of) Allah Who is one, unique, and needless and is named by these names. *Verily, the names are the attributes by which Allah praised Himself.*”⁶

Several traditionists narrated that the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali (*PBUH*), said the following in one of his sermons:

أَوَّلُ الدِّيَانَةِ بِهِ مَعْرِفَتُهُ وَ كَمَالُ مَعْرِفَتِهِ تَوْجِيدهُ وَ كَمَالُ تَوْجِيدهُ نَفْيُ الصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ بِشَهَادَةِ كُلِّ صِفَةٍ أَنَّهَا غَيْرُ الْمُوصُوفِ وَ شَهَادَةِ الْمُوصُوفِ أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ الصِّفَةِ وَ شَهَادَتُهُمَا جَمِيعاً بِالتَّشْبِيهِ الْمُمْتَنِعِ مِنْهُ الْأَزَلِ فَمَنْ وَصَفَ اللَّهَ فَقَدْ حَدَّ وَ مَنْ حَدَّ فَقَدْ عَدَّ وَ مَنْ عَدَّ فَقَدْ أَبْطَلَ أَرْزُلَهُ وَ مَنْ قَالَ كَيْفَ فَقَدْ اسْتَوْصَفَهُ ...

“The foremost of devoutness and faith in Him is to recognize Him. The perfection of His recognition is to believe in His

Oneness. The perfection of believing in His Oneness is to (rationally) deny attributes from Him (i.e., His Essence). Because every attribute is a testimony for the fact that it is different from the attributed entity, and attributed entity is a testimony for the fact that it is different from the attribute, and the (rational) testimony of (the existence of) both together is that it is impossible for both to be eternal. Thus whoever describe (the Essence of) Allah (by attributes) has indeed limited Him (by these qualities and characteristics); and he who has limited Him has indeed numbered Him (by the limits that has been we Him), and he who has numbered Him has indeed disproved His eternity. He who says ‘How (Allah is)’, has tried to describe Him (by condition and state) ...”⁷

Isma'il al-Qutaiba narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (PBUH) that the Leader of the Faithful (PBUH) said in a part of his sermon:

الْمُمْتَنِعَةَ مِنَ الصِّفَاتِ دَأْتُهُ وَمِنَ الْأَبْصَارِ رُؤْيَتْهُ وَمِنَ الْأَوْهَامِ الْإِحَاطَةَ بِهِ .

*It is impossible for the attributes to be His Essence, for the eyes to see Him, and for the mind to encompass Him.”*⁸

In another Hadith, Abu Hashim al-Ja'fari narrated:

كُنْتُ عِنْدَ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ الثَّانِي عَ فَسَأَلَهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ

أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الرَّبِّ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى لَهُ أَسْمَاءٌ وَصِفَاتٌ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَأَسْمَاؤُهُ وَصِفَاتُهُ هِيَ هُوَ فَقَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ ع إِنَّ لِهَذَا الْكَلَامِ وَجْهَيْنِ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقُولُ هِيَ هُوَ أَيْ إِنَّهُ ذُو عَدَدٍ وَكَثْرَةٍ فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَن ذَلِكَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَقُولُ هَذِهِ الصِّفَاتُ وَالْأَسْمَاءُ لَمْ تَزَلْ فَإِنَّ لَمْ تَزَلْ مُحْتَمِلٌ مَعْنَيْنِ فَإِنَّ قُلْتَ لَمْ تَزَلْ عِنْدَهُ فِي عِلْمِهِ وَهُوَ مُسْتَحَقُّهَا فَتَعَمَّ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَقُولُ لَمْ يَزَلْ تَصْوِيرُهَا وَهَجَاؤُهَا وَتَقْطِيعَ حُرُوفِهَا فَمَعَادُ اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَهُ شَيْءٌ غَيْرُهُ، بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ وَ لَا خَلْقَ ثُمَّ خَلَقَهَا وَسِبِيلَهُ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ بِهَا إِلَيْهِ وَ يَعْبُدُونَهُ وَ هِيَ ذِكْرُهُ وَ كَانَ اللَّهُ وَ لَا ذِكْرَ وَ الْمَذْكُورُ بِالذِّكْرِ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْقَدِيمُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَزَلْ وَ الْأَسْمَاءُ وَ الصِّفَاتُ مَخْلُوقَاتٌ وَ الْمَعَانِي وَ الْمَعْنِيُّ بِهَا هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا يَلِيقُ بِهِ الْإِخْتِلَافُ وَ لَا الْإِنْتِلَافُ وَ إِنَّمَا يَخْتَلِفُ وَ يَأْتِلِفُ الْمُنَجَّرِيُّ.

I was in the presence of Imam al-Jawad (PBUH) when a man asked him, “Inform me about the Lord—Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high—are His names and His attributes the same as His Essence?” The Imam (PBUH) replied, “This saying has two meanings. If you mean He is numerous, then Allah is exalted from that. And if you mean the names and attributes have always been, it may imply two meanings: If you say they have always been in His knowledge (i.e., Allah eternally knew what He would create of names and attributes) then this is correct. However, if you say that their image, their spelling, and their wordings were eternal, then I seek refuge in Allah from saying there was anything else with

Allah. Rather Allah existed and there was no creation. He then created them (i.e., the names and attributes) as a means between Him and His creation so that His creation may implore upon Him by them and worship Him. They (i.e., the names and attributes) are His remembrance. Verily Allah existed and there was no remembrance (of Him). The One who is remembered by the remembrance is (the Essence of) Allah who was eternally pre-existent. *The names (Asmaa) and the attributes (Sifaat) are creations* and what is intended by them is (the Essence of) Allah Who neither variety nor union (of several things) befits Him. Only something that has parts and is dividable may have diversity or integrity.”⁹

About the synonymy of name and attribute for Allah, Abdullah Ibn Sanan narrated:

سَأَلْتُ الرَّضَا عَنِ الْإِسْمِ مَا هُوَ قَالَ صِفَةٌ لِمَوْصُوفٍ.

I asked Imam Ridha (PBUH) what the name is. He said, “It is an attribute (Sifat) for that which to it is attributed (Mausuf).”¹⁰

It is also narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (PBUH) said:

اللَّهُ غَايَةٌ مِنْ غَيَّاهُ، فَالْمَعْنَى غَيْرُ الْغَايَةِ، تَوَحَّدَ بِالرُّبُوبِيَّةِ وَوَصَفَ نَفْسَهُ بِغَيْرِ مَحْدُودِيَّةٍ، فَالذَّاكِرُ اللَّهِ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ وَ

اللَّهُ غَيْرُ أَسْمَاءٍ، وَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِ اسْمٌ شَيْءٍ سِوَاهُ فَهُوَ مَخْلُوقٌ، أَلَا تَرَى قَوْلَهُ «الْعِزَّةُ لِلَّهِ» الْعِزْمَةُ لِلَّهِ وَ قَالَ «رَبِّ لِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا»، وَ قَالَ «قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى»، فَالْأَسْمَاءُ مُضَافَةٌ إِلَيْهِ وَ هُوَ التَّوْحِيدُ الْخَالِصُ.

“(The name of) Allah is the final target (only) for someone who considers Allah’s Essence has goal, end, and limit¹¹. However, the creator of the goals and limits is free of goals and limits. He is unique by His lordship and management. *He praised himself without limit.* Thus, the reminder of Allah (i.e., the sign, name, or attribute) is other than Allah, and Allah is other than His names... Don’t you see His sayings, ‘The majesty belongs to Allah,’ (4:139) ‘The greatness belongs Allah’ (i.e., they are His creator and owner), ‘And for Allah there are the best names, thus call upon Him by them.’ (7:180) ‘Say: call (Him) Allah or call (Him) Rahman. By any of these (authorized names) that you call upon Him (is permissible), because for Allah there are the best names.’ (17:110) Thus, the names have been ascribed to Him (as His possessions and authorized means of referring to Him), and this (view) is the pure monotheism (Tawhid).”¹²

In one of the debates in the presence of Ma’mun (the Abbasid caliph), the

following was exchanged between Imam Ridha (*PBUH*) and Imran al-Saabi:

... قَالَ عِمْرَانُ فَيَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ عَرَفْنَاهُ قَالَ بِغَيْرِهِ قَالَ فَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ غَيْرُهُ قَالَ الرِّضَا عَ مَشِيبَتِهِ وَاسْمُهُ وَصِفَتُهُ وَ مَا أَشْبَهَ ذَلِكَ وَ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ مُخَدَّتٌ مَخْلُوقٌ مُدَبَّرٌ .

... Imran asked, "Thus, by which thing do we recognize Him?" Imam Ridha (*PBUH*) replied, "By other than Him." He asked, "What exactly other than Him?" The Imam (*PBUH*) replied, "His will, His name, His attribute, and whatever similar to them. All these things are novel, created, and are devised (by Allah)."¹³

Hisham Ibn Hakam narrated:

عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ أَنَّهُ سَأَلَ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ عَنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ وَ اسْتِيقَاتِهَا اللَّهُ مِمَّا هُوَ مُسْتَنَقٌّ فَقَالَ يَا هِشَامُ اللَّهُ مُسْتَنَقٌّ مِنْ إِلَهٍ وَ إِلَهٌ يَفْتَضِي مَأْلُوهَا وَ الْإِسْمُ غَيْرُ الْمُسَمَّى فَمَنْ عَبَدَ الْإِسْمَ دُونَ الْمَعْنَى فَقَدْ كَفَرَ وَ لَمْ يَعْبُدْ شَيْئاً وَ مَنْ عَبَدَ الْإِسْمَ وَ الْمَعْنَى فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ وَ عَبَدَ اثْنَيْنِ وَ مَنْ عَبَدَ الْمَعْنَى دُونَ الْإِسْمِ فَذَلِكَ التَّوْحِيدُ أَ فَهَمْتَ يَا هِشَامُ قَالَ قُلْتُ زِدْنِي قَالَ اللَّهُ تِسْعَةٌ وَ تِسْعُونَ اسْمًا فَلَوْ كَانَ الْإِسْمُ هُوَ الْمُسَمَّى لَكَانَ كُلُّ اسْمٍ مِنْهَا إِلَهًا وَ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعْنَى يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ بِهَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءِ وَ كُلُّهَا غَيْرُهُ يَا هِشَامُ الْخُبْزُ اسْمٌ لِلْمَأْكُولِ وَ الْمَاءُ اسْمٌ لِلْمَشْرُوبِ وَ التَّوْبُ اسْمٌ لِلْمَلْبُوسِ وَ النَّارُ اسْمٌ لِلْمَحْرُوقِ أَ فَهَمْتَ يَا هِشَامُ فَهَمًّا تَدْفَعُ بِهِ وَ تَنَاضِلُ بِهِ أَعْدَاءَنَا الْمُتَخَذِينَ مَعَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ غَيْرَهُ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ فَقَالَ نَفَعَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَ تَبَنَّنَكَ يَا هِشَامُ

قَالَ فَوَ اللَّهُ مَا قَهَرَنِي أَحَدٌ فِي التَّوْحِيدِ حَتَّى قُفْتُ مَقَامِي هَذَا .

I asked Imam al-Sadiq (*PBUH*) about the names of Allah, their derivations, and the root from which the word Allah is derived. The Imam (*PBUH*) replied, "O Hisham, the word Allah is derived from *Ilah* (deity), and deity refers to (an entity) that is to be worshipped. The name is different from what is named. Whoever worships the name instead of what it refers (*al-Ma'na*) has become a disbeliever and, in reality, has worshipped nothing (deserved of worship). Whoever worships the name along with its reference (jointly), he becomes a polytheist and worshipped two. Whoever worships what the name refers instead of the name itself, he, in reality, has maintained monotheism. O Hisham, did you grasp it?" I said, "Please enlighten me more." The Imam (*PBUH*) added, "Allah has ninety-nine names. If each name had been the same as what it refers, then each name would have been a god. However, the Essence of Allah is what is intended and is addressed by all these names, and all these names are other than He Himself. O Hisham, bread is a name for something eatable. Water is a name for something drinkable. Dress is a name for something wearable. Fire is a name of something that burns. O Hisham, did you fully grasp the point so you can

defend your belief and successfully contest against our opponents, who, accept things other than Him as their Lord along with the Lord of might and majesty?" I replied, "Yes." The Imam said, "O Hisham, may Allah benefit you thereby and grant you steadfastness." Hisham (the narrator) used to say, "I swear by Allah, no one has ever defeated me on the issue of the Oneness of Allah (*Tawhid*) since then."¹⁴

In some translations, the word "*Ma'na*" in the above Hadith has been translated to "meaning", which wrongly implies concept for Allah and negates the message of this and other Hadiths. On the other hand, the literal word of "*Ma'na*" according to lexicon is primarily "*Ma 'Uniya bih*" or "*Maqsud*", which means "what is intended or referred" and not always necessarily "meaning of a concept". The Essence of Allah is what is intended by the attributes, but He is neither the attributes, nor the meanings of the attributes. Attributes just give reference to their Creator and remind us of Him. They are the (means of) remembrance (*Dhikr*) of Allah.

An attribute is a quality (*Kayfiyya*) and Allah is the creator of the qualities. Allah has made quality as quality just as He created the properties of the things. Thus, there is no property, no quality, and no 'how' for His Essence. On the other hand, the heretical philosophical,

mystical (*Sufi*), and gnostical (*Erfani*) cults who mixed Islam with eastern and western theories maintain the belief that the qualities and attributes defuses (*Faydh*) from Allah. This implies that Allah effectively give birth to them or as they say, Allah issues them from Himself. Such a belief negates the Oneness of Allah and His Uniqueness, and makes the creation nothing but the Creator, or just His reduced version with similar properties and genes!

All the names and attributes of Allah refer to His actions and His creating such perceivable attributes. For instance, in the holy Quran, Allah praises Himself with the name "subtle" (*Latif*). In several pieces of Hadith, the Ahlul-Bayt (*PBUT*) provided several meaning for this term:

إِنَّمَا سَمِّيَنَاهُ لَطِيفًا لِخَلْقِ اللَّطِيفِ؛ أَنَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِخَلْقِ اللَّطِيفِ.¹⁵ Allah is called subtle because He is the Lord and the creator of subtle things among His creations.

لِعِلْمِهِ بِالشَّيْءِ اللَّطِيفِ.¹⁶ He is called subtle due to His knowledge about the very subtle things.

النَّقَازِ فِي الْأَشْيَاءِ.¹⁷ He is called subtle because His knowledge penetrates even the subtle things without moving into their place, such that He is not ignorant of His subtle creation as all the things are in His sovereignty.

- 4- **لَطْفَ عَنِ إِدْرَاكِ الْأَوْهَامِ**¹⁸ He is called subtle because He is absent from our understanding and is not imaginable, catchable, graspable even by subtle minds, otherwise He becomes limited, dividable, and a creation of the mind.
- 5- **لَطْفَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى عَنِ أَنْ يَدْرَكَ بِحَدٍّ أَوْ يَحْدَ**¹⁹ **بِوَصْفٍ** He is far subtle that be understood or reached by limits, properties, concepts, and descriptions used to define His creations.

Other attributes that belongs to Allah's has similar explanations. They are attributed to Allah not because the Essence of Allah takes such states but because Allah is their Lord. As another example, when we say "O the merciful", we mean "O Who in Whose hand is mercy." Mercy of Allah and His hand are the creations of Allah, and according to the traditions provided in the next section, they are the Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*). Therefore, mercy belongs to Allah but it is not Allah. Whoever considers Allah "absolute mercy", he worships an idol, i.e., the goddess of mercy just as the Buddhists and ancient Greek philosophers used to do.

The medium of Allah

We have numerous Hadiths stating that the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*) and his Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*) are the "face" of Allah, His "eye", His "tongue", and His "hand", etc. Rationally, these terms cannot not mean organs since Allah is unique and is

free from needs and parts. Allah is the creator of the face, eye, tongue and hand. Whatever is other than Allah falls into the category of His creation, including what is called the face of Allah, and Allah does not need any of His creation. Anywhere in the holy Quran that these words have been used for Allah, it actually refers to His chosen creation, not His Essence. It has been related from the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali (*PBUH*) having said that:

وَكُلُّ مَا فِي الذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْكَرِيمِ وَالْكَلَامِ الْقَدِيمِ مِنْ آيَةٍ تُذَكِّرُ فِيهَا الْعَيْنُ وَالْوَجْهُ وَالْيَدُ وَالْجَنْبُ فَالْمُرَادُ مِنْهَا الْوَلِيُّ .

"In any token in the Book of Allah where any of the words 'eye', 'face', 'hand', or 'side' is mentioned (for Allah) refers to *al-Wali*."²⁰

The word *al-Wali* is Allah's representative who is authorized by Him over His creations and act according to His command. In another Hadith, Marwan Ibn Sabbah narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (*PBUH*) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَنَا فَأَحْسَنَ خَلْقَنَا وَصَوَّرَنَا فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَنَا وَجَعَلَنَا عَيْنَهُ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَ لِسَانَهُ النَّاطِقَ فِي خَلْقِهِ وَ يَدَهُ الْمَبْسُوطَةَ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ بِالرَّأْفَةِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ وَ وَجْهَهُ الَّذِي يُؤْتَى مِنْهُ وَ بَابَهُ الَّذِي يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ وَ خَزَائِنَهُ فِي سَمَائِهِ وَ أَرْضِهِ بِنَا أَنْمَرَتِ الْأَشْجَارُ وَ أَيْنَعَتِ الثَّمَارُ وَ جَرَتِ الْأَنْهَارُ وَ بِنَا يَنْزِلُ غَيْثُ السَّمَاءِ وَ يَنْبُتُ عُشْبُ

الْأَرْضِ وَبِعِبَادَتِنَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ وَ لَوْ لَا نَحْنُ مَا عُبِدَ اللَّهُ.

“Verily Allah has created us and made our creation the best. And He shaped us and made our shape the best. He made us His eyes among His servants, His speaking tongue among His creation, His outstretched hands of mercy and grace over his servants, His face and direction towards which must be turned and arrived, His door that guides to Him, and His treasures in His heavens and His earth. By us the trees bore fruit, the fruits ripened, and the rivers flowed. By us the rain falls from the sky and the plants grow from the Earth. And by our worshipping Him Allah is worshipped, and if we were not (to expound the Allah’s religion as intended), Allah would not have been worshipped.”²¹

Being the eye of Allah (*‘Ain*) means that the grater soul of the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*) and his Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*), namely, their holy spirit (*Ruh al-Qudus*) are witness to mankind. Nonetheless, this does not mean Allah needs of this soul for watching over the creation. Allah has full knowledge and is witness over all His creation. However, Allah has chosen them to be also witnesses over their actions much the same as He has chosen angels to be witnesses over every action of the human being.

“*Wajh*” means face or direction. When we want to pay attention to someone, we direct ourselves toward his face. Face is

also the means of identification. In order to know Allah, one should direct himself toward His face who are the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*) and his Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*). They are the means of remembrance and addressing Allah, and only through them one can properly recognize Him. The meaning of the word “*al-Hujja*” (the Proof of Allah) refers to the same fact. Imam Hasan al-Askari (*PBUH*) narrates from his fathers that Imam al-Ridha (*PBUH*) said:

يُعْرَفُ بِالْآيَاتِ وَ يُنْبِئُ بِالْعَلَامَاتِ.

“Allah is recognized by the signs and is proven by the indications.”²²

The greater the sign, the greater the recognition by recalling Allah as its creator and regarding His Essence pure from having their attributes. A person who has recognized the greatest sign of Allah (i.e., the Prophet (*PBUH&HF*) and his Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*)) and still discern such a great sign as a creation, has attained the purest recognition (*Ma’rifat al-Tanzih*) of Allah.

Similarly, their being the tongue of Allah (*Lisan*) clearly means that Allah speaks to mankind through them. They inform people of Allah’s orders and commandments, explain His message, and protect His religion.

As for them being the outstretched hand (*Yad*) of Allah in mercy means that the mercy of Allah reaches to His creation

only through them. The also refers to power. Allah shows His power through them, and their actions evidently remind the existence of Allah as their creator and the creator of their power. The demonstrate power after weakness and weekness after power as an indication that they are created and administrated by their Creator. Certainly, Allah does not need anyone to work for Him, and He has no associate and no helper. Although not impossible, His glory is exalted to do simple jobs in person, and He wants to show and prove Himself to people through the sayings and actions of some of His creation. Thus, He has created some servants and angels and has assigned them different duties, while He has full control above them. Since their life and all their power belongs to Him, they should not be called His aids or associates in His affairs, but they are called His agents. Allah has not associated anyone in His lordship and has no aid or helper. He attributed the actions of His agents to Himself, because He has ordered them of those actions and because He knows that they exactly follow His commands, and remind people of Him and guide to Him by the sayings and actions that He inspires them to do.

In another Hadith, Abi Basir narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (PBUH) that the Commander of the Believers (PBUH) said:

أَنَا قَائِدُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَ أَنَا حَبْلُ اللَّهِ الْمَتِينُ وَ أَنَا
عُرْوَةُ اللَّهِ الْوُثْقَى وَ كَلِمَةُ التَّقْوَى وَ أَنَا عَيْنُ اللَّهِ وَ لِسَانُهُ
الصَّادِقُ وَ يَدُهُ وَ أَنَا جَنْبُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي يَقُولُ «أَنْ تَقُولَ
نَفْسُ يَا حَسْرَتِي عَلَى مَا فَرَطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ» وَ أَنَا يَدُ
اللَّهِ الْمُسْتَوْطِئَةَ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ بِالرَّحْمَةِ وَ الْمَغْفِرَةِ وَ أَنَا
بَابُ حِطَّةٍ مَنْ عَرَفَنِي وَ عَرَفَ حَقِّي فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبِّي
لَأَنِّي وَصِيُّ نَبِيِّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَ حُجَّتُهُ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ لَا يُنْكِرُ
هَذَا إِلَّا رَادًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَ رَسُولِهِ.

“I am the leader of the believers towards Paradise. I am the strong rope of Allah, His most trustworthy handhold, and the word of *Taqwa*. I am the eye of Allah, His truthful tongue, and His hand. I am the side of Allah about whom (Allah) states: ‘Lest the soul should (then) say: ‘Ah! Woe onto me that I abused and neglected (my duties towards) the side of Allah (39:56).’ I am the outstretched hand of Allah in mercy over His creation, and I am the door of forgiveness. Whoever recognizes me and my rights, has indeed recognized His Lord (who authorized me), because I am the executor (*Wasi*) of His prophet on His earth and His proof over His creation. No one would deny this but he who has denied Allah and His Messenger.”²³

“Side” is used to express extreme nearness. One’s side is the closest thing to an individual. Allah is the creator of place and thus He does not take place, and consequently, physical near to Him

is meaningless. The Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali (*PBUH*) is called the “side” of Allah because he became “close” to Him through obedience so much so that he became the criterion of nearness to Allah and His recognition. In this manner, nearness to Imam Ali (*PBUH*) indicates nearness to Allah, neglecting his right indicates neglecting Allah’s right, forsaking him indicates forsaking Allah, and recognizing him in one’s heart indicates recognizing Allah. In other words, Allah has created a system of agents and defined their authorities according to His will. *Recognizing Allah’s system and rules is a strict requirement for recognizing Allah and His absolute rights over His creation.*

As we discussed, the name of Allah is Allah’s creation, and consists of a literal word (*Lafzhi*) as well as a real entity (*Takwini*) associated to it. The latter acts by leave of Allah when the former called upon. According to several Hadiths, the best names of Allah are the Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*), and thus, His best names refer to real entities. In one Hadith, the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali (*PBUH*) said:

أَنَا أَسْمَاءُ اللَّهِ الْحُسْنَى وَ أَمْثَالُهُ الْعُلَيَّا وَ آيَاتُهُ الْكُبْرَى.

“I am the best names of Allah, His supreme symbols or exemplars (of His attributes), and His greatest signs.”²⁴

Nothing is similar (*Mithl*) to the Essence of Allah, but He has created exemplars or symbols (*Mathal*) that are the place of His attributes. Allah states in holy Quran:

وَ لَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.

To Him belongs the supreme exemplar (of His attributes) in the heavens and the earth. (30:27)

وَ لِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَ ذُرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ.

And for Allah are the best names, thus call upon Him by them. And leave (to Him) those who disbelieve in His (authorized) names. They will soon be requited for what they do. (7:180)

On the commentary of the latter token, Imam al-Sadiq (*PBUH*) said:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ لِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا قَالَ نَحْنُ وَ اللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى الَّتِي لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ عَمَلًا إِلَّا بِمَعْرِفَتِنَا.

“By Allah! We are the best names of Allah that Allah shall not accept any deed from anyone except through our recognition (*Ma’rifat*).”²⁵

There are numerous Hadiths with references to the tokens of the holy Quran which prove beyond doubt that believing in the authority of Ahl al-Bait (*PBUT*) and rejecting all man-made

authorities in the domain of religion is required for faith. Therefore, not only Allah's authorized agents should be approached because they act as the path and medium for attaining the pleasure of Allah and learning His religion, but also recognizing them as His exclusive authorities and as the only paths of Allah, believing in the rights of their guardianship (*al-Wayala*), and having absolute obedience to them are also required for salvation. One should recognize this exclusive medium and its rights so that this medium would benefit him by leave of Allah. More interestingly, it is related to Imam Ridha (*PBUH*) having said:

إِذَا نَزَلَتْ بِكُمْ شِدَّةٌ فَاسْتَعِينُوا بِنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ
وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا.

“When a hardship befalls you, seek Allah's help through us, and this is the saying of the Lord of might and majesty: ‘And for Allah are the best names, thus call upon Him by them.’ (7:180)”²⁶

Conclusion

In this article, we provided some evidence to show that the names of Allah are Allah's best creations, and consist of the literal names (*Lafdhi*) as well as real entities (*Takwini*) authorized by Allah to act as medium of calling Him and the medium for His created mercy and power. The attributes and the

states of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, mercy, wrath, sadness, etc., which are all parts of His created will, manifest in His best servants and do not penetrate His Essence. Allah has also named them as His face, eye, hand, and side, has made all of these functionalities necessary for the physical and spiritual life of His creation. In line with enforcing this will on the nature of creation (*Takwin*), Allah has set corresponding religious rules (*Tashri'*) and commanded people through His messengers that they must recognize Allah's system and the authority of His agents before Allah accept their other beliefs and deeds.

Endnotes

¹ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 144, Hadith 6; *al-Tawhid*, p. 168, Hadith 2.

² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 38, p. 66, Hadith 6, quoted from the *Tafsir* of Imam Hasan al-Askari (*PBUH*).

³ *Musnad*, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, vol. 3, Musnad of Jabir Ibn Abdillah, Hadith Amro Ibn Shaas al-Aslami; *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, the book of *Manaqib*, Ch. 20, Hadith 14736; *Kanz al-Ummal*, vol. 13, the Virtues of Ali (*PBUH*), Hadith 36445; Others books including *Tarikh*, al-Bukhari, *al-Mustadrak Ala al-Sahihain*, al-Hakim, etc.

⁴ This Hadith has been reported by many Bakri traditionists. See for instance: *al-Mustadrak Ala al-Sahihain*, al-Hakim, vol. 3, p. 154; *Fadha'il al-Sahaba*, Abu Nu'aim; *Kanz al-Ummal*, vol. 12, the complement on Fatima (*PBUH*), Hadith 34237 & 34238. For a Shi'i narration of this Hadith, see *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 43, p. 21, Hadith 12.

⁵ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 87, Hadith 1.

⁶ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 87, Hadith 3.

⁷ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 140, Hadith 6; Simillar Hadiths exist in: *Nahj al-Balagha*, Sermon 1; *al-Tawhid*, pp 34-35, Hadith 2; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 227, Hadith 3, p. 247, Hadith 5, p. 253, Hadith 6, p. 285, Hadith 17.

⁸ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 139, Hadith 5.

⁹ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 153, Hadith 1, cited from *al-Ihtijaj*.

¹⁰ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 113, Hadith 3.

¹¹ Similar to this phrase has been related from Imam al-Ridha in another Hadith: «وَمَنْ غَيَّبَهُ فَقَدْ غَايَاهُ» which means: "whoever sets a goal for Allah, he has set a common limit between Him and His creation. c.f., *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 228, Hadith 3, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

¹² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 4, p. 160, Hadith 5, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

¹³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 10, p. 312, Hadith 1, cited from *Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (PBUH)*.

¹⁴ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 114, Hadith 2.

¹⁵ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 3, p. 194.

¹⁶ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 3, p. 194.

¹⁷ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 122, Hadith 1.

¹⁸ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 83, p. 346.

¹⁹ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 122, Hadith 1.

²⁰ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 25, p. 173, quoted from *Mashariq al-Anwar*.

²¹ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 144, Hadith 5.

²² *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 3, p. 297, Hadith 23, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

²³ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 24, p. 198, Hadith 27, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

²⁴ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 53, p. 47, Hadith 20, cited from *Muntakhab al-Basa'ir*.

²⁵ *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 143, Hadith 4.

²⁶ *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 91, p. 5, Hadith 7, cited from *Tafsir Ayyashi*.

NATURE-BASED RELIGION

(the innate nature of religion in Islamic theology)

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Abstract: *Fitrah is a specific state of initiation and is applied to the issues which are present at the time of the first creation of human beings and are not acquired. The claim of the present article is to show Islamic principles in three aspects of belief, act, and ethics are rooted in the first creation of human being and are inborn.*

Key words: *Fitrah, Tinat, logic, belief, act, morality, Islam, religion, Tuhid*

Introduction

Fitrah فطرت is derived from Fitr فطر meaning beginning and fitrah is a special kind of beginning.¹ The innate issues (Fitri) are those affairs which are present at the time of **first creation** of human beings and human beings by

entering this world bring them with themselves. In other words, they are not acquirable, although experience and attempt can have a great role in flourishing Fitrah.

Here we offer that Islam is a religion which is inborn, innate which means that the principles and basis of Islam i.e.

beliefs, actions, ethics are all traced back to the first creation of human beings and they are not subjects which can be attained in all aspects.

This claim is not only specific to the last religion i.e. Islam, but all holy religions as they are seething from the same source, have this feature in common: the holy Prophets are sent by God, the One and the Only One to people. Therefore, their teachings should be identical and no difference among them is acceptable. This point is clearer in the realm of beliefs which includes reports about realities in comparison to the other sections of religion. The only difference among religions regarding this point is the fact that a part of truth has been given to the last Prophet and not the other prophets. But in Sharia شريعة (the religious laws), the differences may result from time and place difference. For example, as the religion of Prophet is the Final religion, its rules and regulations are easier than rules and regulations explained by other prophets.

Due to the distortions and changes, religions have been going through different nations and some discrepancies broke up among these religions. The holy Quran says, “

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعَثْنَا فِيهِمْ

“The only religion with Allah is Islam (submission). Those to whom the Book

was given disagreed among themselves only after knowledge had been given to them being insolent among themselves.” (3:19)

This verse introduces the religion of all prophets was “Islam” and asserts that the differences among followers of holy religions is the consequence of sins and distortions. In this verse, this Single religion is called Islam. In some other verses also we can see this naming. For example, in the following verse, Ibrahim (p.b.u.h.) has been named as a Muslim and “Hanif” (حنيف):

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا
مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“No, Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Nazarene. He was of pure faith, a submitter (Muslim). He was never of the idolaters.” (3:67)

Islam means to surrender: surrender in heart and in practice. But to surrender, a guideline is needed. Whatever prophets bring for people, i.e. religion, is the process to this surrender; a surrender in heart in which beliefs are compatible with truth and a practical surrender by putting religious rules into practice: **““The only religion with Allah is Islam (submission).”**

حنيف “Hanif” is derived from a root means interested in something, having tendency towards something; it means a straight path and also an individual who

becomes interested in the straight path or is avoiding a distorted religion. The followers of Islam are called Hanif. Because they become interested in the straight religion.

Universality of Fitrah

In traditions, Fitrah is not an attribute specifically given to some human beings; in fact, all human beings enjoy fitrah and Fitrah is born with them. It is narrated from Prophet of Islam that: “

ما من نفس تولد الا على الفطره

*Every soul is created while he has fitrah.*²

Imam ‘Alī (a.s.) said regarding the universality of Fitrah:

ان الله عزوجل خلق الناس كلهم على الفطره التي فطرهم عليها

From the verse 30 of surah Rome we can infer the universality of fitrah; because the word “ al-nas” (الناس) , is famous because of its general application. Therefore, all human beings have specific fitrah and creation which is endowed to them by God. Even thought, Fitrah or fitrah-bound affairs are divided into common fitrah shared by all human beings and specific fitrah given to some human beings or to a group of human beings. In other words, the truth that all human beings have fitrah does not reject this idea that

human beings can have different fitrah. It means that all can have common fitrah or can have common fitrah and specific fitrah together. While discussing fitrah, it should be clarified that we are speaking about common or specific fitrah.

Beliefs Inborn-Base:

The holy Quran said about beliefs which is inborn and innate that,

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Therefore set your face to the religion purely, the upright creation upon which He originated people. There is no changing of the creation of Allah. This is the valuable religion, although most people do not know?” (30: 30)

This verse invites his addressee to the straight path and named it as a religion upon which He originated people; fitrah which human beings are created with and is not changeable. At the end, He said an upright religion is the one which is upon fitrah.

In traditions, fitrah and Hanif have the same meaning and in their interpretations, the gnosis of God and Unity of God have been mentioned. From the holy Prophet of Islam, we have received that “*Each baby is born with fitrah and the meaning of fitrah is*

knowing the fact that God is his/her creator” and the verse 25 of surah Luqmān asserted this.

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“If you ask them: 'Who has created the heavens and the earth? ' They will reply: 'Allah. ' Say: 'Praise belongs to Allah! ' But most of them do not have knowledge.”(31:25)”³

The true religion is the one which is based on Fitrah, a religion which its base, i.e. the gnosis of God, is present in fitrah and creation of human beings and this fitrah is not changeable.

In traditions, the subject of the Unity of God is also mentioned as a part of fitrah⁴; Because the gnosis upon which human beings is originated includes the Unity of God and human beings know The One and Only God in their nature.

According to the verses and traditions, this gnosis traces back to pre-world-creation and God gathered all human beings in a world or worlds before this world; he introduces Himself to them directly and after this recognition, they confessed to His being God. This recognition has remained in their soul and they has been entering the world by this recognition.

1. The innateness of this recognition “in religious practices and worships:

The gnosis of God and the unity of God which are the foundation of Islam, are the base of all human beings belief. Besides this belief, people also have practical fitrah. In traditions from Prophet, pray and worship of God are examples of Fitrah: الصلاة و هي الفطرة⁵

Human beings, after knowing God and believing in Him, by the help of Fitrah realize that they must worship their God; even though they do not know the way and steps of this worship. Due to this when they face someone who claims to be a prophet and a messenger, pay attention to his words and if he could prove rightness of his words, they can ask him to teach them how to worship. Therefore, worship is something rooted in our nature and is of fitrah-demanded subjects; human beings through fitrah can realize the necessity of worshipping the previously proved God.

2. In some traditions from Prophet, some issues related to cleansing like clipping nails, shortening beard or brushing have been mentioned as fitrah-oriented issues.⁶

These issues are of fitrah-bound reasons, because human beings by their fitrah can understand goodness of cleansing. In some traditions, it is narrated from Prophet who counted some actions like Friday major ablution, shortening beard, keeping stubble, etc. and some religious practices as Zakat in Islam’s Fitrah.⁷

Islam-Fitrah refers to those religious rules and practices which are not separable from Islam and are of permanent features of Islam, in a way that they are signs of a Muslim.

It is quoted from the wife of Uthman ibn Maz'un who complained of her husband to Prophet that my husband continuously prays and fast and does not pay attention to his family. The holy Prophet got sad and told Uthman,

لم يرسلنى الله تعالى بالرهبانيه و لكن بعثنى بالحنيفيه
السهله السمحه ... فمن احب فطرته فمن أحب
فطرته فليستن بسنتى ومن سنتى النكاح.⁸

This tradition and similar traditions introduce a simple religion, fitrah of Prophet or fitrah of religion of Prophet.

In fact, the base of Islam religion, i.e. the gnosis of God, the Unity of God and also worshipping God, purity of soul and body are of fitrah issues and human beings according to their first creation and via fitrah-reason is able to understand them. The fitrah in terms of actions and beliefs (regarding Islam and mankind) are the same, because the unity, worship and purity are of Islamic fitrah and of human beings fitrah.

The innate knowledge about ethics

In addition to beliefs and actions, human beings enjoy ethics fitrah. Human beings can differ bad from good by his fitrah reason and know that politeness and

honesty, justice and thanking are praiseworthy and lie, injustice and ingratitude are blameworthy. The holy Prophet said regarding reason:

فيقع فى قلب هذا الانسان نور، فيفهم الفريضة و
السنته و الجيد و الردى، الا و مثل العقل فى القلب
كمثل السراج فى وسط البيت⁹

In this tradition, it is asserted that human beings by Fitrah reason and without learning know what is good and what is bad.

Imam Sadiq said, “*The servants of God recognize good actions from bad actions through reason.*”¹⁰

Imam ‘Alī said, “*Good temper is the fruit of reason.*”¹¹ And “*politeness in human beings is similar to a tree which its roots is reason*”.¹² And “*the fruit of reason is telling truth.*”¹³

In traditions, there are references to the nature-base of ethical virtues. Some of these traditions are about public and some for special ones. For example, from the holy Prophet, it is quoted that:

جلبت القلوب على حب من احسن اليها و بغض من
اساء اليها¹⁴

Imam Sadiq said,

جلبت القلوب على حب من ينفعها و بغض من
اضرربها¹⁵

These traditions reveal that all human beings accept some actions and do not accept some other actions. But concerning special unshared-Fitrah,

following two traditions from Prophet are significant.

ما جبل ولى الله الا على السخاء

يطبع المومن على كل خلق ليس الخيانه و الكذب

Therefore, some features belong to a specific group of people. These affairs can be determined for them based on the results of previous souls of them (before entering this world.) or as the prior knowledge of God is that he/she has tendency towards religion, this tendency is given to his nature. But what is obvious is that fitrah does not fade will power of human beings and human beings, even though generosity is wired in his fitrah, can be stingy and vice versa. In addition to it, human beings by practice can strengthen or weaken some fitrah-bound tendencies in themselves.

Religion and Islam Are Rooted in Nature

As we have seen in verse 30, Surah Rome, religion is counted as a fitrah-oriented issue. In traditions, sometimes Islam is counted as the example of fitrah. For example, when Abdullah ibn Sinan asked imam Sadiq about the interpretation of Fitrah verse and added “ما تلك الفطرة” (what is fitrah?), imam answered,

هى الاسلام

“It is the very Islam”¹⁶

In a tradition from Prophet we have read that the meaning of Fitrah in the verse fitrah is the religion of God.¹⁷

In interpretation of these traditions, we should say that religion includes beliefs, practices and ethics; therefore, when we say religion is fitrah-based, we mean it refers to innateness of these three aspects. In some traditions, which introduce Islam nature-bound, they undoubtedly refer to one of these three aspects; for example, in that tradition quoted by Abdullah Sinan, after interpreting fitrah as Islam, we read that:¹⁸

فطرحهم الله حين احد ميثاقهم على التوحيد

Conclusion

We have seen that human beings have fitrah. This fitrah is in three axis of beliefs, practices, and ethics and the meaning of Islam and religion being-based in nature is due to innateness of some beliefs, practices and ethical points in Islam religion.

Fitrah in some of these fitrah-oriented affairs means enjoying some insights and in some others means tendencies. The root of fitrah-oriented teachings in first part is teachings of God in the

world before this world and the root of the fitrah-oriented teachings is nature.

Endnotes:

¹ Ibn Fares, Bi Ta, vol.4, p.510, ibn Manzor, 1410, vol.5, p.56

² Hindi, 1397 AH. Vol.4, p.395

³ Usul Kafi, vol.2, p.12

⁴ Ibid. vol.2,p.12

⁵ Al-Mojam al-Kabir, Tabarani, vol.11, p.272

⁶ Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol.3, p.6; Bihar al-Anwar, vol.76, p.68

⁷ Kanzul Ummal, vol.7, p.763; Mostadrik al-Vasail, vol.7, p.12

⁸ Kafi, Kodayni, vol.5, p.494

⁹ Bihar al-Anwar, vol.1, p.99

¹⁰ Usul Kafi, vol.1, p.29

¹¹ Ghurar al-Hikam, vol.1, p.339, no.1280

¹² Ibid, vol.2,p.109,no.2004

¹³ Ibid, vol.3,p.333,no.4643

¹⁴ Kafi, vol.4,p.381

¹⁵ Ibid, vol.8, p.152

¹⁶ Kulayni, ibid, vol.4,p.12

¹⁷ Siyuti, vol.5,p.155

¹⁸ Kulayni, ibid: vol.2, p.12

Mahdaviyat and God's Sunnah in Quran

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Abstract: *The author of the present article deals with sunnah of God, namely istikhlaf, Imtihan, Tamhis, istidraj, istidraj, and I'mla according to Quran and traditions, then their relationship with Mahdaviyat, disappearance and reappearance have been depicted.*

Keywords: *Imam Mahdi, Mahdaviyat verses/Mahdaviyat, Quran authenticity, Quran, God's Sunnah/ Istikhlaf/ Imtihan and Tamhis/ Istidraj and Imla*

Introduction

One of the issues which all Muslims are agreed upon is "prior to the day of doom, one of the offspring of the last Prophet will rise and will be a ruler over the world. He is going to full the earth with justice after it is replete with cruelty and injustice." The belief in this

promised future maker in Islamic culture is called as "Mahdivisim" .

Awaiting the revelation of Promised Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) is of the most significant issues in Islam and is regarded as the essentialities of religion and the infallible imams always invited people to this understanding. In traditions

awaiting his reappearance is mentioned as the paramount of worships.

The holy Prophet stated,

افضل العبادۃ انتظار الفرج¹.

“The best of worship is waiting for revelation [of him].”

Only those can benefit from this blessing that enjoy comprehensive and deep knowledge about Imam and his unseen situation and like others not to be superficial and shallow minded, which in this case they would be the best of all times; as imam Sajjād stated:

يا أباخالد، إنَّ اهل زمان غيبة القائلين بإمامته و المنتظرين لظهوره أفضل من أهل كلِّ زمان²

“Oh Aba-Khalid, the people of the time of that Imam of disappearance who believe in his imamate and are waiting for his reappearance are superior to the people of all other time.”

In various traditions from infallible imams, it is said waiting for his reappearance is obligatory. As an example from imam Jawad, it has been narrated that he said,

إنَّ القائم مَنَّا هو المهدي الَّذي يجب ان ينتظر في غيبته³

“Surely the one who will rise from among us is Mahdi for whom waiting in the time of his disappearance is obligatory.”

Being obligatory in the words of imam Jawad points to the essentiality of being awaited at the time of his hidden existence and it also brings a duty which is it is necessary to train faithful and honest individuals at the time of sedition and deviation. Holding this belief, human beings can stay stable in front of hardship, adversities and chaos of the time and do not step out of the right path, pass this test of God successfully, and get ready to accept his leadership at that promised time.

We should bear in our mind that the time of imam’s reappearance is dependent on the Will of God; as Imam asserted this himself:

فلا ظهور إلا بإذن الله⁴

“Reappearance [of me] is only dependent on the Permission of God.”

But what prepares the conditions of reappearance is people preparation and desire and the aim of God’s tests is to reach people to this preparation. Therefore, Shia at the time of His disappearance should place himself in the path of Ahlul Bayt and acquire necessary knowledge to get to this preparation.

The reappearance of imam Zaman (p.b.u.h.) is Sunnah of God which is rooted in Quran. To review this Sunnah,

we should refer to some Qurānic points explained by infallibles and commentators. God in Quran in various verses points to the final triumph of Right over Wrong all around the world. In these verses, these concepts have been highlighted:

Finally God will give the world – which is in fact for Him and His friends- to the hands of faithfuls and virtues servants of Him and the earth will be for those best ones who were oppressed in past by oppressors.

Now we refer to the verses including this meaning.

1.1. First verse

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

We have written in the Psalms, after the Remembrance: 'The righteous among My worshipers shall inherit the earth. (21:105)

The issue of rulership of benefactors on the earth is a promise that God has given to pious people in His Books. It shows that this decree is an eternal decree and is essential for human community which without it human community will not reach its perfection.

Traditions of Amme عامه and Khasse خاص also assert this point and mention the time of his reappearance as the perfection time and golden time, and the

final inheritors of the world are his followers.

In some traditions clearly this verse has been interpreted as imam Mahdi and his friends uprising. Imam Baqir in the interpretation of this verse said,

هُم أصحاب المهدي من آخر الزمان⁵

“These – pious servants of God- are the companions of imam Mahdi at the end of the time.”

Close to this meaning is mentioned in the tradition books from imam Baqir and imam Sadiq who said,

«هم القائم و أصحابه»⁶.

Another proof is the well-known tradition narrated by Shia and Sunni from Prophet who said,

لَوْ لَمْ يَبْقَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا يَوْمٌ لَطَوَّلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ عَتْرَتِي اسْمُهُ اسْمِي يَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَعَدْلًا كَمَا مَلَأْتُ ظِلْمًا وَجَوْرًا⁷

“If it remains only a day of the lifetime of the world, God will extend it to be so long that a man from my offspring whose name is similar to mine be raised to spread justice all over the world as it used to be depleted with oppression and injustice.”

In fact such a belief shows the opinion of Islam to the future of human beings. Human beings are always worried about their future and are terrified of facing a bitter end. Different schools of thoughts

eventually have to answer this. A group of them introduces the end of human beings dark and deadly, they held a pessimistic stance; but another group takes an optimistic stance towards the end of the human beings and Islam is among this group.

In another tradition he said,

هذه الأُمَّة مرحومة فمنها نبيها و منها مهديها. بنا فتح هذا الأمر و بنا يختم و لنا ملك مؤجل و ليس بعد ملك لامنا اهل العاقبة للمتقين⁸

“This nation, is the nation of forgiven one, which its Prophet is from it and his Mahdi is from it. This starts from us and will end by us. There is a rulership for us which will form in future and after our rulership, there would be no other rulership. Because we belong to the end and end is for the pious ones.”

1.2. The second verse

إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَ الْعَاقِبَةَ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“Moses said to his nation: 'Seek help from Allah and be patient. The earth belongs to Allah; He gives it as a heritage to whom He chooses amongst His worshipers. The outcome is for the cautious.” (7:28)

Imam Baqir said in this regard,

أنا و أهل بيتي الَّذِينَ أَوْرَثْنَا اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ وَ نحن المتقون، وَ الْأَرْضُ كُلُّهَا لَنَا... حَتَّى يَظْهَرَ الْقَائِمُ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي بِالسَّيْفِ، فَيَحْزُوهَا⁹

“My family and I are the ones whom God leave the earth to us and we are pious. All the earth is for us... till Qaim (imam Mahdi) from us rises with a sword and occupy the earth.”

1.3. The third verse

The verse 5 of surah Qisas refers to this fact that the Will of God is “the oppressed ones become imams and inheritors of the earth”:

و نريد أن نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ نجعلهم ائمة و نجعلهم الوارثين».

“But We wanted to be gracious to those abased in the land, and to make them leaders and inheritors”

This verse in Quran is preceded by the story of Bani Israel but as Imam Ali explained in his interpretation, it refers to Ahlul Bayt and their followers:

هم آل محمد عليهم السلام يبعث الله مهديهم بعد جهدهم فيعزهم و يدلّ عدوهم¹⁰.

“The oppressed one in this verse are the family of Mohammad whom God will appoint Mahdi from them after hardship and then he will bring honor to them and humiliate their enemies.”

In the book of Amme also it is narrated from Imam Ali who said, "This verse has been sent down about us."

1.4. The fourth verse

God in surah noor, verse 55 asserts that appointing faithful ones of Muslim to govern the world will happen:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لِيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفْنَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلِيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلِيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا

"Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good works that He will indeed make them successors in the land as He made those who were before them successors, and that He will indeed establish their religion for them; that which He has approved for them, and will exchange safety for them after their fear. They worship Me and associate nothing with Me. After that, those who disbelieve are the impious."

Successorship means to be someone's substitute for some reasons; for example absence or death. In this situation, a second person replaces the former one or due to the former one disability or the honor and dignity of the second person. In the latter meaning, God gives successorship to His Friends on the earth. As God says in verse 26 surah saad,

يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ

"(We said): 'David, We have made you a caliph in the earth. Judge with justice among people and do not yield to your own preference in case it should lead you from the Path of Allah. Surely, a terrible punishment awaits those who stray from the Path of Allah, because they forget the Day of Reckoning.'" (38: 26)

God even before of Creation talked about this successorship where He said,

وَ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً¹³

"When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am placing on the earth a caliph, ' they replied: 'Will You put there who corrupts and sheds blood, when we exalt Your praises and sanctify You? ' He said: 'I know what you do not know."

It means that Hikmah (reason) of successorship is prior to Hikmah of Creation and if God creates a thing while there is no Caliph in the earth, He exposes that creature to being ruined but this is against Hikmah of God. God is Wise and never does a vain aimless Act.

Therefore, the earth would not exist without a caliph and caliphate will

continue till the Day of Doom. In tradition books by different wordings, it is narrated from infallibles that

و إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لَا تَخْلُوا مِنْ حِجَّةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى خَلْقِهِ فِي كُلِّ عَصْرٍ وَأَوَانٍ¹⁴.

“The earth will not remain without presence of a proof of God to people, [always His proof exists] in all time and all era.”

Imam Sajjad (a.s.) said in its interpretation:

هُمَ وَ اللَّهُ شِيعَتُنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ، يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ بِهِمْ عَلَى يَدَيْ رَجُلٍ مِنَّا وَ هُوَ مَهْدَى هَذِهِ الْأُئِمَّةِ¹⁵

“By God, they are Shia (followers) of us, Ahlul Bayt. God will do this by a hand of a man from us, and he is Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) of this nation.”

Aba-Basir asked Imam Sadiq about the meaning of this verse, imam Answered,

نَزَلَتْ فِي الْقَائِمِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ¹⁶

Imam Sadiq introduced imam Mahdi(p.b.u.h.) and his companions in this verse ***“those who are promised to inherit this world.”*** From this verse, it can be realized that God gives glad tidings of three things to a group of Muslims who have Faith and do good:

- 1.successorship and ruling over this world
2. spreading the right belief everywhere

3.destroying all causes of fear and insecurity¹⁷

But regarding the nature of this group, there are different ideas among commentators: some of them specifically linked it to companions of the Prophet who came into power at the time of Prophet after the victory of Islam. Some commentators of Amme know the era of the next four caliphs after Prophet to be the meaning of the verse. And some believe this promise has been given to all Muslims who have this attribute. And a group who says it refers to the rulership of Imam Mahdi, as frequently narrated news talked about his reappearance which will overcome the earth with justice after it was surrounded by cruelty and oppression.

From the verse, we can understand that doubtlessly this verse is about some members of nation (because of the word «وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ (مِنْ)» in the sentence , و عملوا الصَّالِحَاتِ» it means this promise is only given to those who have faith and also do good deeds.

And there is no reason neither in the wording nor logical-wise to say that it refers to companions of Prophet or the whole nation. Likewise in the verse «وَ لِيُمْكِنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ لِيُمْكِنَنَّ» the word لِيُمْكِنَنَّ refers to what is practiced in the society and no hindrance can stop its effect, no shed can put a barrier in front. In fact a righteous society in all senses

will be built. Such a society with these features, from the prophethood of Muhammad till now has not been established yet. In addition to it, Muslims and faithfuls could not gain complete power on the earth. Therefore, a day should come when God fulfills His promise; as God never breaks His promise.¹⁸

Contemplating on these verses and referring to Islamic news and traditions which some examples have been mentioned, we conclude that fulfilment of these promises can happen at the time of imam Mahdi's rulership. Faithful ones rulership over cruel ones is the stable sunnah of God in all nations. As successorship of friends of God is not only related to future and in the past we can find some examples for, God has mentioned the general principles regarding successorship inside the story of previous nations. For example, at the time of Noah, when his enemies were destroyed, he and his followers inherit the earth. They lived a long life on earth and established cities and states on it.

وَ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ... فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَانجَيْنَاهُ وَ
الَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَ اغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أَنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ

***“We sent forth Noah to his nation ...
(But) they belied him, so We saved him
and those who were with him in the
Ark, and We drowned those who belied***

Our verses. Surely, they were a blind nation.”

The story of Noah has been mentioned in Quran in surah Hood, Anbiya, Momenoon, and Shoara. At the time of Moses, the promise of God has been fulfilled. Pharaoh and Haman and their troops after some years of rebel were humiliated and the nation of Moses inherited Moses' throne.

تَتْلُوا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَبَأِ مُوسَىٰ وَ فِرْعَوْنَ... وَ نُرِيدُ أَنْ
نَمُنَّ عَلَىٰ الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعَفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ نَجْعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً
وَ نَجْعَلُهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ¹⁹

***“We shall in truth recite to you some of
the news of Moses and Pharaoh...But
We wanted to be gracious to those
abased in the land, and to make them
leaders and inheritors.”***

The story of other prophets and their nations like Thamoud, Hud, Salih and Ad are mentioned in verses of holy Quran, for example in surah Yunes verses 71-75, Hud 25-96, Shoara 65-190, Anbiya 69-90, Qamar 8-46. This is the asserted Will of God, as it happened for the previous nations, it will happen for this nation as well; as the Prophet said,

لَتُرْكَبَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ شِدْرًا بَشِيرًا وَ ذَرَاعًا
بِذْرَاعِ²⁰

***“Whatever had happened for the
previous nations will happen exactly for***

our nation, you will tread in the way they put their feet in.”

But the time and place of it depends on God’s decision and no one is aware except God.

It is important to notice Quranic approach is to mention general laws and not detailed examples. Explanations of details are assigned to the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt. There are numerous examples in Quran in which instead of detailed and extended explanation, a succinct point has been said. For example the verse

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

Quran in this verse has the same method in explaining the principles of following infallibles. The principle of obedience of Vali is directly mentioned in Quran, but the tangible examples of vali should be pictured by Prophet.²¹

God used the same method in Quran to talk about “rulership of righteous ones”. In Quranic expression, overthrowing Rebellious unbelievers and empowering righteous ones is called “istikhlaf” استخلاف (i.e. substitution). The examples of it has been clarified by Prophet.

As we have seen, istikhlaf has been happened for previous nations but the rulership of righteous ones did not last, but in the nation of Prophet, by reappearance of Imam Mahdi, it will continue to the day of doom and in the

period of Rajat it will continue. The rulership of righteous ones will extend till the resurrection day and unfaithful and corrupt ones will not find any opportunity of ruling.

A general look at the verses

1. The mentioned verses never picture a subject-based or specific plan for a nation, but depict a general law true for all ages and centuries and for all nations; because “وعد الله” is certain and definite.

2. The rulership of Bani Israel and collapse of Pharaoh’s government are examples of fulfillment of God’s Providence. The rulership of Prophet and the uprising of his son Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) are the perfect examples of fulfillment of God’s Providence.

3. The expression of “الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَ” عملوا الصالحات” emphasizes on this point that faith and good deeds to enjoy God’s promises are essential, as in “العاقبة للمتقين” and “عبادى الصالحون” these points are obvious.

4. The word “منكم” in “وعد الله الذين آمنوا” in “من قبلهم” and “منكم و عملوا الصالحات” are emphasizing on this point that the substitution which has happened in previous nations will happen in this nation as well.

5. The great rulership of imam Mahdi is the beginning of the global ruling of righteous people on the earth, and puts an end to all injustice and chaos.

Test of God and purification in Quran

Test of God is one of the unchangeable and permanent Sunnah of God. The system of the world is a system of growth and perfection-oriented way. All living creatures are on the way of getting to perfection. Therefore, all people from infallibles to others, according to this general rule, should be tested to reveal their dormant talents. As Quran said:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يَبْرُكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ

“Do people think that they are left alone by saying: ‘We are believers,’ and will not be tried?” (29:2)

From Quranic verses, it can be realized that difficulties and problems and religious duties are all test of God to differentiate (Tamhis) تمحيص people, good from bad; good ones will follow the path of perfection and bad ones evil path.

To make clear this Sunnah was God's program, happened to the previous nations, God said in the following verse:

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

“We tried those who have gone before them. Allah knows those who are truthful and those who lie.”

The test includes intentions and desires.

وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ»

Allah might try what was in your chests and that He will examine what is in your hearts. (3:154) '

Tamhis literally means purification from all kinds of shortcoming. In this verse, it means purification. The tools in our daily life even can be a reason for testing. As God said:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“We have appointed all that is on the earth an adornment for it, in order that We try which of them is finest in works.”(18:7)

It is worth knowing that the words “Fitnah” فتنه , “Ibtla” ابتلا , “Tamhis” تمحيص and “Imtihan” امتحان are used in Quran, meaning test. In Arabic they mean “evaluation and testing” and “purification”.

The meaning of this test of God is in fact growth of people. Test of God reveals itself to human beings in different ways. In Quran more than twenty types of tests have been

attributed to God. Each group and nation is involved in this Sunnah of God. A group is put in a place where is polluted from every aspects and Satanic temptations surrounded them from all sides. Their great exam is not to be the same as their environment and to keep their purity. A group is placed in hardship and plight. At this situation, their duty is to keep their faith, follow the path of God, and believe in the Mercy of God. Another group, in contrast, is placed in wealth, possessing whatever they want. This is to test them if they thank God or they sink in ignorance, arrogance, selfishness, lust, and sins.

From this verse, we can understand that one of the important tools of test of God is wealth, especially after turning into God. In the part of istidraj استدراج we will talk about it more.

In summary, it can be said that God in each blessing and hardship, relief or difficulty, health or illness, and in each case, hides a test in order to reach us to the ultimate goal of Creation which is perfection, and appearance of just and perfect human beings, and a just government.

Definitely we know that since creation up to now, during all courses of history, this just government has not been formed. As overcoming the world

by a just rulership is the Will of God, therefore in future, this Will of God will be fulfilled.

Though this goal will be reached when mankind goes through problems and difficulties, passes demanding tests of God. As it becomes clear, test of God is general. In Qurānic stories, we find examples of these tests that even prophets were exposed to.

The Prophet Ibrahim was ordered to sacrifice his son for the sake of God and put his family in that dry place of Mecca. The Prophet Noah had been inviting his nation to God for 950 years, but a few people accepted him. But he continued, until God gave him the glad tidings of his and his nation rescue.

The nations who believe in God also are tested by God, sometimes they pass and sometimes fail. Islamic nations also are not exception, we mention two examples here.

1.2. God has given lots of blessings to human beings which are not countable.

إِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا

If you count the blessings of Allah, you will never number them. (14:13)

Among these uncountable blessings, some are materialistic blessings that

God has given to His servants out of His Kindness, and some are spiritual blessings which are the guidance of human to eternal prosperity. From the greatest spiritual blessings, is the blessing of wilayah and obedience and love of Ahlul Bayt.

فَاذْكُرُوا آلَاءَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

«Give thanks to God for His blessings so that perhaps you will have everlasting happiness.»

In Quran we read,

Imam Sadiq said about this verse,

هي أعظم نعم الله على خلقه و هو ولايتنا.

That best blessing of God to His servants is our wilayah.

This is that blessing which will be asked in the day of doom.

ثُمَّ لَتَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ
نَحْنُ النَّعِيمِ

Imam Ali explained this blessing as,

This blessing is we

وَأَشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ كُفْرَكُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

and be thankful for the favors of Allah if it is He you worship.(16:114)

Thanking God is obligatory logical-wise and tradition-wise. Each wise human

being, should know himself responsible for thanking his bless-giver who is God. According to Quran, the requisite of being a servant is to thank His blessing.

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

“If you are unthankful My punishment is indeed stern.”

God promises rewards in return for carrying out this responsibility and in case of disobedience, punishment is waiting for them.

Therefore, regardless of the duty of each person towards his bless giver, if he wants to benefit more, he should thank Him. Otherwise, he deserves punishment. This is the sunnah of God.

One of the greatest blessings of God which was disregarded after the demise of prophet was wilayah.

Imamat is one of the principles of religion and accepting it is as significant as believing in the Unity of God, Prophethood, and resurrection day. Imamat is considered as the extension of prophethood of Muhammad and infallibles have the same responsibility as Prophet's except for messengership. From various logical and traditional reasons, it can be understood that all Muslims in every places and time, should know the present imam of their time and accept his wilayah (guardian

ship), otherwise, their connection to true religion will be torn apart and will be returned to the ignorance time.

من مات و لا يعرف امام زمانه مات ميتة جاهلية

Anyone who dies but does not know imam of his time dies like a person lives in ignorant time.

Accepting wilayah of Ahlul Bayt is a definite sunnah of God which is in progress for all the world; it had been introduced to the heaven settlers and inhabitants of the earth. Even infallibles have been tested by wilayah. Choosing those five great prophets among thousands of Prophets was based on this test. In a tradition, the holy Prophet said,

In that night when I was carried away towards God (Meraj night), God has revealed to me: oh, Muhammad, I have created "you, Ali, Fatemah, Hassan and Husayn and imams from his offspring" from the main light of me and I introduced your wilayah to the heaven settlers and earth inhabitants.

Anyone who accepted, becomes faithful and anyone who denied, became a disbelievers.

Oh, Muhammad, if one of my servants worships me so long as to be cut into parts, and wears out like skin bottle, then came to me while denying your

wilayah, I do not forgive him until he confesses to your wilayah.

Therefore, the criterion of faith and disbelief is **wilayah**. As Muslims were tested for this after the demise of the Prophet. For this reason, the holy Prophet, at the beginning of his prophethood and then in various periods, in Ghadir khum, by hadith Thaqalayn or at the time of his death, emphasized on **wilayah** and successorship of imam Ali and called those who denied as misled.

But plots and treacherous hid truth to the extent that except a small group like Salman, Ammaar, Abuzar and Miqdad, other people revolted against him.

Therefore, imamat and **wilayah** of Ali and his innocent children were forgotten. This event had happened at the beginning of imamat and **wilayah** chain. For the end of this chain, which is the time of imamat and **wilayah** of imam Mahdi, this test is in progress, shedding light on the life of all people of that time. Imam Mahdi wrote to his second representative, Muhammad ibn Uthman that,

I take refuge to God from darkness after light, from astray after guidance, from practical evils and doubt raising Fitnah, the very God who says,

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ

“We tried those who have gone before them. Allah knows those who are truthful and those who lie.”

How are they sinking in the waves of Fitnah and are wondering in the whirlpool of wonder, do they choose the separation way from religion of God, or are doubtful, or are in the war of God or neglect the news and traditions or do they know them all but forgot?

Now, we are present in the arena of test. What is suitable behavior? Should we go to wrong way in spite of all lights, similar to the mentioned stories? Or should we keep our right belief and do not forget that unseen imam? Hope to pass this test proudly.

2.2. Test in the time of imam disappearance

In Shia traditions, imam Mahdi's disappearance has been counted as a test for people. Imam Musa Kadim said, *The owner of this responsibility, wilayah and imamat, has a period of disappearance, in which believers in imamat, change their minds. This issue, disappearance, is not but a test from God to test His creatures by that.*

This test is what a lot of Muslim can not pass, even those who believe in imamat

and *wilayah*. Basically, this test is specifically for imamat believers, because others fail the prerequisite tests before this test, which is accepting Prophet successorship. Now, at the time of disappearance of the last imam, God wants to separate weak believers from strong believers. Therefore, in a tradition from imam Sadiq in this regard we read,

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ حَتَّى تَغْرِبُوا، لَا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ حَتَّى تَحْصُوا، لَا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ حَتَّى تَمَيِّزُوا، لَا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ إِلَّا بَعْدَ آيَاتٍ، لَا
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تَمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ حَتَّى يَشْقَى مِنْ شَقِيٍّ
وَيَسْعَدُ مِنْ سَعِيدٍ.

His holiness will reappear after hard tests which reveals pious people from evil doers.

3.2. Tests, tools for training

We know that one goal of all prophets and the main program of them was to establish a rulership based on the Unity of God all around the world. Quranic verses assert that all prophets were on mission and committed to administer it. God says,

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ
شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

We have sent Our Messengers with proofs, and sent them with the Book and the Scales, so that people might establish the Scale (of justice). We have sent down iron in which there is great might and diverse benefit for people, so that Allah knows those who help Him and His Messengers in the Unseen. Indeed, Allah is the Strong, the Almighty.

By a brief look at the human history, we can conclude that prophets, in their endeavor could not reach a complete success. If there was any success, it was for a short period of time. And even in that short period, they faced enemies. According to Quranic teaching, all of these goals and plans will be fulfilled one day. A great man from prophets family, will organize this world, spread justice, and ruin disbelief, and his majesty will revitalize the earth and its residence by faith and justice.

This plan is not only in a special part of the world, but it is all over the world, and in all aspects of religion, economy, intellect,

In the society before reappearance, God is not worshipped in true sense, people's rights are violated, Quran is not obeyed, ahkams are not administered, all types of hardship and cruelties, oppression, poverty, famine, war, will overcome societies.

To rescue such a society, a number of faithful, purified, and ready to fight people are needed to carry the heavy burden of such vast reforms around the world on their shoulders.

Training these people definitely needs passage of time. In this burning desert, there should grow some flowers to prepare a garden. In traditions, one of the reasons of prolonged disappearance of imam is cited as a test of people to choose the best ones. Shia at the time of disappearance, should await their imam, it means to be completely ready, and in addition to purifying himself, try to purify others.

4.2.imam disappearance, a difficult exam for Shia

The biggest danger at the time of imam Mahdi's disappearance which threatens us is to lose true faith and turn into disbeliever. Therefore, the most emphasizes are on keeping faith; Because people lose their faith in a way that they do not even realize. A day from morning to the evening is enough to turn into disbelievers. Imam Sadiq talked about some Fitnah engaging people in an eloquent speech:

Before the time of imam reappearance, some fitnah will pour on people.

Men are believers in the early morning and lose their faith late at night. The early night are faithful but by the end of night their faith has been taken away from them. Some groups of people exchange their beliefs with small things belonged to the world.

From words of imam Sadiq, it can infer that the era at the time of imam's disappearance is not going to be a peaceful time. At that era, Muslims should not be indifferent to the threats towards their belief. To be indifferent equals to lose their faith. This is one of the most difficult tests in front of Muslims after imam's disappearance. To save faith, one should care a lot. Because at this time the number of wrong or doubtful ideas are more than any other time. Therefore, if a person could stick to his true believes against all difficulties and temptations, he will stay a true believer in imamat of imam Zaman. Due to this sticking to true religion at the time of disappearance is said to be similar to holding fire in hands.

These people who believe in unseen imam are superior to those who met Prophet and imams and converted to Islam after witnessing great signs. The holy Prophet said,

Oh Ali! know that the most wondrous people in faith and the greatest ones in

certainty is the group that do not visit Prophet and also their imam is hidden from them but they believe in black which is on white [the words written on white sheets reached them from their ancestors).

3. Istidraj and Emla املاء in Quran and traditions

As it is said, God tests His servants through various ways. A type of test and punishment that He applies to many of arrogant evil doers is Istidraj and Emla. These two words are taken from Quran surah 'Araf verses 182-183.

The meaning of two words of Istidraj and Imla

In Mofradat Ragheb, istidraj has two meanings:

1. سنستدرجهم من حيث لا يعلمون
"*We will draw them on little by little, from where they cannot tell.*"
2. وَأَمْلِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ
"*and I respite them, My stratagem is firm.*" (7; 182-183) which means we gradually approach them to the punishment which is outcome of their actions.

Imam Sadiq said in this regard, "Istidraj is when a person is given time by God after his sins and pours His blessings to him, then distracts him from repent and finally he is trapped gradually."

Istidraj and Imla at the time of disappearance

In Islamic source books, there are various traditions which depict the corruption and distortions of nations at the time of Imam's disappearance. According to these traditions, one of the worst threats of then is prevalence of sins to the extent that they seem usual. Many examples of these sins are named by Prophet. For example, prevalence of lie and divorce, wines, usury, oppression, According to Istidraj, people little by little forget their religious duty, sink in mundane pleasures of the world and think these blessings are because they deserve. But in the contrary, God is testing them by blessings and is giving them time, but as Quran says abruptly God seize them and throws them in the abyss of torture.

Therefore, we see in traditions one of the important duties of Shia at the time of Gheibah (disappearance) is to wait for reappearance of Imam Mahdi (a.s.). Reappearance will happen suddenly like Moses who was lost in the darkness of a desert along with his family. He went away to look for fire but he went back to them while he was appointed as a prophet.

God Almighty will act the same concerning imam Zaman and He will makes him appear when there is no hope in his reappearance, while people are absorbed by assets of the world. At that time repent would be fruitless; as imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) wrote in his letter to sheikh Mofid:

فان امرنا يبعثه فجأة حين لا ينفعه توبه¹

Truly, our reappearance would happen abruptly, when repent is fruitless for people.

Therefore, hope in his holiness reappearance, in days and nights, should exist and in every minute should await his reappearance.

¹ Mikyal al-Makarim, Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Mosavi Isfahani, Qum

Responsibilities of Awaitors for imam Mahdi

Fereshte Chamani

Abstract: *In contemporary society, some issues and principles which are of religious and practical essentialities are covered by the shed of ignorance, and eventually they lose their importance. One of the fundamental beliefs which is of high importance and it should be considered, and it is felt to be needed more than any other time is the belief in imam Mahdi (may God hasten his reappearance) and reviving his remembrance and waiting his reappearance. These are regarded as religious duties. According to the sayings of our infallible imams, besides this fact that reappearance of imam Mahdi can be the relief of all good people, this waiting itself can be a relief and problem-solver and has constructive results for awaitor and society. The first part of the present article is a brief look over the birth, imam's short and long hidden life and then the meaning of awaiting for imam and the importance of it according to the words of infallibles are mentioned. The second part is dealing with the moral effects of this waiting on people. The third part is allocated to the moral effects of this waiting on society. The forth part is dealing with the effects of the effects of this waiting psychological- wise.*

Keywords: *waiting, awaitor, duties, effects of waiting, waiting for imam reappearance*

Results of awaiting for Imam Mahdi and responsibilities of awaitors

- A. Generalities and concepts
 - a. The concept of waiting
 - 1. The literal meaning

The word in Arabic is derived from نظر (nazar) . of its synonym we can refer to the words which mean “contemplating” and “looking forward”.¹

Intezar (انتظار) in word means contemplating on affairs, looking forward, and having hope in future.²

b. Expressional meaning:

As a term, it means waiting for reappearance of the last living asset of God and being prepared for to help him in order to establish just and fair rulership all over the world. In other words, it is a spiritual state which causes readiness in human beings to what they expect. The opposite of this feeling is the state of being fearful and hopeless. The more waiting, the more interested and enthusiastic. This interest will make people more active and ready.

B. Birth and short time and long time hidden life

The last imam of Shia and the twelve successor of holy Prophet, was born in the half of Shaban month in 255 A.H.

(868 B.C.) in Samera in Iraq. His father was the eleventh imam of Shia, imam Hasan Askari and his great mother, was Narjes, an honored lady for whose nationality there narrated various traditions.

According to a tradition, she was the daughter of “Yasho” the son of Rome emperor, and her mother was from “Shamoon” descendant, the successor of “Isa”. In this tradition, we read that Narjes converted to Islam after a wondrous dream. And as imam Hasan Askari told her, she joined Roman troops who were on their way to fight muslims. She was taken as prisoner of war with some others. Imam Hadi sent someone to buy her and bring to Samera.

The name and epithet of the last imam is the same name and epithet of the holy Prophet of islam and in some traditions people are prohibited of saying his name before his reappearance.

The famous epithet of him are as follows: Mahdi, Ghaem, Hujat, Khalf Saleh, Mansoor, Sahib al-amr, Sahib al-Zaman and Vali Asr which the most famous one is Mahdi.

The birth of imam Zaman was hidden from public but Imam Hasan Askari introduced him to reliable people and a group of Shia elites. This introduction could help people not to go astray or being puzzled regarding their last imam.

Imam Mahdi answered to the religious and professional questions of one of the great scholars of Shia, Saad ibn Abdullah, when he was a child. Imam Hasan Askari suggested he receive the gifts which are sent by Shia gathered by Ahmad ibn Ishaq then to classify them as Hallal and Haram, and send those which Haram to the real owners of them.

After the martyrdom of imam Hasan Askari, Imam Mahdi lead the pray to the body of his father. Imam Mahdi's imamat and leadership has started since this time in the year 260 A.H.. since then his short time hidden life started and lasted for about 70 years (up to 329 A.H.)

The most important feature of the short time hidden life of him is that people were related to imam Mahdi through the special deputies. People received messages of imam by them. and in some cases, they were honored to meet imam by these deputies.

After the death of the last deputy of imam, in the year 329 A.H., the long hidden life of imam has been started and it will continue until God desires to reappear him. At this time, people can benefit from direct rays of his guidance.

C. Importance and meaning of waiting

Any religious actions to be accepted by God should enjoy some conditions

which most part of these conditions. These are what we know as religion. True religion which God wants.

Abubasir narrated from imam Sadiq that he said,

الا خبركم لايقبل الله عزوجل من العباد عملا الا به؟

Shouldn't I inform you that God would not accept any action of human beings unless with conditions?

Abu basir told, yes. Please tell us. Then imam said,

شهادته ان لا اله الا الله و ان محمدا عبده و رسوله و الاقرار بما امر الله و الواليه لنا و البرا من اعدائنا – يعنى الائمه خاصه- و التسليم لهم و الورع و الاجتهاد و المانيه و الانتظار للقائم.

The testimony to the Unity of God and the fact that Mohammad is His servant (who is sent by Him and confession to what God orders, and our villayah, and regarding our enemies as your enemies – enemies of infallibles and being surrender to them, and forbearance and endeavors (to put religious actions in practice) , and patience and looking forward for his reappearance. Therefore, no religious in accepted unless it is done while the doer is looking forward for his reappearance. Acceptance means to be regarded as a religious duty which deserves rewards of God and causes closeness to God.

The rewards which are considered for a special action and included in Quran and Sunnah, all are considered for an accepted action and if that action does not enjoy essential conditions, the doer of that action will not receive any reward from God. Regarding this, no action will be rewarded unless the doer experience the feeling of waiting.

In the meaning of waiting various explanations have been given. For example, the author of Mikyal said,

معنى الانتظار... هو كيفيه نفسانيه ينبعث منها التهيؤ
لما تنظره... فكلما كان الانتظار اشد كان التهيؤ اكد.
الا ترى انه اذا كان لك مسافر تتوقع قدومه، ازداد
تهيؤك لقدومه كلما قرب حينه.

The meaning of waiting is a spiritual state which results in getting ready for what one is waiting for... therefore, the stronger the feeling of waiting, the readiness is more. Do not see when you are waiting for a traveler, the more closer the time of his arrival, the more ready you are.

فالمومن المنتظر لقدوم مولاه، كلما اشتد انتظاره
ازداد جهده فى التهيؤ لذلك بالورع و الاجتهاد و
تهذيب نفسه عن الاخلاق الزديله و اقتنا الاخلاق
الحميده.

Therefore any faithful person who is expecting reappearance of his master will increase his attempt to get ready by getting closer to the time of reappearance- through piety, Ijtihad, and

removing improper traits and acquiring values.

Waiting for the reappearance of Imam Mahdi will create readiness in an individual and will affect his life in all aspects, social-wise and personal-wise.

The moral effects of waiting for imam Mahdi from personal-wise

A. Self-construction

It is obvious that the more we know a person, the more effective his/her personality on us. In fact, the higher is the level of this knowledge about one, in case of surrendering to this knowledge, the deeper his/belief in that person. It means if a person enjoys a deep knowledge about someone, his forgetfulness and mistakes will be less regarding the path of truth. Therefore, if a person desires to find the truth, the best way is to recognize imams through the most authentic ways.

If a person knows Imam is a witness on all his affairs – witness of hidden affairs and public affairs- it can cause a person be very exact in all his actions and take a path which brings God's satisfaction. To keep the true belief is the most significant issue in the eyes of such a person and is not ready to exchange Imam's satisfaction with anything else. Here is the point which being pious and

knowing the ways of being pious finds its importance.

Imam Sadiq said,

من سره ان يكون من اصحاب القائم فلينظر و ليعمل بالورع و محاسن الاخلاق و هو منتظر

Anyone who likes to be of the companions of Qaim (a.s.) should wait and while he is waiting, be pious and good-tempered.

Therefore, in this regard, we can point out to three main axis of psychological training which have great role in construction of human beings:

a. Observe piety, do obligatory actions and avoid forbidden things

The first and the most basic condition of building yourself up is to observe religious acts and do them. a waiting faithful person can not see an obligatory action is neglected, because he knows the best thing in front of God is to do obligatory actions.

Of course, it is not easy to be committed to do obligatory actions as it is against the laziness and carnal desires of human beings. But a real awaiter waits and makes himself be committed to do obligatory actions. Imam Sadiq said about this verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Believers, be patient, and race in patience, be steadfast, fear Allah, in order that you will be victorious. (3:200)

Besides acting upon obligatory actions stands avoidance of forbidden actions.

As much as waiting of a person is more, he will remember his imam more and the more waiting, the more interest in committing sins.

b. Real fear of God and hope (خوف ورجا)

One of the other fundamental bases of construction is fear of God and hope in Him. According to traditions, faith without these two will not be achieved. Imam Sadiq said,

لا يكون المومن مومنا حتى يكون خائفا راجيا، و لا يكون خائفا راجيا حتى يكون عاملا لما يخاف و يرجو.

A faithful person is not faithful and is not fearful and hopeful unless he acts upon his fear and hope.

Therefore, the condition of being faithful is to have fear in heart; but it doesn't mean all kinds of fear; but this fear should have an impact on the actions of a person. What is the sign of this holy fear in human beings? Imam Sadiq answered this question like this:

من خاف من شى هرب منه.

The one who fears something will run away from him.

A faithful person if is really fearful of his past sins and wrong steps, will frighten of repeating them in future and escape from them.

c. The attitude towards the world

The third axis of building up spiritual aspect of human being which should be regarded as a fundamental principle is the attitude of a person towards this world. It should be noted that most of mistakes are rooted in the love of this world and they should be uprooted to dry out the roots of other sins. If the love of the world obsesses a person to the extent that he sees nothing else, he is far from the sweet taste of faith. The only way towards tasting the sweetness of the blessing of faith is to be moderate in this world. Therefore, those who are waiting for imam Mahdi must remember this and live a life which is compatible with this attitude.

The second part: knowledge and prudence

A faithful person who is a waiter tries to prepare himself in all aspects. One of these aspects is to be ready intellectually. The result of a waiting faithful person's intellectual attempt is to achieve prudence and wisdom.

Doubts can bring ignorance and can cause only the son of the waiting school who is intellectually grown up can be wise and ready. He knows that shia school of thought since the time of its spread was always attacked by enemies and at the time of Ghiebah (hidden life of imam) the extent of these attacks is drastically augmented. The enemies find the time of disappearance of imam an opportunity to mislead people. But faithful people know it is their duty to defend Shia believes and answer the doubts and Satanic temptations.

A waiting faithful person is companion of history and learn from it. His role model is Abalfazl who was prudent. A faithful waiter is awake. God has given them logic and wiseness; for them the time of absence is similar to the time of the presence of imam Mahdi. They have a kind of prudence that they can answer doubts easily.

Third part: not to be solved in the darkness of his environment

Another important effect of this waiting is not to be solved in the immoralities of the environment and not to be surrounded to the impurities of the world around. In explanation, we should say that, when immorality spread every where and induces a great number of people, good innocent people will face a difficult psychological dead-end, a dead-

end which is resulted from losing hope; they lose their hope of any revolution. Sometimes, they think darkness conquers every where and any attempt to stay pure is fruitless. This hopelessness will gradually push them towards immorality, they may not save themselves from impurity and relent!

The only thing which can give them hope and encourage them to resist is the hope in final victory. Only in this case they will continue their attempt.

The result of this hope, hope of reappearance of a savior, has a growing effect on psychology and give assurance to them against the powerful waves of immorality. Not only will they not lose their hope but also they see their goal close to them and their interest to try harder is increased.

Third chapter: the moral effect of waiting for Imam Mahdi (a.s.) from social aspect

First part: resistance against strangers

The only thing which help Muslims be patient against their opponents and ultimately unite Muslims to stand up against them was the promises of Quran and prophet who said, this religion will not be eradicated and future will be for Islam. Islam will overcome every where

and the flag of unity of God, Justice and Truth will be raised every where.

These promises have been always giving hope to muslims that islam and its period will not go to an end and the Islamic government like Bani Omayyeh and Bani Abbas are not the role model of Islam, we should be looking forward to the future and do not retreat, we should stay powerful in protecting our borders, until the golden time of the rulership of Justice. In that time which is the time of imam reappearance all plans which Islam had for Islam will be performed, in that time, the world would escape from all chaotic thoughts and peace and unity will fill every corner. Then the world will be embraced by security and assurance.

Muslims are always expecting for the best and each situation no matter how much good it is not perfect for them; therefore, they do not regard it as an ultimate. And if the situation in which they are is not desirable and in fact is non-Islamic, they will not lose their hope and it is their duty to fight against injustice. To stay aside and be indifferent to what is going on has no place in Islam. All attempts of Muslims especially Shia during history was due to this hope and this belief; they never leave their fortress and continued their combat.

Awaiting for imam Mahdi gives providence to awaitors and prepares them for resistance, assiduity, fighting ignorance and corruption. And familiarize awaitors with this significant philosophy in history.

Second part: strengthening and spreading the religious values

Waiting for the-end-of-the-time-savior, Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.), in addition to be backed by strong religious pillars, has excellent social philosophy.

Muslims believe that true belief in God will spread every where and the world will be saved from all these chaotic disorders, modernity minus humanity, relief minus peace. Returning to back and to the era of ignorance is in the opposite of infallibles' mission and Islamic thoughts.

Muslims who are living with this prospect, never will join corrupted, disbelieved or atheist groups. They try to preserve their prudence and hope in future, take steps firmly towards future. They are certain that tyranny and corruption will be eradicated one day and future is for pious ones. Therefore, they do not surrender to tyrants and do not unite corrupted people.

This waiting is not rooted in weakness or laziness in taking responsibilities, and no one excuse is accepted for his/her inactivity to do goods and stop evils.

Silence and immobility, indifference and acceptance of present situation, hopelessness and depression are not excusable. This waiting is a movement, mission, mobility, devotion, fighting with heresy. This waiting is a live and constructive school of islam and Muhammad and his companions and followers.

Third part: strengthening public believes

The real ones who are waiting for Imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) should not only work on themselves but also be aware and take care of others; because waiting for him is not a personal plan. It is a plan which should be fulfilled by all, it is public-governed movement. All attempts should be led to this.

In a vast battle field of war, no one can neglect his/her friend, but should help wherever he finds a shortcoming or weak points, backs and supports weak ones; it is because no war can be won without unity of all.

The real awaitors not only think of their own growth but also know themselves responsible to help others. And this is another constructive result of awaiting for the LAST SAVIOR.

Fourth part:

The educative results of the belief in imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) from psychological aspect

First: spreading real hopes

Hope is the motor of people's movement towards future. Some people know it as a drive and some need of human being. According to Maslow, a psychologists of self-actualization, motivation is a common and inborn need which stands in a hierarchy of the strongest to the weakest needs. To explain this, it can be said that human beings continuously and after finishing an action is to find a clear end and also before any action he/she needs a strong motivation to start that activity.

Therefore, human beings always need a strong motivation to go forward, to tolerate difficulties and to pass through hard situations. This motivation is manifested in "hope in future." A future which is better, more beautiful, and more peaceful than our today's. this is of high importance for young people. Because, in the light of this hope, they can give meaning to their endless energy.

This subject has different interpretations, meanings and positions in various religious and non-religious schools of thought. As an example,

belief of followers of religions to miracles is a proof on having hope and relief after difficulty. While in materialistic or secular schools of thought, there is no place for miracle. Even among believers of divine faith, this issue has different manifestation.

Against the pessimistic approach which is taken to future and exists in the most of schools of thought, there are pessimistic approaches; for example the belief in the reappearance of a savior, imam Mahdi, which is not only a reasonable, logical and understandable phenomenon but also it is regarded as the greatest relief.

Now, if we consider this issue from psychological aspect, we will find the role of hope in psychological health significant.

Kant regarded the issue of "hope" as a feature shows intelligence of mankind and wrote that for any one who is wise and aware and is thinking about his life, three questions will be raised: one, what can I know? Second: what should I do? Third: what can I expect and hope for?

Having futuristic point of view has a positive relationship with "psychological health". We find this relationship in Frankl who said that healthy personalities have other characteristics: they look at future and pay attention to prospective goals and

duties. In fact, they need these goals. This is human characteristic that he/she can only live by being futurist.

He added that without future, the spiritual concept of life will be erased and soul and body will be deemed to destruction. To live a life, a reason is needed; to work for a goal, otherwise life will lose its meaning.

According to Frankl, having hope in future, is a factor of having a meaningful life and a factor of its continuation. This definition is a summit among psychological theories in this regard.

Waiting for a savior in Shi school of thought, not only is a hope for future, but also means waiting for a great change; this savior is the manifestation of all dreams and unfulfilled hopes of mankind during centuries.

According to this, future is going to be better and brighter than today. Because most of our disputes and disagreement are due to limitations of our understanding and in the light of wisdom, when flourishes, these disputes will be exchanged with mercy and friendship.

Regarding this fact, depression has no place among awaitors. If mankind does not expect a better future, he/she would sink in hopeless and depression. The importance of this will become more obvious when we know that depression

is the most common and difficult disorder contemporary human beings are tackling with.

The second part: movement towards a goal

Life is meaningful when there is movement in it or in another word, a person who is active can find a meaning for his presence in the world. Because he can go far from routines and reach meaningful life.

When a person is not satisfied with the present situation and decides to change it for better, it means he himself should play a role in this change and is not a mere spectator. But is an actor of an specific role.

Mobility can be studied from two aspects: first an active person stands up against any indifference and this is the creator of innovation, and creativity. Its result is proportional satisfaction of life and of himself. Because he sees some impacts of his presence in the world. Though, movement without any goal is barren and goal with no movement is meaningless.

Therefore, according to this it can be inferred that waiting for imam Mahdi (p.b.u.h.) should cause these two aspects: mobilization and goal-orientation; because a awaitor is waiting for a society in which all promises of infallibles are fulfilled. Therefore, he

tries to take part as much as he can in construction of such a world. He knows what he is trying for. He has a clear, defendable motivation. His attempt leads to a great goal which is “ waiting for reappearance”.

In summary, the results of this kind of waiting are: A. actualizing dormant talents and abilities. B. purification of inside while waiting for this reappearance. C. meaning-oriented way of life. D. becoming stronger against discomfort and difficulties. E. moving towards perfection.

Conclusion

According to what is said imam Mahdi has two periods of hidden life, one of them is short time (about 70 years) and one of them is long; the most important difference between these two, is that in the short period of time, Shia people could keep in touch with their Imam by special representative and could get familiar with their duties, but in the long period of time this relationship is cut and people to know their religious responsibilities should refer to the general representative of that holy Imam. In addition to it, at the time of imam hidden life, waiting his reappearance is regarded as duties of Shia people.

Human beings in social and personal life owe to the blessing of waiting and if they are not awaitors, they would lose

their hope in future, and life would be meaningless for them. movement and waiting are intrigued and can not be separated. Waiting is the cause of movement. The subject of expectation the more is sacred and elevated, the more valuable and holy. Therefore, a faithful person who is waiting the reappearance of imam, will increase his attempt and his interest. A real awaitor, whether social-wise or personal-wise, attempt to prepare himself for the time of reappearance; he tries to spread piety and honesty. He will not be absorbed in the darkness of society. He is looking forward for his imam and he makes a change in his life and the environment of him to be suitable for Imam’s return.

¹ Khoori Shartooni, Saeed, Aghrab al-Mavared, Farhange bozorge Jamee Novin

² Mostafavi, Hasan, al-Tahghigh fi kalamat al-Quran al-Karim, vol.12, p.166

Examples of Positive Social Interaction from Quran and Traditions Point of View

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Abstract: *positive social interactions are one of the basic pillars of each society and in Quran and traditions of Ahlul Bayt we observe significant guidelines concerning this issue. The goal of this study is to introduce examples of these interactions based on Quran and traditions. The research method is library-based. The examples of positive interactions are: interacting with others, interacting with friends, respecting people, having good temper, be kind, keeping promises, forgiving others, cooperation, security, and psychological and moral health in people's interaction.*

Key words: *social interactions, social relationship, society.*

Introduction

Interaction and relationship among people are subjects which have existed during history and played a significant

role in the life of people. In the light of these bilateral relationship people could gain achievement in various fields of morality, economics, cultural,... . Positive interactions in societies result in

unity and peace, and realization of talents and creativity, friendship and kindness.

In Islam numerous teachings based on the specific fundamental principles of it have been outlined applicable for all aspects of life. They can be found in the Quranic verses and traditions of Ahlul Bayt. These verses and traditions promise flourishing of society and bliss in this world and hereafter.

Faithful and Muslim elites try to offer proper Islamic guidelines for educational system to place individuals in the path of God so as to pave their way to prosperity and salvation. We believe that Quranic teachings provide us with humanistic values governing effective and perfect social interactions, in this article, by the use of ethical discussions, interactions among people in society have been introduced. The examples are studies and its positive impact from Quranic and infallibles' view point are given.

One of the criterion of advancement in each society is the quality of social interactions among individuals of society. How much do they observe morality and humanistic criteria in their social interactions? How much could they show their affection, respect, trust and loyalty in their relationship? What can determine the prosperity and advancement of each society? Islamic

and ethical teachings in this regard can offer behavioral role models that if they are fulfilled in practice, Islamic society will reveal its humanistic realization. In culture, there exists various criteria which can contribute to social strengthening and interactions among people. Methods of interactions among people of a society and in social interactions should be compatible with Islamic conditions. The sound relationship and interaction can establish the foundation of a society. Social interactions not only put wonderful influence on the personality of a person and uplift his spirit but also has significant impact on society. The more powerful, the more effective. The extent of each person's effect on society is closely tied with his characteristics and attributes. In Islamic society, we witness growing relationship among people, they meet each other's need by interacting each other; rewards encourage them to take serious roles in benevolent activities. In the present article, methods of interacting each other positively and examples of it have been outlined in the framework of Quran and Ahlul Bayt opinions.

The literal meaning of social interaction and relationship

Social interactions in literal sense means an exchange between two or more individuals. A process by which people

act and react to each other. Social relationship is derived from the root “رَبَطَ” and in word means being attached, being related to a group. God in Quran includes various verses concerning establishment and strengthening social relationship. The relationship among people should be based on respecting humanistic dignity. It makes no difference to be black or white, affluent or poor, or follower of which religion. God eloquently mentioned this truth in verse 70 surah Asra. “*We have honored the children of Adam*” (17:70) anyone who disrespects a person whom God honors, in fact, disrespects God. Therefore, social relationship is connection and fond among people which result in their unity.

Individual entity in Islamic society

In Islamic view point, each person has a relative independence in society. It means he is part of society but does not melt in it. In another word, Islam neither is individualist nor Collectivist. What is important is to adhere to a religion. Muslims if live in atheist society, should not follow atheism; they should stand up against it as much as they can. If it is not feasible for them, they should migrate from there.

They are not allowed to be the same as that atheist society and can not violate religious responsibilities.

However, Islam respect private life of people but to the extent that not to be harmful for societies. If someone’s desire is against social rules of Islam, in Islamic society he should accept Islamic rules. Society and a person are in mutual interaction and can effect on each other. But at the same time they have a kind of relative independency and an individual can make society. It means originality of a person at the same time of originality of a society. But Islam does not favor any type of interaction and relationship. Those interactions are appropriate that are defined in the framework of God’s rules and regulations: a relationship that ends up in God’s satisfaction. Islam emphasized on close relationship among Muslims. The proof on this claim is the quite a few number of Islamic practices which should be carried out in groups. Or when these practices are not done in group, they have smaller rewards. These emphasis empowering connections. Quran advises people gather around a pivot. Sticking to the rope of God is the basis of worshipping God and among monotheists this belief stands top of the other beliefs of them. This belief can join Muslims together regardless of their race and language and can make trust.

1. Examples of positive interactions in society on the view point of Quran and infallibles

1. Interaction with your fellow citizen

Mankind is a sociable and active creature, and to answer his physical or psychological needs should interact with other fellow citizens. Human beings cannot declare his talents and abilities without interacting others. All human beings to answer their needs are looking for those whom give them peace. This need of interacting others is given to all humans. God asks His servants to treat each other justly. For example in verse 36 in surah Nesa regarding this issue says,

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئاً وَ بِالْأَوْلَادِينَ إِحْسَاناً وَ بِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَ الْيَتَامَى وَ الْمَساكِينِ وَ الْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَ الْجَارِ الْجُنْبِ وَ الصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَ ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتالاً فَخُوراً

Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him. Be kind to parents and near kinsmen, to the orphans and to the needy, to your neighbor who is your kindred, and to the neighbor at your far side, and the companion at your side, and to the destitute traveler, and to that which your right hands owns. Allah does not love he who is proud and struts.

The above mentioned verse pictures a series of Islamic laws including right of God, ethical code, etc. From this, we can infer some rules:

وَ بِالْأَوْلَادِينَ إِحْسَاناً.

وَ بِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَ الْيَتَامَى وَ الْمَساكِينِ:

And also God in the verse 77 Surah Qesas invites human being to do good:

وَ ابْتَغِ فِيما آتاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَ لا تُنْسِنِ نَصيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيا وَ أَحْسِنْ كما أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَ لا تَبْغِ الْفَسادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Allameh Tabataee, a great Quran commentator, wrote under this verse, “Try to seek the Hereafter, use your blessings of this world to fix your Hereafter by giving your money away for the sake of God and to His satisfaction. وَ لا تُنْسِنِ نَصيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيا- means do not leave behind whatever of sustenance God has given you, but use it to build your Hereafter. Because the true interest is what you spend for Hereafter which is your deeds. وَ أَحْسِنْ كما أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ - means donate the extra part of your money to others, as God has donated you from His Kindness and you do not deserve it. and لا تَبْغِ الْفَسادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ means do not seek moral calamities and do not use whatever you have of money or power to spread evilness that God does not like evildoers, and the base of creation is on goodness and intentions of make others good.”¹

Imam Sadiq said, “*There is a verse in the book of God which is definite and certain.*” I said, “*Which one is?*” He answered, “*It is God’s word in His book Who said, “is the reward of goodness something other than goodness?” this is true for unbelievers, believers, benevolent people, and evildoers. Any one who receives kindness should compensate ...*”²

And also he said, “*Believers in kindness and benevolence, in sympathizing and affections are similar to a body, if a member of this body is afflicted by a pain all members will be in pain.*”³

According to the Islamic teachings mentioned in Quran and seen in life styles of infallibles, social life receives an special spotlight and Muslims are ordered to be nice with others, whether Muslim or non-muslim. And being nice to parents and then other relatives and all people of society. In those communities which are govern by friendly interactions, fields of prosperity for human beings will be prepared. And in those societies people will move towards perfection calmly.

2. Interacting friends

Friendship is an example of interacting friends. The soul of human being will flourish in the light of friendship. Need of friendship is hidden in the very deep layers of our soul. When he makes

friend with a person, he can taste the sweet flavor of life more and release from darkness of loneliness. Friendship with pious people is one of the levers of life and causes of happiness and prosperity. With good friends people can go through difficult periods of life. And reach their real goals and wishes. A person who is deprived of companionship of others, is alone and he can not know himself as he should be. Therefore, in his life he is unable to flourish his talents intellectually and spiritually and will lose happiness. In the verses of Quran some conditions are mentioned for making friends, God in Surah Ale Imran , verse 28 says,

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا
مِنْهُمْ ثِقَةً وَ يُحَذِّرُكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

The believers should not take the unbelievers as guides in preference to the believers he who does this does not belong to Allah in anything, unless you have a fear of them. Allah warns you to be cautious of Him, the arrival is to Allah.

Tabari in the explanation of this verse said, “as God in previous verses says that He is the Owner of the world and Hereafter and can exalt whom He wills and abase whom He wills, He prohibits faithful ones from friendship with and following enemies of God that exalting

or abasing are not by them.” people should always be interested in things at the hand of God, friends of God and faithful ones nor things at the hands of enemies of God and disbelievers, God says in this regard,

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ

The believers should not take the unbelievers as guides

It means it is obligatory for Muslims to join faithfuls and prohibits cooperating unbelievers against Muslims.

Therefore it can be concluded that God forbids us of friendship with infidels and enemies of God as their friendship can weaken faith. The other point is declaring brotherhood with someone which is the sign of showing affection to others. And in Islam the relationship between two people is so valued which is named as brotherhood.

God in Surah Hujurat verse 10 says,

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَ اتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

Believers are indeed brothers, therefore make things right among your two brothers and fear Allah, so that you will be subject to mercy.

As hard as you try to make peace between two people, you should seriously and firmly try to make peace among all faithful ones.

God states, kind friends become each other’s enemies in the day of Doom except those who are pious. In modern life, finding a pious friend is not easy. Isn’t it that the first thing after prophethood of a prophet was to be accompanied by a good and honest friend? And also of blessings of God to His friends and infallibles and selected ones is to succeed them in friendship and companionship of his infallibles. And this means there is no blessing in surface and in depth which is higher and sweeter than good companions in the way of God, a brotherhood for the sake of God.

Noticing Quranic teachings, one of the most apparent characteristics of a good friend is to be faithful and benefactor, an honest and frank person. A person who rushes to assist in hard times, in sorrow and in happiness, in relief and agony, sympathizing and accompanied his friend like a brother, as it is mentioned in holy verses. In a society friendship with pious people can result in growth and flourishing different aspects of human being. Friends can make not erasable impact on each other, to the extent that to know a person, one can look at his friends. Selecting a good friend can play a great role in success of a person.

3. Respecting people's dignity and nobility

In a society, the base of all interactions among human beings should be this very important principle. Here by this we mean being benevolent, forgiving and gentle. Being noble, if it refers to God means His beneficence and apparent blessings and if it refers to human beings, it means being noble in behavior. From the effects of this nobility are generosity, forgiveness, In Islamic view point, nobility is inborn and intrinsic which is given to all human beings from one hand and due to this they are superior than to any other things. From the other hand, it is something which can be acquired by piety. This kind of nobility which is the result of human beings attempt is the criterion of superiority of human beings and the cause of getting closer to God.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

And God states,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

People, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might know one another. The noblest of you before

Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is the Knower, the Aware.(49:13)

Surely God is Wise and informed. As people are equal no one is superior to others and no one is higher than others. But the differences we can see in their creation, being in different tribes and groups, is to get them to know each other, to organize the society they live in and to help them be united. The privilege which God knows as privilege is the real highness, which is piety and fear from God. In fact the only way to reach salvation in hereafter is piety, which will bring salvation and prosperity in this world as well.

Imam Sadiq said, “no one boasts to believers, then God saves his honor and face in front of Muslims. And the person who cares more to respect God and His prophet, cares more in respecting Muslims.” If a person is reluctant and careless in respecting his religious brothers, in fact tears down the rope of his belief. The holy Prophet said, “respecting family and relatives is in fact respecting and honoring God.” He also said, “the one who has no mercy upon our little ones and do not respect our elder ones is not from us.”

According to the Quranic and religious teachings, each person should be respected regardless of their gender and social class. All people are equal and the

more pious, the more respected. In societies where people are respected for their piety, that society can bring up responsible and psychologically healthy individuals.

4. Being Good Temper

One of the other significant examples of interaction and relationship in a society is being good temper. It is a kind of powerful and positive attractions among people which is resulted in friendship and human beings can reach his desires by being good temper. People of society are flexible facing good temper people and having relationship with them can give the feeling of psychological security and peace to them. God in the verse 159 surah Ale Imran cites one of the aspects of great morality of Prophet as his being good tempered and says,

فِيمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

It was by that Mercy of Allah that you (Prophet Muhammad) dealt so leniently with them. Had you been harsh and hardhearted, they would have surely deserted you. Therefore, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them. Take counsel with them in the matter and when you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Allah loves those who trust.

In its interpretation it is said, though this verse is for prophet but in fact it addresses all Muslims. Muslims were dissatisfied with prophet, people blamed prophet for the killing of their friends. Because of this, God does not address them, He addressed His Prophet and said, in the light of mercy of God, you become kind with people while if you were bad tempered they would leave you.

From the words of interpreters, it becomes clear that this verse is about kindness and forgiveness of prophet to his companions. God points out to the good temper of Prophet which causes his defeat in Uhud Battle. This is a message to all Muslims to set prophet as their role model and to be nice to everyone and overlook each other's mistakes.

Imam Ali said, no wonder if an honored person is humiliated because of his temper and a humiliated person is honored because of his good temper. Imam Sadiq also answering a question about limitations and meaning of good temper said, "good-temper is to be nice and kind with others, speak politely and be cordial with your brother. God in His book asks people to treat each other well."

5. Showing Affections

One of the other examples of social interaction is to show affection and to answer to kindness. In a society which is based on kindness and forgiving mistakes and all believe that meeting a person's needs is an opportunity from God, kindness will spread. To increase happiness and affection in society people should show smile facing each other, say positive things and make others laugh. God mentions a general rule in Quran Surah Nisa verse 86 in replying to others' kindness:

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِحَيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا

And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with better than it, or return it. Allah is the Reckoner of all things.

In its interpretation, it is said, the first sentence of the verse is to advise to greet in return for a greeting, and the reply should be the same or even better than the first greeting. This is a general rule which include all greetings.

Or it is said in its interpretation, God orders Muslim to answer a greeting of a Muslim better than the first greeting and greeting of a non muslim the same as the greeting not more.

The holy Prophet said in this regard, *“whenever one of you likes his fellowship he should announce it because this can cause survival of friendship and affection.”*

Imam Baqir said, *“Smiling at a faithful person is a good deed which is rewarded and removing harm from him is also rewarded. The most popular worship in front of God is to make a faithful person happy.”* Imam Sadiq said, *“Anyone who smiles to his faithful brother, that very smile is counted as a good deed for him.”* Therefore one of the examples of social interactions is to show your affection to others and this includes greeting them and be kind with them, make them happy, solving their problems, etc. In society, we are witnessing different behaviors, but those who are treating others based on their fitrah, are usually kind with others, because these people are positive thinkers and optimist, psychologically healthy and are living in peace with others.

3. Forgiveness

One of the other examples of social interactions among people of society is ability to forgive. Forgiveness, tolerance and forbearance are of the most precious moral and humanistic values and are signs of eminence of soul and greatness of a human being. It enables human beings to get along well with others as

he/she organizes his/her relationship based on tolerance and forgiveness. Therefore, a stable relationship can be shaped.

A united and powerful society depends on this characteristic of its people to forgive silly behaviors kindly; in personal issues especially in social coexistence where rights of people are subject of discord, forgiveness, forbearance, and kindness should be the base of interactions.

Therefore, the number of cases in them forgiveness is advised is more than the cases harshness is prescribed. Besides, forgiveness has always been advised among relatives and is encouraged by God. In holy Quran, in verse 40, Surah Shora, God states,

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

The recompense of a sin is a sin like it, but whosoever forgives and seeks to reform, his wage will be with Allah. Surely, He does not love the harmdoers.

Allameh Amini in its interpretation said, this verse is the pleading of a suppressed person who asks for help, it says this person can behave similar to the behavior of the oppressed on. This revenge is fair. But there is a nice promise to those who forgive instead of taking revenge.

Generally speaking, in the interpretation of this verse God asks Muslims to behave kindly with each other. This is because God likes forgiveness and kindness and desires to give splendid reward to the oppressed one. The holy Prophet said, *“Do forgive! Because forgiveness does not decrease but increase people’s dignity; so forgive each other, so as God gives you honor.”*⁴

Imam Jafar Sadiq said, *“There are three characteristics which are of the greatest personality traits in this world and hereafter. Here they are: forgive one who oppresses you; join one who leaves you, and be patient when you are ignored.”*⁵

According to the teachings of Quran, it encourages Muslims to be forgiving to strengthen social ties and not to support oppressors. Forgiveness fades away hatred from the hearts of people. This can be a ground for friendship which in its turn is an influential factor to unite nation and to save them from plots of enemies. In a society there are those who forgive other ones mistakes; these are the ones who first and foremost give peace to their own soul. It causes sympathy, kindness, unity, and eventually positive interaction among members of a society.

6.Keeping Your Promises

Loyalty and being practical concerning commitments and promises are one of the criteria of growth of human communities. The foundation is bilateral trust which is the backbone of coordinated social activities and people's cooperation and resulted in security of society. In various verses and traditions it is asked from Muslims that keep their promises, as it decreases trust in society. Trust is what keeps a community from division and tie people like circles of a chain. In Islam, keeping promises is obligatory and considered as a *vajib* واجب. God states in Surah maeda, verse 1

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ
الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرِ مَجْلِيِّ الصَّيِّدِ وَ أَنْتُمْ
حُرْمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

Believers, fulfill your obligations. It is lawful for you (to eat the flesh of) the beast among cattle other than that which is recited to you, hunting is forbidden while you are on pilgrimage. Allah decrees what He will.

Allameh Tabatabaee in its interpretation said, "Quran, as it is obvious from the wording of the verse, asserts that promises should be kept. This command addresses all and includes all examples. Each and every action which is considered by public as a kind of promise should be kept. "عقود" which is

the plural form of "عقد" includes each action or word which brings even the literal meaning of "عقد" to minds. And that literal meaning is making relationship between one thing and another thing, in a way that one depends on the other one and cannot be separated like *بيع* عقد بيع (purchasing something) in which the relationship between customer and goods is in a way that he could do whatever he wants with that goods, and this new relationship cut the previous relationship between the goods and its ex-owner and he could not make any change in it. Quran emphasizes on all meanings of promise and severely advises, a strong advice which stronger than this is impossible, all to live up to their promises. Those who break their promises are strongly reprimanded, they are threatened by a harsh tone; while those who keep their promises are praised in various verses. The number of these verses are quite a few and there is no need to mention them. The tone of the verses asserts that the goodness of keeping promises and ugliness of breaking promises are traced back to our nature.⁶

Siyuti narrated from ibn Abbas in the interpretation book of Dorrul Manthur that:

أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ

Be loyal to your treaties and promises.

Which means **keep your promises**. Do not invade what God announces as Hilla, or what He makes obligatory (Vajib) or what its limitations and rules are mentioned in Quran. Do not change them or violate them.⁷

The holy Prophet said in describing a faithful person, “*a faithful person is the one whom people find him trustworthy regarding their possessions and souls.*”⁸

And Ali (a.s.) said, “*there are signs for pious people by them they are recognized: honesty in their words, returning whatever they borrow, keeping their promise, no arrogance or stinginess, having relationship with family and friends, helping poor people, avoiding sinful companionship with women, generosity, being good-temper, broad knowledge of what gets them closer to God. Lucky them, what a good end is waiting for them!*”⁹

Therefore, according to the Quranic teachings, one of the examples of social interaction is to be committed to promises. This commitment includes all types of promises and God in Quran orders Muslims live up to their promises. As we said it can result in trust and unity of people of each society. In modern life, we can see faithful human beings who are committed to their promises. In the light of this commitment, they can provide a safe and peaceful atmosphere and in this

atmosphere, they can benefit from individual and social relationship.

4. Assistance And Cooperation

Cooperation means assistance and help. Human beings since long time ago have cooperated to facilitate work or to put impossible work into action or to save time and cost. From sociological perspective, cooperation forms among those whose goal is joining some activities together, or mutual assistance. In Quran this Islamic and humanistic principle has been highlighted: in the second verse of surah Maedah, we read,

“وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَ لَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَ الْعُدْوَانِ

The meaning of this verse is obvious, this sentence is explanatory of Islamic sunnah, God in His word in Quran Surah Baqarah verse 177 explained “بر” and said,

وَ لَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

The word “تقوا” means noticing God’s must and mustn’t. Therefore, this verse means Muslim community should be united on faith and good deeds which are resulted from تقوا (fear of God) and this is social تقوا. Against this, we have unity to commit sins, i.e. a bad act which causes prosperous life.

Tabarsi in the interpretation of this verse said, “Here, God orders His servants to assist each other in good things and do what Gods orders and not to do what God’s forbids. Likewise, they should avoid cooperation in sins.¹⁰

Based on the Islamic teaching, growth of people of society and their maturity – for individuals and for society, depend on individual’s unity to get good actions done.

Islam knows cooperation as a factor of friendship in society: it can result in advancement of a society. In modern time, we see people who are benevolent and philanthropist, they take part in charities. They solve people’s problems and are ready to do any voluntary work. These people can spread good actions in society and revitalize societies. Through these charity work they find peace and get closer to God.

9. Chastity and Hijab

One of the other examples of social interactions is in facing each other, they should observe chastity and in society be modestly dressed. From Islamic teachings it can be understood that being modest means to be governed by logic and not by lust. If logic gets the rein of human beings at hand, that person will be strong in front of lusts and sinful passions. The tendency of such a person to sins would be less. Hijab means

modesty in wearing clothes outside and ifaf عفاف (chastity) is inside modesty. These two are the factors of prosperity of a society. Hijab and ifaf are religious duties and are of the key issues. They are related to many issues and have political, social, cultural and economical aspects. This issue as it addresses women, in fact, addresses half of a society. This factor has a basic role in regulating relationship between men and women, can influence all individuals of a society. Hijab and proper clothes are of factors which can make human beings and are of reviving laws of pure life. They are based on Fitrah and according to needs and psychological conditions of people and cause of human beings’ motivation and advancement.

Hijab not only can give value to women but also can influence family, society, etc. In Islamic culture, this issue receives comprehensive attention. Orders have been given to men and women in this regard and examples of hijab and ifaf have been given in Quran.

a. Ifaf in clothes

God states in Sura Ahzab, verse 59 that

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
يُذْنِبْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا
يُذْنِبْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُوراً رَحِيماً

“O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters and the believing women to draw their veils close to them, so it is likelier they will be known, and not hurt. Allah is the Forgiver, the Most Merciful”.

Allameh in the interpretation of this verse said that the word جلابيب is plural of جلباب and it is a gown which covers all body or it is a special scarf that cover hair and part of face and the meaning of ***“draw their veils close to them”*** is to cover their neck and chest.

ذَلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ

It means covering body can help a person to be recognized as a modest person, and when he/she is known as a chaste one, he/she will be less absorbed by corrupted groups. Some interpretation’s experts say: this chastity and cover showed they were Muslims as in that time non-Muslim women and servant women did not have hijab, hijab was specifically for women; therefore, no one dares to harass them. No one mistaken them to be non muslim or maid; though, the first meaning is closer to mind.¹¹

Regarding the importance of Hijab, the holy Prophet said, ***“There is no more reward even for a martyrs as it is for a person who can commit a sin but stays away from sins.”***

If we see the duty of women is more for hijab, or they are more advised to have hijab, it is because women are symbols of beauty and men are absorbed by their beauty. Therefore, women like to flaunt and men like to enjoy their beauty. Hijab is based on our fitrah, raised from their reality, and it is not unfair. It is essential for their survival. From Islamic point of view, hijab does not mean limitation of a woman from social activities but a woman can be present and active in society while keeping her hijab. This will bring peace, psychological health and security in society and paves the way for her useful activity.

In society, those who are wearing indecent clothes are more subject of harassment. This may lead in losing the meaning of family. Here, women are considered as commercial goods, their peace and psychological health are endangered and may cause other social harms.

B. Chastity in Looking

Considering the way of looking in Surah Noor verses 30 and 31, Quran ordered men and women:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ .

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَأَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ

إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيَّةَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Say to the believers they should lower their gaze and guard their private parts that is purer for them. Allah is Aware of the things they do.

And say to the believing women, that they lower their gaze cast down their eyes and guard their chastity, and do not reveal their adornment except that which is outward (face and hands); and let them draw their veils over their neck, and not reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or what their right hands own, or such male attendants having no sexual desire, or children who have not yet attained knowledge of women's private parts; nor let them stamp their feet, so that their hidden ornament is known. And, O believers turn to Allah all together, in order that you prosper.

Scholars interpreted differently the phrase «غض بصر» in these two verses, but in general based on the following order mentioned after this phrase i.e.

«يُحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ», it can be said here this phrase means not to look at those parts which should be covered obligatorily; which are all parts of women's body except their face, their hands and their feet and in men from waist to knees. Allame Tabatabaee said, " وَ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ " " وَ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِعَضُنَّ ... " is the same as " قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ". Therefore, it is not permitted for women to look at whatever which is not permitted for men. And when God says, " وَلَا يَبْدِينَ " " ابداء " here, the word " ابداء " means revealing. And revealing "beauties of women" is meant. Beauties do not mean necklace or earrings but the place they are hung. God Almighty excludes whatever is apparent from this rule. In a tradition, it is said the meaning of whatever is apparent is palm of hands and feet. Numerous traditions have been reached us disparaging ogling and staring. The holy Prophet said, anyone who fills his eyes with hiram, God is going to fill his eyes with igneous nails in the day of doom, then his body is going to be filled with fire till people get up from their graves. Finally he will be thrown into the fire. Therefore the way of looking is one of the Quranic orders which commit both men and women to avoid bad way in looking. If it is observed, men and women can put their steps in the path of God to prepare a pure life for themselves.

C. Chastity in Speaking

One of the other realms of chastity is in speaking. God has pictured various frames for speaking in Quran like: «قول» «قول حَسَنٌ which means good speaking, «قول معروف» means proper speaking,¹² «قول لِينٌ means soft and mild speaking¹³, «قول كريم» means venerable speaking¹⁴, «قول سديد» means firm and stable speaking¹⁵, and «قول بليغ» means eloquent and all right¹⁶.

God states in Quran, verse 32 surah Ahzab:

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْنُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنَّ أَنْقَشْنَ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

O wives of the Prophet, you are not like other women. If you fear (Allah), do not be to complaisant in your speech, lest he in whose heart there is a sickness may desire (of his mother); but speak honorable words.

In its interpretation, it is said that speaking in normal way, which is accepted by Islam is meant: a kind of speaking which is to transfer ideas only not flirtation. However, this verse is to address wives of prophet but also it is an order for all women. Therefore, from Quranic view point each way of speaking which is with flirtation and seductive is not accepted. Examples of chastity in speaking is to be benevolent and politely, proper and to the point. In a

society we find those who obey these rules and can cause security and morality in society. These people are honest in their speaking, speak properly, and politely.

Conclusion

Social interactions among people have been existed since the first human beings and they have been existing in future. Human beings in the light of these interactions and relations could be able to continue their life besides each other and achieve considerable advancement in various social, cultural, political, economic fields.

These interactions and relations are based on Fitrah and holy religions have embarked on guiding people according this fitrah. Islam which is the most comprehensive religion outlines a series of rules and regulations in accordance with pure fitrah. To establish positive relations among human beings, Quran sets various rules in different fields.

God in Quran cites the most complete and effective rules of Him regarding relationship among people in different ways.

Positive and correct social interaction in society can result in positive effects and results like respecting dignity of human beings, noticing people's needs, being nice to each other, being good-temper with each other, sympathizing,

companionship, restoring cultural and Islamic values.

Endnotes:

¹ Tabatabaee, 1363: 16/111

² Kashani, 1336:7/104

³ Kofi Ahvazi, 1387: 79

⁴ Kolaini, 3:289

⁵ Ibid, 3:287

⁶ Tabatabaee, 1363: 5/258

⁷ Siyuti, 1404: 2/253

⁸ Javadi Amoli, 1391: 523

⁹ Tabarsi, 1379: 79

¹⁰ ibid: 1360: 6/194

¹¹ Tabatabaee,1363: 16/510

¹² Nesa, 8; Ahzab, 32

¹³ Taha, 44

¹⁴ Asra, 23

¹⁵ Nesa, 9; Ahzab 73

¹⁶ Nesa, 63

Some effects of pray in purification of soul and acquiring ethical virtues

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Abstract: *According to holy verses and traditions, pray has significant effects on purification of soul and acquiring moral virtues and spiritual states. In the following, a number of the most important effects has been offered.*

Key words: *pray, educational effect, prohibition of evils*

The encouraging and leading effect of remembrance of God and pray

The soul of pray and supplication and its goal and philosophy, more than anything else, is the remembrance of God which is expressed as “Zikr-ullah”

(ذکر الله) in Quran. It is apparent that this remembrance of God is not a superficial act which is carried out even by tyrants of the present era. But it means a kind of remembrance which is rooted in the depth of our heart, and more than a simple thought, is the doors to thinking

and movement, resulted in constructing personality and guidance of human beings. Imam Sadiq interpreted this verse like this:

"ذكر الله عند ما احل و حرم"

To remember God and be fearful of Him, not to oppress people or not to evade responsibilities and to respect other's rights when in dilemmas is the meaning of "remembrance of God." This is the very soul of pray, its goal and its philosophy. And this is the answer to this question: why should we pray?

Imam Riza pictured the philosophy of prayer and its secrets: *the secrets of pray as a daily activity are:*

a. Of its educational aspect is to get closer to God and to confess to His role in training human beings rather than role of other phenomena especially human beings.

b. From benefits of pray is to fight idol-worshipping and ignorance and to get closer to freedom, independence, rights and dignity in the light of His Mercy.

c. The other goal of pray is to feel humbleness and obedience while standing in front of God. Through this, the spirit of law-obedience and rule observance will flourish in people's souls.

d. The other lesson of pray is to learn honesty, to confess to one's sins and

errors, and to ask God to forgive us. It helps us put steps in the path of repentance and compensation, and construct our personality and avoid justifying mistakes, disobedience or seizing others' rights or irresponsibility.

e. The other goal of pray is that human beings each day and night put his forehead on the ground to show his politeness to the greatness of God, and to live a proper life.

f. The other lesson is: human beings do remember God in all times and be wise, do not let the dust of ignorance darkens his heart, and not be poisoned by arrogance nor trample other one's rights.

g. In addition to these points, repeating this repeated plan of praying will cause "remembrance of God" sticks to ones' mind. Therefore, that person hesitates evil actions so he will not exchange modesty and freedom with tyranny. This remembrance can prohibit him from sins.

The effect of pray in wiping out arrogance

The mania of arrogance and the devastating pain of egotism, from one hand, is a barrier on the way of human being's growth and perfection and on the other hand is of the fatal drives towards cruelty, violence and tyranny; a weapon against security and freedom.

Pray and remembrance of God- which is the soul of pray and its goal and philosophy, can break the idol of egotism and arrogance, heal the maniac of egoism, wipe out tyranny; in fact, when human beings kneel down in front of God thirty-four times a day, and find himself the most insignificant jot in front of His Majesty, and see death and life, happiness and all things belong to Him and all people at His Powerful Hand, so there would remain no place for arrogance and disobedience. The great role model of pray, Imam Sajjad, in order to manifest some rays of philosophy of supplications' sun said,

فرض الله الايمان تطهيرا من الشرك، و الصلوه
تنزيها عن الكبر و

God sets faith to purify you from dualism and tyranny. And pray is to eradicate pest of arrogance from you...

And Fatimah, the unique and wise lady said regarding the philosophy of Ahkam that

جعل الله الايمان تطهيرا لكم من الشرك و الصلوه
تنزيها لكم من الكبر و ...

God puts faith because of your purification from signs of dualism and tyranny; and pray is to eradicate the pest of arrogance.

One of the goals and philosophies of pray and supplications is to fight with arrogance and ignorance seriously and the result of it, pray and remembrance of

God will put the goal of creation in perspective of a wise prayer. To put goal of life in perspective can stop superficial look at life, it can give caution to human being to recognize the gem of his soul, realize his real place and think about the place he has come, the place he is going to, and to know he is responsible towards himself, his God, society, history, era and people of his time and later. What is his responsibility? For what should he attempt? This perspective can avoid his falling into the well of darkness of arrogance. A look at the details of pray and its parts and sentences and by contemplating on the deep meanings of pray this point can become clear.

The constructive role of pray in washing dusts away

In some verses and traditions, this intricate educational point has been referred to by examples. For example, if we consider sins and oppression as wounds hurting soul of human beings, making it injured, paralyzed and bothered, a real pray is the medication for these painful wounds, a medication which sooth its harmful effect, the remembrance of God will eradicate the rust on the mirror of soul and polish it. As a result, pray and remembrance of God is a means to get to the high level of repentance and a determination to make up for and wash the results of sins and attract forgiveness of God. Holy

Prophet in description of constructive role of pray and clearing effect of pray said, “tell me if there is a river of clear water running in front of your home and one of you washes himself in it for five times a day, would any dirt leave?” People said, “No”. He said, “This river does the same as what every day five-times prays [do with your soul].”

The effect of pray in cherishing love and intimacy

Pray as it is the remembrance of God and a sign of His love, is a way to cherish spiritual values and a means to flourish morality and human ethical code and a means to soar to the summits of perfection; it is because pray broadens horizons of human attitudes and elevates him from the tight and limited materialistic and mundane world to the reality of the world; it can make human beings monotonous with the universe, intimate to the world and lighten up His love in the soul of human beings. In traditions, pray is mentioned as a mean to get closer to God and a ladder to elevate to the court of God and as a love-creating tool. Imam Ali said in this regard, “*pray and remembrance of God is a means for each fearful person to get closer to the court of God.*” And it is narrated from imam Sadiq that who said, “*in rokou of pray, the politeness of a monotheist servant of God in front of God becomes clear and its Sajdeh, there*

is a way to get closer to God and find spiritual closeness to Him.”

The effect of pray in prohibition of injustice and sins

The sincere pray and supplication are that very strong dam which can control wild forces and let them be controlled by a wise and moral person; because pray gives power to the spirit of faith in God and the resurrection day, implant the sapling of being responsible in the soul of human beings and we know this faith and responsibility are the strongest dams against the outburst and flood of these forces. They can give control and proper managing power to a determined person. This is what the hero of the most beautiful stories, i.e. story of Josef said,

وَمَا أُبْرِي نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَجِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Yet I do not consider my soul was innocent, surely the soul incites to evil except to whom my Lord has mercy; indeed, my Lord is Forgiving, the Most Merciful.” (12: 53)

And also in Quran we read,

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

“Prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil.”(29:45)

In the interpretation of this verse, this story has been given, “a young person did his pray when Prophet did his pray

and follows him in his pray. But in his private life, he also commits sins. Some people reported his sins to Prophet. Prophet told them eventually his pray will lead him to the right path and will stop him from sins and wrong doings. After a while people witnessed Prophet was right.”

The effect of pray in motivating human beings to observe people’s rights

A person who commits himself to pray and oblige himself to repeat this spiritual plan daily, should be very careful in observing people’s rights and tries not to suppress, threaten or be unjust towards others whether by his hand, his tongue, his pen, his planning, so on and so forth. Imam Sajjad said in this regard, “*pray has this right over you that you know it is a means by which you enter the feast of God, standing in His court. So when you know this, it is proper to be similar to a servant who is humble, wishful, needy, fearful, hopeful, desperate, crying, honoring greatness of God, pray calmly and with dignity, speak beautifully, requesting for freedom from Fire of hell which is because of [your own] sins, say your pray from bottom of your heart and obey its rules and rights.*” According to imam Sajjad pray should be performed by these conditions and its rights and limitations should be obeyed. Truly, if a person sees pray like this and performs it in this way, several

times a day, will not learn to consider people’s rights? Therefore a real pray – which is the code of a purified love (between God and human beings)-creates motivation to obey God’s rules and people’s rights. And this is the achievement and philosophy of pray in Quran and traditions.

The educational effect of pray

Looking at the various traditions about pray, we can infer that there is a close relationship between acceptance or non-acceptance of pray and some actions of us. These actions have a basic role in moral growth or moral decline of human beings. Here we refer to some of them: the holy Prophet said, “*the pray of a drunk person will not be accepted for forty days unless he repent.*” And also, “*anyone who backbites a good man or woman, God will not accept his pray and fast for forty days unless the person who was backbit forgives him.*” And also, “*anyone who eats Haram food, for forty days, his pray will not be accepted, for forty days his pray and request will not be answered, and any meat which grows by that haram food, deserves the fire of hell.*” And also, “*if a wife bothers her husband, her pray and good deeds will not be accepted by God even though she fasts every day; and if she helps her husband and satisfy him, God will forgive her.*”

From imam Ali we read, “*God will not accept the pray of anyone who does not pay Zakat and [does not returns] whatever he owns people.*” From imam Sadiq, it is narrated, “*anyone who fabricates a lie, its penalty is he will not be given Tufiq (honor) to say night pray.*”

In fact, pray not only causes psychological health, but also will elevate human beings in his life.

The effect of pray in strengthening the spirit of order and organization:

Another achievement of pray is that it can flourish the spirit of tidiness – which is a secret of success- in life of people and help him to plan and behave based on planning: due to the fact that pray can teach people to be punctual, to say pray in its proper time, and know that to be disorganized in this regard can lead to his pray being unaccepted. In addition to it, pray can teach him to observe rules and regulations of other religious practices. These are all some effects of pray individual-wise, but if prays are performed in groups, the achievements could be multiplied.

Ali (a.s.), in the last moments of his life and in his last message, advised everyone: “*I advise you, all my children and relatives and anyone who receives my will to have fear from God and be organized and tidy in his life.*” In addition to the effect of pray in

edification and gaining moral virtues, this worshipping act has significant effects which are very important such as: self-building, cleaning, observing people’s rights, discipline and punctuality, controlling wishes, equilibrium and tranquility, respecting God, peace, making up for sins,.... From these points, we can conclude that if we want to have a sound society immune from any immorality and disorder, noticing the very influential and various functions of pray in building up people of a society and the role of this obligatory action in training ideal people who live based on orders of God, this obligatory action, i.e. pray, should receive more attention and the value of it be clarified more in society to enjoy an ideal and lovable society.

Conclusion

No one can enjoy the true meaning of life unless he/she finds a source to refer to in life, not only in problems and hard days of life but also when he/she wants to answer his/her innate need of getting to perfection. In the world, we are in the need of attaching to an indefinite source, otherwise feeling of emptiness will overcome us. As we have studied, this need is answered by pray, which is channel to connect God. But this channel not only can answer our inborn need of connecting to an infinity but as we said can make great changes in our life, of course this change and these

changes will happen if we pay attention to pray, i.e. a real pray can give people equilibrium, peace of mind, motivation and brings order in their life. As we have mentioned, it is a good means to unite people and make good changes in people's life. words of our infallible imams can be considered as good sources of finding ways and characteristics of a real pray.

Ahlul Bayt's Manner of Confrontation with Ahl-e-Kitab

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Abstract: *familiarity with the attitude of Ahlul Bayt while confronting Ahl-e-Kitab, not only can introduce them a role model in management but also can help to comprehend various aspects of Islamic teachings. In the present article, by referring to Islamic resources and providing examples, the most important criteria of this issue is under study. These criteria show tendencies of Ahlul Bayt to have ethic-based, wise and scientific-based discussion, respect and kindness with Ahl-e-Kitab, justice-based and loyalty in treaties, preserving peace. These criteria had been manifested at the time of their rulership which they even manifested when they could find any opportunity even when they had no official power; i.e. these virtues are not essentially governmental.*

Keywords: *confrontation of Ahl Bayt with followers of Divine Faiths, Ahl-e-Kitab, Christianity, Jewism*

Introduction

Holy Quran in addition to advising muslims to speak nicely with each other, emphasizes on taking proper approaches to confront Ahl-e-Kitab;¹ though, besides these emphasis, according to the same Quranic logic, accepting Wilayah of Koffar and Ahl-e-Kitab has been disapproved severely. The foundation of this attitude is traced back to their actions such as their declining truth or their opposition with Prophet or Muslims.² It means religious beliefs of Ahl-e-Kitab were not the reason of that order. In other words, Islam welcomes interactions with Ahl-e-Kitab or other believers in divine faiths like Christian and Jewish people.

Familiarity with the opinions of Ahlul Bayt in process of their interaction with Ahl-e-kitab, not only can introduce them as role models after Prophet, specifically from Islamic teachings, but also can help to comprehend various aspects of Islamic teachings. In this approach, each and every interactions between Ahl Bayt and followers of other religions which are derived from revelation and social and political life of Prophet, be studied in the realm of modern time and based on it; as an explicit interpretation includes rich teachings of Islam and opens a new horizon of understanding in the vast territory of Islam.

The significance of this issue absorbs concerns of some modern researches, and the difference of this article with other studies is the tradition-based attention of it to the type of this confrontation. While the other studies are usually based on Figh or they focused on a limited political, social, cultural or economical aspects.

Reviewing the collection of verses and traditions leads us to the point that this confrontation can be noticed from two main aspects:

Ethnicity

Doubtlessly, ethnicity is of the most significant behavioral must in Islam, as far as Quran introduces holy Prophet as a unique role model of morality.³ To clarify an aspect in this regard, it teaches Muslims the way of facing Ahle-Kitab while addressing Prophet:

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَالْهِنَّا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

“And do not dispute with the People of the Book (Nazarenes) except in the best manner, except for those among them who do wrong and say (to them): ‘We believe in that which was sent down to us and that which was sent down to you. Our God and your God is One, and to Him we have surrendered.’”

(29:46)

Therefore, the holy Prophet and his Ahlul Bayt treated Ahle-Kitab in the most suitable and polite way. For example, upon visiting Prophet, some Jews said “السلام عليكم” instead of “السلام عليك”. The first one means “down with you or death falls upon you”. They said this to bother Prophet. Prophet’s wife sadly answered them, “death falls on you and God’s Anger, and Curse.” But the holy Prophet said, “Why are you swearing? Why are you angry and nervous?”⁴

In the history of Islam, there are various examples depicting the relationship between Islamic society and minorities, but the real Islamic example which is based on that Islam brought by Muhammad could be found in the behavior of Ali (a.s.) with religious minorities.

For example, Amirul Momenin Ali ordered his agents: “lest you Muslims attack Jews and Christians under your rulership.”⁵

This shows the originality of morality-based relationship between Muslims and Ahle-Kitab in the opinion of imam of Muslims who is a person who learned Prophet’s life style in correct way.

In another example, when a Christian, to belittle and make fun of imam Baqir, addressed him “بقر” (cow) instead of Baqir (باقر) (splitter of knowledge), imam with praiseworthy dignity,

corrected his mistakes. In addition to these examples, in morality defined by Ahlul-Bayt, following some moral does and don’ts in social behavior could not be dropped by the excuse of religious differences or arguments. For example, imam while explaining the reason of his companionship with a non-muslim traveler on the way to Kufa, mentioned it as a sunnah in Prophet’s life and said, “*this is of companion’s right that an individual should see his co-traveler off respectfully and this is an order of Prophet.*”⁶

Knowledge-oriented discussions

“Conversation” has a special place in explanation of divine faiths, it is used as an educating means; because by multifaceted explanation, mankind will find intellectual growth, and guidance will be realized. This feature, not only, at the time of inviting people to Islam, was regarded as a useful means, but also in Islam is emphasized as a base.

Therefore, conversation and interaction with Ahle-Kitab were one of the key issues for holy Prophet and Ahlul-Bayt. The order of being kind while facing Ahle-Kitab is derived from Quran, which says, “*Dispute with them in the best manner.*” (16:125)

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ
وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

The legitimacy of conversation among religions and respecting their ideas and opinions and using suitable ways to interact with them is due to the fact that Islam has approved Divine books of Ahle-Kitab and says,

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذِهِ لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ

“He has sent down to you the Book with the truth, confirming what preceded it; and He has sent down the Torah and the Gospel (of Prophet Jesus which has been lost)

Before, as a guidance for people, and He sent down the Criterion. As for those who disbelieve in the verses of Allah, for them is an intense punishment. Allah is Mighty, Owner of Vengeance.” (3: 3-4)

This shows that the gem of guidance, from Islamic point of view, is based on logical-based conversation and other means such as military actions are only allowed in rare cases; as the holy Prophet even gave priority to logical talk in battle field before war.

Prophet advised his companions: *“do not start fighting with disbelievers unless you invite them to have a discussion before.”*⁷ In addition, Prophet's advice to Ali upon sending him to Yaman is another obvious

example, *“oh! Lest do not start war unless first you invite them to Islam, because if anyone is guided by you, is better than all things that sun spreads its light on it and night falls darkness on it.”*⁸ Likewise, Ali in his sermon named Ghase'ee "قاصعه" said in this regard, *“truly, God Almighty likes following Prophets and their books.”*⁹ This saying of him is compatible with those verses we have mentioned before¹⁰ which necessitate respect to other beliefs and assert their rightness. Imam, by his words, not only respect all followers of divine faiths but also confirm their right to discuss their beliefs in the framework of reason and logic.

In another example, imam Sadiq has narrated from Prophet that, *“Prior to thinking about war, find a way to talk logically with other belief-holder.”*¹¹

Discussions of imam Riza and Ahle-Kitab which is explained in details in “Uyun Akhbar Riza” are of the most famous examples in this regard.¹²

The law of respect

From Islamic point of view especially Prophet's life style and Ahlul Bayt ethical code of behavior, all followers of Divine faiths in Islamic law and according to clear rules are respectable and enjoy human dignity.

Therefore, there is no difference in the essence of respect between Muslims and

non-Muslims and no one whether to be a governor or an ordinary person has no right to know him/herself superior to others and disrespect Ahle-Kitab or swear them; for example, in the story of Umme Hani, sister of Ali and her non-Muslim maid, when they referred to Ali, imam gave them both equal amount of Beitulmal بيت المال (Muslim treasury). This caused complaint of Umma Hani.¹³ Or when a man from Ansar complained that why his right is equal to the right of his newly-freed slave, imam answered them, “*I recited Quran, but nowhere I have seen sons of Ismail are privileged in comparison to the sons of Ishaq, no difference even as small as] a wing of a mosquito.*”¹⁴ This depicts examples of interactional approaches by Ahlul-Bayt, which were based on respect and equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, Arab and non-Arabs, these approaches, even though were taken when Ali was a governor, were based on Quran. From Qurānic point of view there is no difference or superiority except for “Taqwa” تقوى (piety). In fact, the difference among Muslims is due to Taqwa. And it is a criterion to divide duties and a means to reach excellent aims of human beings, and not a cause of prejudice in terms of financial goals. As the holy Prophet said in his eternal chart in Hajjatul-Veda حجة الوداع (the last Hajj) that, “*oh people! Truly, God of you is the same and your father is the same; you are all from Adam, and Adam from*

soil. Truly! The most honored one of you before God is the most pious one of you and no Arab is superior to non-Arabs unless in terms of piety.”¹⁵

It is obvious that this saying includes Muslims and non-Muslims in general and not only Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims.

To assert this, we can refer to Quranic teachings which say all human beings from each race or tribe and with any financial or spiritual characteristics are created by the same Soul and said,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

“O people, fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul. From it He created its spouse, and from both of them scattered many men and women. Fear Allah, by whom you ask one another, and (fear) the wombs (lest you sever its relationship). Allah is ever watching over you.” (4:1)

In addition to Quran and Sirah teachings regarding equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, in terms of citizenship, the principles of Ahle-Kitab are also counted respectful; therefore, in various examples from sirah of Ahlul Bayt, respecting rules of Ahle-Kitab which are based on their Divine Faiths is emphasized. For example, marriage

custom has some conditions among some religions which are different from Islamic ones but Ahlul Bayt, opposed someone who swore one of the Ahle-Kitab for their customs. They explicitly reacted and asserted that marriage custom of each tribe should be based on its own religion, emphasized on the property of marriage custom of Ahle-Kitab. Accordingly, Imam Sadiq forbid Muslims of slandering Ahle-Kitab or what they are not informed of and treated people of other religions respectfully.

In a tradition from imam Baqir, we read, *“it is permitted for holders of any belief to perform whatever is permitted in their religion.”*¹⁶

Or in another tradition from imam Sadiq, it is said, *“for each nation, there is marriage to stop adultery by it.”*¹⁷

Therefore, in Sunnah of Ahlul Bayt, whether as a governor or non-governor, Ahle-Kitab deserves respect; they are equal to Muslims in this regard and even their laws are legitimate.

Kindness with Ahle-Kitab

One of the other ethical code of Ahlul Bayt is kindness to all including non-Muslims. Ali, the ruler of Islamic territory, advised the governor of Akbra (عكبراء), *“when you come to them (Ahle-Kitab), notice not to sell their clothes for Jezyeh جزية, even though it is*

*summer and they do not need them; and do not put their food or animals on sale. I do not want you to beat even a lash on one of them because of money nor bother them in order to get money from them.”*¹⁸

Or in another situation, he ordered his tax collectors, *“not to punish any Jewish person or Christian for tax or not to beat them or not to take their animals in return for tax and sell them.”*¹⁹

As it is clear from the tradition, he observed justice regarding tax and kharaj خراج between Muslims and non-Muslims which is a crystal clear example of his just-oriented behavior between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Seeing a Nasrani disabled old man begging, Ali reprimanded his agents, *“why they had not taken care of him, he was serving for an Islamic government at his youthhood and now due to aging and blindness, he needs others assistance.”*²⁰

In an order by Imam Ali to Malik, he said, *“be kind to people and have mercy on them because people are your brother who are having the same belief or are similar to you in their creation.”*²¹

In this part of letter, followers of divine faiths and others are among those who are not Muslims but at least they are

similar in their creation and therefore should be behaved kindly.

Ali in his letter to Malik advised him to pour his mercy and kindness to all. Therefore, an Islamic ruler should behave equally with Muslims and non-Muslims and not only do not hesitate giving them his kindness but also should replete them with his kindness. In this letter, imam Ali, as an Islamic governor, use the word ناس which means people (9 cases), servant meaning citizen (13 cases), عامه meaning all (3 cases), كل امرى meaning each and every human being (2 cases), عباد الله meaning servants of God (1 case) and more important نظير لك فى الخلق meaning similar to you in creation (1 case). This asserts that his holiness in his order did not limit Islamic society to Muslims only and gave importance to kindness with everyone from religions, races, nationalities and culture.

Justice-oriented manner

One of the duties of government concerning nation is to have courts which are based on justice. The base of our claim is judgment of Ali (a.s.), which was definitely emphasized by Ahlul Bayt; as judgment is the pivot of justice, because a judge in an Islamic society defends people's right.

His holiness did not accept any violation of ethical codes while judging, for example not to behave differently with

the parties to the dispute. At the time when he was the governor of Islamic society, a Jewish person sued him; Ali (a.s.) accepted the verdict of the judge which was against him, because he did not have enough evidence to prove his claim.²² This story contains important points which not only shows the security of rights of Ahle Kitab in society, but also clears the responsibility of an Islamic society in supporting civil rights of minorities of each society.

Ali (a.s.) said about judgment: *"I swear by God! If a place is set for me to sit on, I will judge Torah-believers by their Torah, Gospel-believers by their Gospel, Zabur-believers by their Zabur and Quran-believers by their Quran in a way that each one of these Books will confess Ali was right. Truly, he judges the same as what God puts inside me.*

And you Muslims who recite Quran days and nights, is there any one among you who knows what in Quran is? Even there was only this one verse in Quran, I would be able to tell you what was, what is and what will be till the day of judgment by this verse and the verse is "Allah blots out, and He establishes what He will. With Him is the Essence of the Book."(13:39)

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُنْبِئُتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Explanation of this by a person who is the symbol of justice, Ali, can result in peace and security for all people of a

society even the followers of other religions. For example, Imam Ali, regarding those Ahle-kitab citizens who lived in Muslim society but drank wine said, *"If they committed it in their homes, or in worshipping sanctuaries, as long as it does not infect Muslims, do not bother them."*²³

Or in a tradition from imam Sadiq, it is narrated that Ali wrote to his agent in Egypt, Mohammad ibn Abi Bakr, *"A Jewish woman did adultery, order people of her community punish her as they went."*²⁴

From these traditions, it become clear that his holiness while interacting people of society including each one of non-Muslim (Ahle-Kitab), not only behaved based on justice, even he acted upon their own books and rules or leave them to their own judges. His manner when facing Ahle-Kitab was when Islam governed a vast territory and Ahle-Kitab was in minority; therefore, he could judge them by Islamic rules without any problem; but even though some beliefs and rules of them were different from Islamic regulation, he, by revoking to ethical principles and considering dignity of people and respecting Abrahamic religions, honored their rules and let them judge based on their own religion and beliefs.

In Ali's point of view, responsibility of a rulership regarding people of an

Islamic society is to observe public rights of people, Muslim or non-Muslim; not only he himself tried to respect their right but also supervise and be sensitive to others not to neglect people's right.

Loyalty in treaties

To be loyal to treaties not only is emphasized when Muslims are your partner, but even for non-Muslims and their enemies. It is natural that this advice includes Ahle-Kitab as well.

The holy Prophet, in his first days of Hijrah to Medina, signed a treaty pact with Jews of that city. By this treaty, different tribes of Medina united and made a single nation comprising of Jews and Muslims. In this treaty, it was asserted that the united groups which included muslims and Ahle Kitab could keep their own beliefs: Muslims keep their own beliefs and Jews keep their own beliefs and in each disputable issue, they should refer to God and His Prophet.²⁵

In treaties and peace letters that Ali signed with religious minorities and non-Muslims, two points are significant. First, in all parts, he emphasized on respecting ethical values and honor of people and second he insisted on keeping promises. In a treaty that Islamic governor signed with Zoroastrian of Iran, leniency,

compromise and kindness of Muslim governor with Zoroastrians can be seen.

In this treaty, Islamic governor gave two privileges to Zoroastrians: honoring human kind's dignity and ethical values.

In this treaty written in 39 AH., in the handwriting of imam Husain, the followings have been guaranteed: personal security, financial security, saving Zoroastrians' dignity and religious freedom, amnesty, and returning belongings and gifts of temples to the owners, tax-exemption and Jezyeh-exemption, being kind and merciful on them by agents of Muslim's caliphs and protecting governor of Zoroastrians.

In another treaty of imam Ali in 40th year of Hijri in Deir Jezghil دیر جزقیل, it is obviously mentioned that this treaty forced them to do good deeds and protect ethical values and dignity of human beings and forbade them from evil actions. Imam, in this treaty, gave two main privileges to Christians: first is personal, financial, grace security and in the light of it freedom in carrying out their religious duties and the other one is decreasing Jezyah.

Another time, in the text of this treaty, respecting Christians' leaders, not destroying churches, prohibition of breaking promises and likewise were highlighted.

Likewise, Ali, as a ruler of Islamic world, in his governmental decree called *Ahdname*, at the time of appointing Malik Ashtar as a governor of Egypt, wrote that God's satisfaction resides in peace. He also informed him of enemies plot and advised him to be prudent. He also wrote, *"If you conclude an agreement between yourself and your enemy or enter into a pledge with him then fulfill your agreement and discharge your pledge faithfully. Place yourself as a shield against whatever you have pledged because among the obligations of Allah there is nothing on which people are more strongly united despite the difference of their ideas and variation of their views than respect for fulfilling pledges.*

*Besides Muslims, even unbelievers have abided by agreements because they realized the dangers which would come in the wake of violation (thereof). Therefore, do not deceive your enemy, because no one can offend Allah save the ignorant and the wicked. Allah made His agreement and pledged the sign of security which He has spread over His creatures through His mercy and an asylum in which they stay in His protection and seek the benefit of nearness to Him. Therefore, there should be no deceit, cunning or duplicity in it."*²⁶

In this way, Ahle-Kitab in Islamic territory, are not counted as foreigners and this term in Islamic laws is replaced with "allies" and when the contract is signed by two parts willingly, it causes unity.

Saving security

Ahle-Kitab should live a secure life in terms of financial and personal aspects. When they are living in an Islamic society, their life and money should be secured. This responsibility is on the shoulder of government. However, this security will spread when Muslims pay attention to it. They could make government follow this rule. This consideration receives the highest emphasize from Quran, not only regarding life and money of minorities but it is on Muslim and Islamic governor to protect them from any attacks inside or outside of country.

Therefore, religious minorities and Ahle-Kitab are classified among those for whom an Islamic government should prepare security. For example, at the time of Ali's rulership, Mu'awiyah army attacked one of the cities in his territory; they killed a number of people, raid homes of Muslims and non-Muslims and harass them. When Ali was informed, he got angry and said, "*I heard that a man from Sham, attacked home of Muslim woman and home of non-Muslim woman who was in the custody of Islamic governor, they loot her anklet, bracelet, necklace, and earrings while these women had nothing to defend but tears and pleading! Sham army left there by good booties while none of them was hurt or injured and not a drop of blood was shed. But if a*

Muslim dies out of this sorrow [for this event] should not be blamed! It is natural in my idea."²⁷

This shows the importance and attention of Islamic governor that they should know themselves responsible to the life and money of non-Muslims and there is no difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in this regard.

Conclusion

The most significant feature of behavior of Ahlul Bayt when they face Ahle-Kitab includes ethnical-oriented manner, academic debates, respect, kindness, justice-oriented manner, loyalty in treaties, which their realizations have been manifested when they were in power, i.e. in the short time of their rulership.

Islam has always been emphasizing on dignity of mankind, no matter white or colored, religious or non-religious, Arab or non-Arab.

All debates and discussions of Ahlul Bayt were grounded on ethnicity and dignity.

Ahlul Bayt always counted academic, logical, reasonable, and friendly talks as key issues for inviting people to Islam.

Rules of other divine faiths which are derived from their authentic belief should be treated with respect.

In social conflicts, any impoliteness, disrespect, improper reaction to people or their opinions should be avoided based on the view point of Islam and Ahlul Bayt.

From Ahlul Bayt point of view, justice is the main principle which should be the base of all disputes and no matter Muslim or non-Muslim, it should be considered.

“Security” is of the most significant Islamic commands which should be preserved by each and every individual.

²⁵ Al-siyar al-Nabovatiyah, vol.1, p.357

²⁶ Nahjul balaghah, letter 53

²⁷ Tahzib al-Ahkam, vol.6, p.293

¹ Nisa: 4

² Momtahanah: 1,9

³ Anbiya: 1-7

⁴ Al-Kafi, vol.2, p.648

⁵ Ibid, vol.3, p.540

⁶ Kafi, vol.2, p.67

⁷ Mostadrik al-Vasail, vol. 11, p.31

⁸ Ibid, p.30

⁹ Nahj al-Balagheh, sermon 192

¹⁰ Ale Imran, 3-4

¹¹ Daeem al-Islam, vol.1, p.369

¹² Baqare: 256; Ale Imran, 64; Ankabot, 46

¹³ Ikhtisas, p.151

¹⁴ Al-Kafi, vol.8, p.60.n.26

¹⁵ Tuhaf al-Ughulo, p.30

¹⁶ Tahzib al-Ahkam, vol.9, p.322. no.4

¹⁷ Al-Kafi, vol.2, p.324., no.5

¹⁸ Nahjul Balagheh, letter 51

¹⁹ Al-Kafi, vol.3,p.51

²⁰ Tahzib al-Ahkam, vol.6, p.293

²¹ Nahjul Balagheh, letter 53

²² Bihar al-anwar, vol.41, p.56

²³ Al-Kafi, vol.8, p.228, n.5; vol.8, p.229, n. 8

²⁴ Vasail al-Shia, vol.128, p.8, n.5