

About The Author

[This section has been written by Allamah Sayyid Abdul Husayn Sharaf al-Din, the author of *Al-Muraja'at (Sunni-Shi'ah Dialogue)*].

His Birth and Early Life

He was born—may Allah exalt his station—in the city of Kazimiyyah at noon on Friday, the 29th of the blessed month of Ramadan in the year 1272 A. H. Indeed he was raised in the household of wisdom and piety under his saintly father, who made every effort to educate his son. He succeeded in placing his son on a firm intellectual footing and raising him to reach the peak of guidance. He first taught him the various branches of Arabic. Our author hardly clocked fifteen before mastering grammar, rhetoric and making good progress in logic. He was tutored by pious and accomplished professors from among the scholars of Kazimiyyah, chosen by his father who supervised the studies of his son. This honorable father would spare no effort in stimulating him and strengthening his resolve to attend to his studies.

In his early life he had loftiness for mind and always aspired for perfection. Thus he engaged himself in learning and distinguished himself among his peers, finishing the *sutooh* (levels) in *fiqh* and *usul* (jurisprudence and its principles) at the early age of eighteen. He studied both subjects and mastered them under the supervision of his father. Sometimes he would attend the classes of other professors of Kazimiyyah also, and, as a result, became known to all the people as a keen student. He became famous for his exceptional intellect, moral excellence and sound views; he was a real model for the youth, both in outward behaviour and inner uprightness.

In the Holy City of Najaf

Since the time the sheikh of the sect, Imam Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Tusi (448 A. H.) migrated to Najaf, it has been the center of learning that attracts the scholars and to this day it remains the source of all branches of knowledge. Najaf is indeed the greatest center of Islam, especially the Imamiyya school of thought. It is like a great university where both the intellectual and transmitted sciences are acquired yielding thousands of masters of religious knowledge. These graduates, then carry good tidings and warn mankind everywhere, reminiscent of the apostles from among the Children

of Israel.

The author was one of those luminaries. He left for Najaf at his father's bidding in the year 1290 A. H., fully prepared for the race to attain perfection and devoted himself wholeheartedly to jurisprudence, its principles and other disciplines of the Ahl al-Bayt, by attending the lectures of great Muslim religious scholars. He learned philosophy and theology from al-Mawla Muhammad Baqir al-Shakki and after his death, the author joined Sheikh Muhammad Taqi al-Kul Baykanri and Sheikh Abdunnabi al-Tabarisi to complete his studies in these fields.

Hence, he continued his intellectual life with full enthusiasm; learning, teaching, writing, lecturing and engaging in debates until he left for Samarra, highly commended by his teachers who openly testified to the fact that our author had reached the level of *ijtihad* and was now capable of deducing secondary rules of jurisprudence from the sources of Islamic law. Thus, did he bid Najaf farewell, as a successful student. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

In Samarra

When the master of the Shi'ah, the reviver of the *shari'ah*, the great Imam al-Shirazi left Najaf for Samarra in 1291 A. H, the elites of his school hastened to join him there. They rallied around him, forming a formidable circle. Like these scholars, he too had girded himself (may Allah raise his station) for the task of serious studies. They would spend long hours day and night without getting weary, and how could they have grown weary while they were supported by his holy spirit which sharpened their inquiring nature and polished their minds.

Their retentive hearts were receptive to his words of wisdom and to various intellectual and transmitted disciplines. As a result, religious studies flourished and reached their peak in Samarra, surpassing all other centres of learning. The author was one of the authorities among the scholars of religion who drank from that wholesome fountain.

He left Najaf for Samarra in the year 1297 A. H. ready to absorb what that highly gifted Imam and reviver had to give. Along with the other scholars around the Imam, our author devoted himself to his studies with unflagging commitment. In return, the Imam took special care of him, reposing his trust in this student who proved true to his master's expectations.

Between the master and his students there grew firm ties of love, harmony and brotherhood. Through mutual compassion, they diligently pursued their academic work, their sole concern. They delved into the depths of the disciplines in order to reveal their subtleties and fully comprehend their fundamentals and branches. Sometimes the studies were conducted under the supervision of the master during the lessons or outside class, and in the form of debates among students. This was the situation of our author and his peers throughout their stay in Samarra.

He spent about seventeen years there engaged in incessant academic pursuit. He followed closely in the footsteps of the Imam and those of his other eminent teachers, retracing the steps of the leaders of the seminary at Samarra. He explored the methods of research employed by great Imamiyyah scholars deliberating on their procedures of confirmation and revocation of proofs during the process of deduction so that he could adopt the best and most balanced methodology. Thus, he acted according to these verses of the Holy Qur'an:

“Those who listen to what is said and follow the best thereof. Those are the ones guided by Allah and those are men of understanding.”

Our author's time was spent in attending the classes of his master, taking part in discussions with his learned peers, delivering lectures to his students, writing and worship. He had special discussions daily with his master, the great researcher, al-Muqaddas Mirza Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi. This practice continued for twelve years. Having spent a very active period both intellectually and practically, he left for Kazimiyyah, his birth place, two years after the demise of his master.

A Brief Biography of his Teacher

A Brief Biography of his Teacher¹

He was the Imam, the reviver² of religion, ‘the proof’³ of Islam, the honorable Sayyid Muhammad Hasan ibn Mirza Mahmud ibn Ismail al-Husayni al-Shirazi, who came from a noble family in Shiraz. He was born in Shiraz in mid-Jumada al-Ula, 1230 A. H. and started his studies there. He later went to Isfahan during the time of the two noble scholars Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Rashti and Sayyid Sadr al-Din al-Amuli and met pious and accomplished teachers⁴ and studied under them. Then he migrated to the holy city of Najaf in 1250 A. H. where he applied himself to studies under the guidance of its notable scholars until his main teacher Imam Sahib al-Jawahir testified to the fact that he had reached the level of absolute *ijtihad*. ⁵

He then continued his studies and research exclusively under the supervision of the grand master, Sheikh Murtada al-Ansari, surpassing all other disciples. When the latter died and, as a result, the people became confused as to who should be recognized as the next *marja amm*, (source of emulation for all), the opinion of prominent scholars⁶ among the disciples settled on Mirza al-Shirazi.

In the year 1288 A. H he went on pilgrimage to Mecca and also visited Medina, may Allah's blessings be on the one who ennoble it. In the year 1291 he migrated to Samarra where he lived with a large number of his disciples and graduates whose presence made the city a fountain of knowledge. The scholars who learnt from him are too many⁷ to be named here. Under his supervision, they graduated firm in knowledge, their condition befitting this line:

Scholars, leaders, men of wisdom; by whose path, the stars are guided.

They spread his knowledge from the pulpits and through their glorious writings. May their recompense lie with Allah! This great Hashimi Imam was entrusted with the leadership of the Imamiyah sect because his piety, knowledge, forbearance and refulgent wisdom had earned him the respect of eminent personalities. His authority, *marja'iyah*, was accepted by all.

The people turned to this benevolent father for *taqlid*, (imitation in religious laws), and sought his opinion even in private affairs. He was a wise custodian of Islam and the Imamiyah sect and was always alert and ready for the service and defence of both. Through his intellect, vigilance and foresight he took great care of his community. He was noble in demeanour, forbearing, generous, ascetic and desirous of nothing but Allah's rewards. He was a towering figure whom tyrants feared and to whom powerful kings submitted. He was described by one Sayyid as follows:

“The rulers you led, as you would horses and freed the people for the service of the Lord.

The rulers bowed grudgingly though, lest recalcitrance makes them face your chastisement.

Let them now cheer up and wallow now that you have taken repose, for they are now free.”

The case of the tobacco monopoly conceded to Great Britain by the government of Iran during the reign of the Qajari king, His Majesty Nasrudeen Shah was clear testimony to what we have said. The vigilant Imam was apprehensive for the independence of Iran so he issued a timely *fatwa* forbidding the use of tobacco, at the same time expressing his anger with both governments, because of the infamous contract. In the wake of the great agitation engendered by the *fatwa* the whole Iranian nation renounced the use of tobacco, considering it what the pious considered wine!

This situation persisted so that the two governments had no other choice except to revoke the contract and terminate the monopoly despite heavy material losses and the moral blow they suffered. [8](#) “Allah has turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not obtain any advantage, and Allah suffices the believers in fighting, and Allah is Strong and Mighty.” This virtuous act earned widespread praise both verbal and written, therefore there is no need to expatiate on that.

Indeed Allah opened for the Imam the gates of wealth so that considerable amounts of money were at his disposal. But his saintly soul rose above it in asceticism preferring to undertake projects of common good. [9](#)

In his financial support the Imam used to give priority to two groups of people: the religious students who wanted to continue their studies, graduate from the seminaries and become leaders who invite to the true path; and the weak such as orphans, widows, the poor, the destitute and the needy travellers among the Shi'ah who came from different parts of the world to visit him. He was responsible for the keep of all these people and they were amply provided for.

For those among the two groups who resided in other cities or countries monthly allowances were

arranged and they received it wherever they lived unceasingly. Apart from these, innumerable delegations often called on the Imam expectantly and he gave them abundantly so that they always left contented and grateful. I saw this great man when I migrated to Samarra in 1310 A. H. to study there. In those days the conditions were most conducive for learning and religion. The relations of the Imam and his students with the community were at their best.

I have personally witnessed myself most of what I am recording concerning his qualities and heard the rest from celebrated scholars, 'the proofs' of Islam and other informants. Orators commended him and poets chanted his praises. If such works were to be collected they would surely run into volumes. Here we will be contented with an elegy written by one of the Sayyids:

“Delegations come in, confident that your vale shall rain heavily.

At your place, they aimed, from distant lands, by land and by sea they are shipped.

At your splendid courtyard they alight as they would, in their ripe fields.

Here they disembark on fertile ground and with gratitude do they leave.

Neither is their honor wounded nor does misery or pride mar your gift.

As though the orphans of all of the by-gone had, in Samarra, guarded treasures.

They receive your provisions effortlessly like verdure watered by the rain.”

The Imam was fortunate to have as ministers, outstanding members of his seminary who were known for their perceptive intellects, and sharp hearts. Abu Muhammad Hasan al-Sadr (the author) was indeed the best of them. Their master, the Imam, had tested and found them to be honest, faithful and compassionate councillors. So he entrusted them with key positions to help him in the great responsibility he shouldered and they discharged their duties with the sincerity it deserved. Religious and worldly affairs were harmonized thanks to their wise counsel.

Our author was the closest companion of the Imam who had great love and high regard for him. Because of his trust in the author, known for his sound judgement, the Imam would first confide to him his affairs and subsequently present the matter before the council without which no judgement concerning the general public was executed. It seemed as though this verse of the Qur'an had descended about them:

“And those who respond to their Lord and establish prayer, and their affair is by consultation, and they spend from what we have given them.”

This is how he was in the days of his leadership and this is how his pious companions were. They remained sincere to Allah, the Glorious, the Powerful, until they returned to Him as true believers.

He died in Samarra on Tuesday night the 24th of Shaban 1312 A. H. He was carried on the shoulders from Samarra to Najaf, a distance of eight stages for riders (a stage is a day's journey). The people of Samarra, Najaf and the towns and villages in between, took part in the funeral procession generating a congregation never seen before.

They took turns in transporting his body; tribe after tribe, district after district, city after city and village after village. They competed in getting blessed and honoured by carrying his body and crying 'loyalty, loyalty!', the way the thirsty call out for water. The people took his body to the holy shrines of the Imams and sacred Muslim leaders (as a token of) renewing his fealty (to the Imams) and then prayed over it at the four mausoleums, at Samarra, Kazimiyyah, Karbala and Najaf.

The emotion showed by the people in Baghdad and the cities of these mausoleums was too immense to be described. His remains were laid to rest on Thursday, the 2nd of Ramadan, in his school by the side of the glorious courtyard of Imam Ali ('a). His student Abu Muhammad Hasan al-Sadr, our author went into the grave to lay him to rest. He was also the foremost personality in the funeral procession which was attended by scholars, leaders, tribal heads and people from all walks of life. My father who was on a visit to his pure forefathers, on whom be peace, helped him in interring the body of the holy man. [10](#)

[His Return to Kazimiyyah](#)

The author returned to his birth place, Kazimiyyah, in 1314¹¹ and his first stop was the courtyard of his ancestor, the gate of requests, Imam Musa al-Kazim ('a). His time was spent in his prayer niche, the library or the classroom; and on writing, conducting research and guiding the people.

When he stood in prayer before the Lord of lords he resembled Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn, the 'Adornment of the worshippers' and master of those who prostrate themselves before Allah and his meekness before Allah the Mighty and Glorious, pervaded his heart, hearing, sight, and all his senses and limbs. He was often found in his library, which was packed with valuable books, examining the works of earlier and later scholars, and reflecting on the subtleties to discover the lofty aims of those masters. His teaching was unique and his writing of the highest order. When he took up research work he used to dig deep into the subject bringing forth its hidden ideas and full import, removing all ambiguities and clarifying the facts.

On his return to Kazimiyyah and joining his saintly father they found renewed impetus for discussion and treating difficult issues as they were used to whenever they found themselves together. When they met they were always relaxed in spirit and full of vigour for learning; they missed no opportunity that their reunion presented.

When he took to preaching and guiding the people, words of wisdom flowed out from his lips and, as a result, he captured the hearts, returned the dissenters to the right way, bridled obstinate desires and reformed deviating souls. Consequently, his listeners' eyes and hearts lowered in submission. After returning to Kazimiyyah he hardly spent two years before his dear father passed away, a calamity too

heavy for him to endure. He took over all the responsibilities of his deceased father.

When his great teacher died and the people wanted to imitate him in religious duties, i. e. follow him as *marja' taqlid* he referred them to his uncle's son, the saintly Sayyid Ismail al-Sadr. It was on the latter's death in 1338 A. H. that he assumed this office. His book on practical laws of Islam, *Ru'us al-Masa'il al-Muhimmah*, was published and he wrote annotations on the *Tabsirah* of Allamah al-Hilli, *Najat al-Ibad* and *Urwat al-Wuthqa* which transformed these books into special sources according to which his followers observed their religious behaviour.

During his tenure as *marja' taqlid* and even before that, the author was one of the most able supporters of the Ahl al-Bayt's cause. He was very cautious in the process of espousing their laws and most compassionate towards their orphans (i. e. the Shi'ah). He took up the task of promoting the mission of the Ahl al-Bayt and devoted his life for that. He would never miss a single chance to support it till he joined them in the abode of the hereafter.

His Sermons

His sermons were in fact schools from which guidance could be sought and in which was available whatever is desired to make a perfect human being; different types of knowledge, all sorts of wisdom and admonition which would uplift one to the level of the angels in heaven, as the poet said,

“In the earth is the ephemeral substance of his body, while his mind resides in the high heavens.”

He spoke with a lucid style and with grand and elegant terminology. He would bare his heart with clear, exquisite eloquence. His speech found its way to the inner recesses of the heart. He addressed both the elite and ordinary people with singular tenderness, taking into account their feelings and level of knowledge and understanding. Those who attended his assemblies returned with the prize they anticipated; they learnt rare pieces of wisdom and numerous intellectual and practical lessons.

His Intellectual Attainments

He reached the peak both in knowledge and action. He was a master of jurisprudence, with which he had been exceptionally endowed and by which he became a guide and an established authority. He was indeed a sanctuary for the religious, including those who held key positions of authority in religious law and he was a source of emulation, *marja*. He was a reliable transmitter of traditions, an authority in hadith and a scholar of historical issues. He was master of the principles of jurisprudence, biographical sciences, the evaluation of traditionists, (*rijal*) the science of the contextual study of hadith (*al-dirayah*) and the genealogies of the Quraysh and other Arabs, especially the Hashimites. He was well versed in exegesis and other sciences of the Book (i. e. the Qur'an) and the Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet and his family, the *Ahl al-Bayt* p.b.o.th.) in addition to other branches of knowledge such as grammar, rhetorics and lexicology. He was counted among the competent scholars in logic and philosophy, and

was also well grounded in theology, astronomy and arithmetic. As for ethics, the author was a fathomless ocean with whom no one can compete.

His Debates in Defence of the Truth

I have never seen a persistent person like him in his argument in support of Islam or in his support for the Imamiyyah school. He was indefatigable, with a very eloquent and, somewhat sharp tongue and was very persevering. Capable of deriving proof even from seemingly remote sources, he would silence the contender by refuting his false arguments and putting him to rout. Never have I heard a speaker so economical with words but still capable of establishing the truth; he was concise and through maxims communicated what he desired.

His Competence in Literature

He was indeed a venerable custodian and a true critic of Arabic literature. Although endowed with acuteness and being sharp-witted, the quality of poetry he had aspired for was not feasible, because he had concentrated on his studies in his chosen fields from his early youth till the end of his life. What the circumstances permitted did not earn his pleasure, for his very high aspirations would not accept anything less than the best in all fields. Therefore no poem has been related to his credit. He was like al-Khalil ibn Ahmad, the famous Arabic grammarian, who shunned poetry and did not write a single verse. When asked about the reason, he answered: "Neither can I compose what I want, nor do I want what I can compose". Al-Asma'i (another grammarian) also did not write any poetry. When he was asked, "What prevents you from composing poetry?" "My acute insight in it", was his answer.

His Works

He—may Allah exalt his station—was a writer of exceptional distinction who was both prolific and meticulous. He wrote about different subjects of various disciplines and each one of his works was a real treasure—information properly and uniformly presented. The following is a list of what I readily recall from his works:

On the Fundamentals of Religion (Usul al-Din)

(1) *Al-Durar al-Musawiyah fi Sharh Aqa'id al-Ja'fariyyah* (Musawi's Gems: A Commentary on Jafari Beliefs). The original text is *The Book of Beliefs* written by the great Sheikh Kashif Al-Ghita. The Sheikh has given proofs on the Oneness and Justice of Allah by citing Qur'anic verses and pointing to the wonders of creation observable in nature such as the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, etc. These are discussed verse by verse leaving the task of elaboration for other scholars. Therefore the merit of our author's commentary lies in his expatiation of the circumstances of revelation of those clear verses, the legal opinions that could be derived from them,

and the subtle meaning they contain.

Furthermore, the importance of this work lies also in the simplified but technical language which is employed to show how these Qur'anic verses present more proof for the Oneness of the Almighty and Omnipotent God than the brilliant sun does for daytime. In the chapter on *Imamah* (leadership) he substantiated his views about the Imams, peace be on them, based on sources of the opponents.

(2) *Sabil al-Salihin fi al-Suluk wa Tariq al-Ubudiyyah* (The Path of the Righteous in Wayfaring and Servitude). He mentioned seven paths thereof.

(3) *Ilya' al-Nufus bi Adab Ibn Tawus*. (Reviving the Souls through the Etiquettes of Ibn Tawus). He composed it from the words of Sayyid Jamal al-Din Ali Ibn Tawus al-Hasani that are scattered in his writings. It is arranged into three categories; the first is on the relationship between the servant and his Exalted Lord. The second is on his relationship with his masters, the proofs of Allah, the Almighty, the Exalted i. e. the Imams, and the third is on the relationship of the servant with the angels and fellow humans.

On Jurisprudence

(4) *Sabil al-Rashad fi Sharh Najat al-Ibad* (The Path of Guidance: A Commentary on the Deliverance of the Servants). The style is that employed in deduction and inference in legal issues. A big volume treating issues about water and toilet rules has appeared.

(5) *Tabyin Madarik al-Sadad li al-Matn wa al-Hawashi min Najat al-Ibad*

(Explaining the sources of both text and glosses of *The Deliverance of Servants*). Most of the topics on cleanliness and prayer have appeared. What is meant by glosses here is the two glosses written by Sheikh Murtada al-Ansari and his teacher, Sayyid Mirza al-Husayni al-Shirazi.

(6) *Tahsil al-Furu' al-Diniyyah fi Fiqh al-Imamiyyah* (Acquiring the Religious Laws according to Imamiyyah Jurisprudence). A book useful to both *muhtat* (one who is knowledgeable enough in jurisprudence to determine the precautionary way of conducting his or her religious obligations without having to refer to a particular religious authority) and the *muqallid* (a layman in jurisprudence who has to imitate a particular religious authority). The book of purification and prayer have appeared. In the introduction, the author dealt with the issues of *taqlid* (what a *muqallid* does) in detail.

(7) *Al-Masa'il al-Muhimmah* (Important Issues). It is a valuable book on religious observances for use by *muqallids*.

(8) *Al-Masa'il al-Nafisah* (Precious Issues). It is a book that discusses problematic issues in jurisprudence and its less familiar situations.

(9) His glosses on *Urwat al-Wuthqa*, *Ghayat al-Quswa*, *Najat al-Ibad*, *Al-Tabsirah* and *Al-Fusul*

al-Farisiyah.

(10) *Al-Gayah li Ahl al-Andhar al-Aliyah* (The Ultimate Purpose for those with a Lofty Vision). It discusses the unlawfulness of shaving the beard. It is written in Arabic and Persian.

(11) *Tabyin al-Rashad fi Lubs al-Sawad ala A'immat al-Amjad* (Justifying Wearing Black Clothes to Mourn the Imams). It is written in Persian.

(12) *Nahj al-Sadad fi Hukm Aradi al-Sawad* (The Right Way as Regards the Law of Tenure of the Lands of Iraq)

(13) *Al-Durr al-Nazim fi Mas'alat al-Tatmim* (An Array of Pearls about the Issue of Completion). It is a book on the completion of *kurr* (i. e. a certain volume of water having special rules in purification) with impure water.

(14) *Luzum Qada' ma fat min al-Sawm fi Sanat al-Fawat* (The Necessity to Compensate for Missed Fasts in the year they are missed).

(15) *Tabyin al-Ibahah* (Clarifying Permissibility). It is a book on the permissibility of praying with parts of an animal, the lawfulness of the flesh of which is doubtful.

(16) *Ibanat al-Sudur* It is written to shed light on the issuance of a *hadith* from the Imams and the Holy Prophet. It deals with the *mawqufah* (a hadith, in which the chain of narrators does not reach the source) of Ibn Uzaynah which deals with the issue of the inheriting of houses by a woman who has a child by the deceased.

(17) *Kashf al-Iltibas 'an Qa'idat al-Nas* (Removing the Ambiguity about the Rule of 'the People'), that is the jurisprudential rule stating that 'The people have control over their possessions'.

(18) *Al-Gurar fi Nafy al-Dirar wa al-Darar* (The Best Presentation on the Rule of Prohibiting the Occurrence of Damage or causing it). It is a valuable book comprising some investigations like the meanings of *al-hukumah* (a case whereby the subject of a legal proof, *dalil shara'i*, is eliminated by another proof) and *al-wurud* (a case whereby the subject of a legal proof is defined and delimited by another proof).

(19) *Ahkam al-Shukuk al-Ghayr Mansusah* (The Rules Regarding Doubts that are Not Stipulated). It is a book in which deductive reasoning is used to study the hadith indicating (the necessity) of acting on the assumption that one has performed the greater number of *raka'ats* when one is in doubt as to which number of *raka'ats* one has already performed.

(20) A book on the Stipulated Rules in case of being in Doubt Concerning the Actions during Prayer.

(21) *Al-Rasa'il fi Ajwibat al-Masa'il*. It is a book comprising a number of legal opinions, (*fatwas*), which

answered his followers' questions about religious laws.

(22) *Sabil al-Najat fi al-Mu'amalat* (The Path of Safety in Transactions).

(23) An annotation on Sheikh al-Ansari's verdicts on dissimulation, *taqiya*.

(24) An annotation on the issues relating to water taken from the book of purification by Sheikh al-Ansari (may his soul be sanctified).

(25) *Al-Risala fi Hukm ma' al-Ghusalah* (A Book on the Rules of wash water, *ghusalah*)

(26) A Book on the Rules of Purifying Water.

(27) A Book Concerning the Fact that a Higher Body of Water Maintains its Purity by Virtue of Being Conjoined with a Lower One.

(28) A simplified annotation on the book Sheikh al-Ansari wrote about congregational prayer.

(29) A study on the conditions for testifying to the fact that a person has been suckled by a particular woman.

(30) A study on some issues on endowment, *waqf*.

(31) A Book on the Rules Pertaining to Water that is Used in Cleaning after Relieving Oneself, *isntinja*.

(32) A Book on Water that is Mixed with Something, *al-ma' al-mudaf*.

(33) A short study dealing with the hadith on inaudibility (*ikhfa*)' in saying the glorifications (*tasbihat*) in the third and fourth *raka'ats* of prayer.

(34) *Muna al-Nasik fi al-Manasik* (Desires of the Worshippers Pertaining to the Rites of Hajj). It is a rich book devoted to the rites of major pilgrimage, *hajj* and minor pilgrimage, *umrah*, and the etiquette of visiting the two holy sanctuaries, the Sacred House of Allah and the shrine of His messenger (may Allah's blessings be on him and his Household). It is printed in Baghdad in 1341.

On Hadith

(35) *Sharh Wasi'il al-Shi'ah ila Ahkam al-Shari'a* (a commentary on the famous book *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*). It is a book the like of which has never been written. The author discusses each hadith under a number of headings; text, terminology, chain (of narrators) and import of the hadith. In the section about the text, he mentions the differences among the various copies and ascertains the correct reading of words. The section on terminology consists of a lexical discussion on the words of the hadith. In the section about the chain of transmission, he talked about the narrators, as is obvious.

When he comes to import he looked into the meanings conveyed by the hadith to see whether or not a

given rule could be established by it. He then talks on what other evidences there were that might contradict its import and a possible way of reconciling the two or preferring one over the other. He evinces unprecedented skill in this art. This commentary is, in its own right, a book on jurisprudence, hadith, *usul* (principles of jurisprudence) and *rijal* (the science of the biography and criticism of narrators). Several volumes of this work have appeared.

(36) *Kitab Tahiyyat Ahl al-Qubur bi al-Ma'thur* (It is about the prescribed formulas of sending greetings to the dead when visiting the graves). It comprises of ten chapters and an epilogue.

(37) *Kitab Majalis al-Muminin fi Wafayat al-A'immat al-Ma'sumin* (It is about the sessions which the faithful hold to commemorate the demise of the Infallible Imams). For each Imam he assigns a discourse comprising his merits, miracles and the circumstances of his demise, while leaving out the chain of narrators. He constructs the discourses in the form of sermons with the appropriate tone suitable for reciting on the pulpits on the days of commemorating the Imams' demise. Each discourse ends with a mention of the Imam's wives and children.

(38) *Miftah al-Sa'adah wa Maladh al-Ibad* (The Key to Bliss and the Refuge of Worshippers). The book comprises the recommended religious observances for the day and night, and those done weekly, monthly or yearly. Besides, it contains the prayers to be recited while visiting the Imams and other holy personages as well as the relevant etiquette to be observed.

(39) *Ta'rif al-Jinan fi Huquq al-Ikhwan*. (Directing the Hearts to the Rights of Brothers in Faith) It is an important book containing topics, advice and lessons which can hardly be found in other works.

(40) *Risalah fi al-Manaqib*. It is a book on excellent qualities extracted from al-Suyuti's *Al-Jami al-Saghir* and arranged in alphabetical order.

(41) *Al-Nusus al-Ma'thurah* (Transmitted Texts) It is written about 'the Proof', al-Mahdi –may Allah hasten his reappearance–as recorded in the books of the Sunnis. It has not been completed. Perhaps it is the book, *Akhbar al-Ghaybah*, which is mentioned by Agha Bozorg Tehrani on page 38 of the fifth part of his *Al-Dhari'ah*.

(42) *Sahih al-Khabar fi al-Jam' Bayn al-Salatayn fi al-Hadar* (Sound traditions about combining two prayers when at home). This presentation is confined to the accounts in the six *Sihah* in regard to the fact that the Holy Prophet, blessings of Allah be on him and his Household, sometimes performed two prayers successively when at home not because of rain or other such reasons. The author mentions the views of Sunni scholars who agree with our view.

(43) *Al-Haqai'iq fi Fada'il Ahl al-Bayt alaihim al-salam min Tariq al-Jamhur* (The Facts Pertaining to the Virtues of the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) –peace be on them– in Sunni sources.

(44) *Ahadith al-Raja'a* (Hadiths about the Return).

(45) *Hidayat al-Najdayn wa Tafsil al-Jundayn* (Indicating the Two Ways and Outlining the Two Armies). It is a book commenting on the hadiths of the army of reason and that of ignorance, as reported in *Al-Kafi*.

On the Science of the Context of Hadith (al-dirayah)

(46) *Nihayat al-Dirayah* (The Ultimate In Knowing) It is a commentary on *Al-Wajizah* of Sheikh al-Baha'i in a simplified discourse. He examines the various issues of this discipline including the types of hadith and the topics defamation, *jarh*, and authentication, *ta'dil*.

On the Ways of Transmitting the Hadith

(47) *Bughyat al-Wu'at fi Tabaqat Mashayikh al-Ijazat* (Aspiration of the Attentive Concerning the Classes of Masters who Give Permission for Transmitting the Hadith). It comprises ten classes and a very beneficial preface in which he authorized Sayyid Muhammad Murtada al-Jahanburi al-Hindi to transmit the hadith. It is for the latter that Allamah al-Nuri wrote *Al-Lu'lu' wa al-Marjan*. The author also granted permission to a number of his contemporaries. Some of these texts of his permission were long while others were short.

On the Science of the Biography of Narrators

(48) *Mukhtalaf al-Rijal* (Narrators About whom there is Difference of Opinion). This book deals with this discipline (*ilm al-rijal*) according to the methods usually followed in other sciences discussing its definition, subject, aims, conceptual foundations (*mabadi tasawwuriyah*) and principles of judgment (*mabadi tasdiqiyah*). It also gave an account of the narrators about whom there was difference of opinion.

(49) *Uyun al-Rijal* (Prominent Narrators). It is a book in which he mentions the narrators who enjoyed general credibility and indicates their classes and recounts their biographies. He added an appendix consisting of three classes of narrators and a detailed permission, *ijazah*, to some notable scholars who were Sayyids. At the end of the book he listed most of his works.

(50) *Nukat al-Rijal* (Anecdotes of Traditionists). It is a compilation of his uncle, Sayyid Sadr al-Din's glosses on the *Rijal* of Sheikh Abu Ali. Therefore, it is in fact one of his uncle's works.

(51) *Intikhab al-Qarib min al-Taqrif* (Selecting the Proximate from *Al-Taqrif*). It is devoted to the traditionists whom Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani has explicitly described as Shi'ah in his *Al-Tarib*.

(52) A book concerned with the biography of the pious scholar Hasan al-Husayni al-Raji, the author of *Al-Maqsud*. This book is titled *Dhikra al-Muhsinin* (A Memoir of the Righteous).

(53) *Bahjat al-Nadi* (The Delight of Association). It is a memoir of his father Abu al-Hasan al-Hadi.

(54) *Takmilat Amal al-Amil*. (A Supplement on *Expectation of the Hopeful*).

The original is also known as *A'yan al-Shi'ah*. This supplement is unique. In it, is mentioned such narrators that were not covered by *Amal al-Amil* whether they lived before, during or after its compilation. It appeared in two parts, consisting of three volumes. The first volume covers the first part and discusses Amilah scholars while the second and third volumes that make up the second part, talk about scholars from other countries. The method of compilation used in the original version of this book is also adopted here.

(55) *Al-Bayan al-Badi'*. It is a marvellous account on the fact that Muhammad ibn Isma'il with whom *Al-Kafi's* chain of narrators starts, was indeed the man known as Bazi'a.

(56) *Al-Ta'liqah ala Muntaha al-Maqal* (A gloss on The Ultimate Word).

On Indices

(57) *Ta'sis al-Shi'ah al-Kiram li Ulum al-Islam* (Founding Islamic Sciences by the Honourable Shi'ah).

This book is considered an unprecedented achievement. Here he painstakingly listed the Islamic sciences conducting a full investigation to ascertain the founders and the classes of contributors. He was able to prove that the Imamiyah Shi'ah took precedence in all Islamic disciplines, a fact which has not been demonstrably established before.

(58) *Al-Shi'ah wa Funun al-Islam* (The Shi'ah and Islamic Disciplines) and a book of great worth and is a summary of his previous book, *Ta'sis al-Shi'ah*.

(59) *Fasl al-Qada fi al-Kitab al-Mashhur bi Fiqh al-Ridha'* (Settling the Matter Concerning the Book known as The Religious Jurisprudence of al-Ridha'). He reveals the reality of this book and proves that it is, in fact, *Al-Taklif* by Ibn Abi al-Azaqir al-Shalmaghani and points out the causes of confusion over its authorship.

(60) A book showing that the author of *Misbah al-Shari'ah* was in fact Sulaiman al-Sahrishi, a student of Sayyid al-Murtada. It is a summary of Shaqiq al-Balki's book.

(61) *Al-Ibanah an Kutub al-Khizanah* (Clarifying the Contents of the Bookcase), that is, his own bookcase. A fine book in which he examines the books in his possession, prepares a list of the titles according to the disciplines. What was unusual or not in circulation was indicated by highlighting with the quill of his pen. The book was started with a beautiful introduction stressing the importance of writing and book collection. He also points out the high position of knowledge and scholars, indicating the noble impact they could have on the people, especially the youth.

On Ethics

We have already mentioned that he wrote *Ihya' al-Nufus* and *Sabil al-Salihin* which are both on ethics.

(62) A brief work on observing and assessing one's spiritual life, *al-muraqabah*.

(63) Another book on conduct.

On Debating

(64) *Qati'at al-Lajaj fi Tazyif Ahl al-l'wajaj* (Terminator of Obstinacy Concerning the Forgery of the Deviated). He was alluding to the *akhbaris*, ('the traditionists') who deny *ijtihad* and *taqlid* claiming that all the narrations which have been ascribed to the Pure Imams undoubtedly came down from them and that their import was conclusive.

(65) *Al-Barahin al-Jaliyyah fi Dalal Ibn Taymiyya* (Evident Proofs on the Deviation of Ibn Taymiyya). It is a big book in which the author presents evidence on Ibn Taimiyyah's misguidance, a fact which is confirmed by his own words and deeds, and the testimony of Sunni ulama. The author enumerates the evil deeds of this man and how he contradicted the Muslim nation, *millah*, and went on to mention Ibn Qayyim and the Wahhabis, laying bare their real identity and deviation.

(66) *Al-Firqah al-Najiyah* (The Sect that Attains Salvation). It is a book which proves that that sect is none other than the Twelver Imamiyyah.

(67) *Umar wa Qawluh 'hajar'* (Umar and his Saying: 'He was Delirious'). A book devoted for discussing a sound hadith reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas in which he said: "Thursday, what a Thursday it was!" He then wept bitterly adding, "On one Thursday when the sickness of Allah's messenger became critical and his pain was aggravated he said 'Bring me some writing material so that I may write for you a document after which you shall never go astray.' Then they disputed with one another ignoring that it was improper to dispute in the presence of a prophet. They said, 'The Messenger of Allah is delirious', upon which he retorted, 'Leave me alone...'"

(68) A nice book refuting the *fatwas* of the Wahhabis, who consider it forbidden to erect buildings over the graves of holy people and claim that it is necessary to demolish the structures erected by the Muslims on such places. This study was a most excellent piece in this regard. Whenever I read it I find myself compelled to recite [the Quranic verse] "The truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Surely falsehood is bound to vanish."

On Principles of Religious Jurisprudence

(69) *Al-Lawami'* (The Brilliant Notes). It is a book on the principles of jurisprudence, *usul al-fiqh*, in which he drew up a synthesis of the thoughts of the two scholars al-Ansari and al-Shirazi and those of their prominent students among whom our author's contribution was of paramount importance.

(70) An annotation on the *Rasa'il* of Sheikh Murtada al-Ansari.

(71) *Al-Lubab fi Sharh Risalat al-Istishab* (The Quintessence: A Commentary on the Book about

Istishab (continuation of a given situation). It is a big volume.

(72) *Risalah fi Ta'arud al-Istis'habayn* (A Book on the Mutual Contradiction of *istishabs*).

(73) *Hada'iq al-Usul* (Gardens of the Principles of Jurisprudence). In this book miscellaneous issues on the problems of *usul* are discussed.

(74) *Al-Ta'adul wa al Ta'arud wa al-Tarjih* (Equivalence of Two Evidences, their Mutual Contradiction and Preferring One over the Other). The glosses on the *Risa'il* of Sheikh apart, this is a book in its own right.

On Arabic Grammar

(75) *Khulasat al-Nahw* (A Summary on Grammar). A book in which he summarized this discipline according to the arrangement of the *Alfiyah* of Ibn Malik.

On History

(76) *Nuzhat Ahl al-Haramayn* (A Recreation for the Residents of the Two Sanctuaries). A book dealing with the history of building the mausoleums of the Commander of the Faithful and Imam Husayn –peace be on them. In it, he mentions the first people to erect these sanctuaries, those who rehabilitated them, the dates of construction and rehabilitation and the names of those responsible for the restoration. He also mentions the first descendants of Fatima to live in al-Ha'ir, that is, Karbala.

(77) *Wafayat al-A'alam min Shi'ah al-Kiram* (Demise of the Honorable Shi'ah Dignitaries). The subject of this book is obvious from the title. It is chronologically arranged and the classes of the personalities are taken into account. What has appeared of this book covers the first four centuries.

(78) *Muharibu Allah wa Rasuluh* (Adversaries of Allah and His Messenger). It is a book devoted to enumerating the people mobilized for fighting Imam Husayn, the lord of the martyrs on the day of Taff. He showed that they were thirty thousand odd.

(79) *Al-Mata'in* (Defamatory Cases). It is a book that cites cases where some Sunni *ulama* defame one another.

(80) *Al-Nasi'* (The Deferment). It is a study disclosing the essence of deferment of the months, *nas'*, that was in practice during the days of ignorance before the advent of Islam which Allah declared to be a sign of disbelief. In this book there is a rebuttal of the doubts raised concerning the birth of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his Household, in the month of Rabi' al-Awwal and his conception which took place within the nights of *tashriq* (eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth of the month of Zu al-Hijjah).

(81) *Kashf al-Zunun an Khiyanat al-Ma'mun* (Removing the Doubts Concerning Ma'mun's Treachery). It is a book proving Ma'mun's hideous treachery carried out in the name of al-Ridha', peace be on him.

(82) *Mahasin al-Rasa'il fi Ma'rifat al-Awa'il* (Beautiful Pamphlets on Introducing the Predecessors) in fifteen chapters.

His Library

Since the time of his youth the author was very fond of collecting books, a trait which continued till his last days. He took great care in this pursuit and was very successful in gathering precious books on all fields of learning, both transmitted and rational.

There is little wonder in his success considering the fact that he would prefer this acquisition to meeting daily needs, sometimes even necessary belongings were sold out for the sake of this pursuit. Consequently, he gathered a large number of printed books and manuscripts.

His library has a range of rare manuscripts not possessed by most large libraries and perhaps some precious books are not found elsewhere. The fame of this library stems from here. In his survey of the libraries of Iraq in his book *Tarikh Adab al-Lughat al-Arabiyyah* (The History of Arabic Literature), the famous scholar George Zaidan considered this library one of the best.

The author paid special attention to this library and prepared an index for it which he gave the title *Al-Ibanah an Kutub al-Khizanah*. This was done with great skill as noted when we mentioned the title *Al-Ibanah* in the section about his works. But this book (the index) was the focus of further care; it was constantly re-examined and thoroughly revised.

His trustworthy and confidential student and nephew (a son of his sibling sister), Sheikh Murtada Al Yasin, when writing his biography, had this to say: "I have heard about Sayyid, the author that he was assiduous in his studies in the prime of youth and he hardly slept at night or took a siesta. During his old age I witnessed it myself, not to talk of hearing it from others. His habit of frequenting his library day and night with a pen in his right hand and a sheet of paper in his left is clear testimony to the fact that the eye which used to stay open at night would not close even during the day.'Sleep could not overcome it except for a while'."

His Authorities in Transmitting the Hadith

In transmitting the hadith he related from two classes of scholars: those from whom he related what he heard and read without acquiring the formal permission, *ijazah*, and those from whom he related after receiving their general permission, *ijazah ammah*.

Among the first group were Hujjatul Islam Mirza Muhammad al-Shirazi al-Gharawi al-Askani (d. 1312) (who was the greatest of them), Sheikh Hajj Mirza Habibullah al-Rashiti al-Gharawi (d. 1313) the author of *Bada'i al-Usul*, Sheikh Muhammad Hasan ibn Sheikh Hashim al-Najafi (d. 1308) who wrote a commentary on *Al-Shara'i*, Mawla Muhammad al-Irawani al-Najafi who died in the beginning of the

fourteenth century, Sheikh al-Islam Sheikh Muhammad Hasan Al Yasin (d. 1308), the author of *Asrar al-Faqaha* and our author's honorable father Sayyid al-Hadi (d. 1316).

The second group includes a number of scholars such as: Sheikh Mullah Ali ibn al-Mirza Khalil al-Razi al-Gharawi (d. 1297), Sayyid Mahdi al-Qazawini al-Hilli al-Gharawi, the prolific writer who died in 1300 and Mawla Mirza Muhammad Hashim ibn Zayn al-Abidin al-Isfahani who died in the holy city of Najaf in the year 1318.

The author has included, in his lengthy works on permissions detailed biographical accounts of the aforementioned scholars, leaving nothing unsaid.

His Physical Constitution and Appearance

Allah, the Mighty and Powerful, made him a model of perfection and endowed him with great splendor. He was among the most handsome of men, the most elegant in appearance and characterized by unimpaired natural disposition. He was of a very firm built, strong in sinew, sturdy and had a robust chest. He had thick shoulders, rounded muscular arms. His cheeks were smooth, his nose and eyebrows fine and eyes large and white with bushy eyelashes. He had a bright and clear complexion and a delicate skin. His senses were sharp, quick and extremely acute. He was indeed clad in elegance and Allah had made him lovable to all. His smile that showed a set of teeth as white as hail stones delighted whoever cast an eye on him. His grey beard that covered his chest inspired awe. Glory is to Him who bestowed on this man abundant knowledge and physique, taught him eloquence and endowed him with the proof! Blessed be Allah the best Creator.

His Natural Disposition and Traits

Allah created him from sacred stuff, molded him with the material of nobleness, and brought him forth from noble origins. In him are combined all the traits of nobility which are expressed through his virtuous manners. Chivalry was embodied in his word and deed. I have never seen anyone with more honorable manners or a nobler disposition. He was always composed and courageous. He was a defender of the truth and one who extirpates rancor.

He was very generous and liberal. And no wonder about that for he came from a people from whose hands spring of generosity gushed forth, the ultimate in liberality.

He was sharp in mind lively at heart, fine in sensibility and possessed acuteness of the faculties and presence of mind. To the believer he was very compassionate but, in respect of Allah's enemies, he was stern and in the cause of Allah, he was indifferent to blame. He had a lofty goal and a high-minded nature that raised him to noble things and position of greatness.

His Biography

During his lifetime, a number of scholars wrote the author's biography. Among them was Allamah Sheikh Murtada Al Yasin who has beautifully depicted his unique personality. This account, in essence, urges the scholars to wake up to the issues necessary for attaining perfection. There is also a biography of the author in *A'yan al-Shi'ah*. The numerous works he authored will remain a living memory of him, by the will of Allah. The fact that he was one of the masters who granted permission for transmitting the hadith, *shuyukh al-ijazah*, of the century in which he lived and, therefore, one of the authorities on hadith till the end of time, also serves to immortalize him. The great saintly scholar, Sheikh Abbas ibn Ridha' al-Qummi has also written about him in his biography of Sharaf al-Din al-Amuli, the grandfather of the author. Even foreign writers like the Lebanese scholar, Amin al-Raihan, and some orientalist tourists wrote about him.

After his death the eminent researcher, Sayyid Ali Naqi al-Naqawi wrote a detailed biography of the author. It is actually a gloss on an excellent *ra'iyyah* (a poem whose verses end in the letter *ra'*) in which he elegizes the deceased author. The elaborate commentary of this ingenious poem depicts the various stages of his intellectual life coupled with his practical career from his birth to his eternal rest. It also refers to his forefathers, namely, Sharaf al-Din, his father Zayn al-Abidin, his grandfather Ali Nur al-Din and his great grandfather Husayn ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Hasan Taj al-Din al-Musawi. It then recounts the rest of the heroes of this family including the earlier and later ones who lived in Jabal Amil and Iraq, pointing out the eminent religious and worldly positions and the dates of death of these personalities.

In addition, this biography gives a picture of the author's high social standing and his special position in the Muslim community. It listed his masters, his students, and his works which cover various disciplines. It also includes the circumstances of his death, his funeral procession and the commemorations in his honour that took place in Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, India, etc. The following two sections have been quoted from this biography.

Those Whom he Granted Ijazah

Sayyid al-Naqawi said: He –may Allah exalt his position–was a great authority on transmitting the hadith and a link to the contemporary categories of narrators.

Among the numerous narrators who related from him were a group of 'proofs' (*hujaj*), of the Shi'ah sect and its distinguished scholars such as Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Hasan al-Isfahani al-Najafi (may Allah prolong his life), Sheikh Muhammad Kazim al-Shirazi, Hadi Al Kashif al-Ghita, Muhammad Ridha' Al Yasin, Ali al-Qummi, Sayyid Ridha' al-Hindi, Mirza Hadi al-Khwansari of Holy Karbala; Sheikh Muhsin of Samarra who is known as Agha Bozurg Tehrani, the author of *Al-Dhari'a ila Tasanif al-Shi'ah* and other works; Sayyid Abdul al-Husayn Al Sharaf al-Din of Jabal Amil; Sheikh Agha Ridha'

al-Isfahani, the writer of *Naqd Falsafat Darwin* (A Critique of Darwin's Philosophy); Sayyid Sadruddin al-Sadr of Mashhad, the city of Imam al-Ridha' ('a), my father Allamah Sayyid Abd al-Hasan al-Naqawi of Lucknow; Allamah Sayyid Shabir Hasan of Faydabad and others. I myself relate from him according to a permission, *ijazah*, he wrote for me on 11th Shawwal, 1346 A. H. He was the first master in hadith I sought *ijazah* from and he granted me a general permission that includes all our books on hadith, exegeses of the Qur'an and other branches of knowledge.

His Death, Funeral and Commemorations

Sayyid al-Naqawi said: He died in the capital of Iraq, Baghdad, where he was staying for a number of days for treatment in mid-Rabi' al-Awwal, 1354 A. H. [To be specific: in the afternoon of 11th Rabi' al-Awwal 1354 A. H. equivalent to 12th June, 1935]. His demise had a profound impact on all and his funeral procession to Kazimiyyah, his birth place, was attended by about a hundred thousand people from all walks of life, even His Majesty, King Ghazi, sent a delegation on his behalf. The prime minister, his ministers, members of parliament and tribal Sheikhs were also among the participants. At the head of this endless procession were the *ulama* of both Sunni and Shi'ah who followed the bier in humility till they entered Kazimiyyah. He was buried near his ancestor, Imam Musa ibn Jafar ('a). The news of his death soon spread to other parts of Iraq, especially the holy city of Najaf. In consequence, funeral ceremonies were held, the biggest of which was the three-day funeral ceremony of the leader of the Shi'ah, Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Hasan al-Isfahani which was held in Najaf.

He added: No doubt his death resounded through the Muslim world especially in Syria and Jabal Amil (southern Lebanon) from where he hailed and in which his family lived for a long time. His death was felt most intensely in the district of Tyre, the town of the family of Al Sharaf al-Din and their head Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Abdul Husayn Sharaf al-Din. This scholar is a nephew to the deceased. A crowded funeral ceremony characterized by intense grief was conducted in Tyre for seven days throughout which the sadness persisted. In connection with those gatherings we received a printed invitation card indicating that a funeral ceremony was to be held at the new mosque at two o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, 12th Rabi' al-Awwal, 1354, equivalent to 13th June, 1935. It carried the names of speakers of high calibre like Hujjat al-Islam Sheikh Abd al-Husayn Sadiq, Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Abd al-Husayn Nur al-Din, the scholar Khayr al-Din Beg al-Ahdab, Sheikh Ahmad Ridha' and other proficient men of letters. In India, too, a similar ceremony was conducted while the papers carried the news of his death with a most grief-inspiring tone. A similar thing happened in other parts of the Muslim world. It is no wonder though, for when a scholar (*alim*) dies, a cleft appears in the Islamic edifice that nothing can fill till the Day of Judgment.

His Commemoration in the Iraqi Press

A good example of what Iraqi papers wrote in this regard is the report which the Karkh newspaper carried on 30th Rabi' al-Awwal 1354 (1st July 1935), (Number 312, Year 7) which reads:

The Unique Personality of Imam Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr

Some eminent resident of Najaf sent us this short account of the life history of the late great Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Hasan Sadr al-Din, may Allah be pleased with him, and we publish it verbatim.

“It is a futile exercise to attempt to describe the extent of loss which befell the Islamic community as a result of the demise of its great leader, Imam Ayatollah Sayyid Hasan Sadr. It is, in fact, a grave misfortune, the calamity of which is most painful to the Muslims, considering his position as their great leader and scholar, the foremost authority they referred to in both religious and worldly matters and the safe refuge to which they often resorted.

“The Imam –may Allah have mercy on him– was indeed a unique intellectual personality the like of whom is unknown to modern history. He was exemplar of learning and virtue during the three stages of his life: youth, age of maturity and old age. In the first he was the brilliant youth who occupied the foremost position in diligence and intelligence. During the second, he had a unique status among scholars and personalities of distinction. In his old age, he was the greatest religious authority to whom the community entrusted its affairs and referred in all issues of moment.

“The Imam had a cheerful look and a shining forehead. He was strong in furnishing his evidence and was very eloquent; his speech was a smooth flow uninterrupted by faltering or hesitation. He often rebutted the proof of his adversary by more cogent evidence. He made simple the difficult and ambiguous topics so that his listener might find it plain even though it was not. In fact, it was his eloquence, his power of demonstration and his charming mode of speech that makes such topics seem pleasant and simple to the audience.

“His sermons were excellent classes overflowing with knowledge and dealing with culture and all sorts of subjects that may be desired. The topics of discussion usually varied according to the type of audience and their needs. He expresses his ideas so vividly that the listener imagined the scene; when he talked about the angel Gabriel (peace be on him) descending with the revelation you felt as if you had seen and heard him; when he talked about the Holy Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, you had the impression that you were present when he received the message and presented his miracles and that you beheld the books of his hadiths and judgements. When he changed the subject of discussion this feeling persisted due to his power of imagination and expression. At the end of the sermon one would leave with a polished mind and a wealth of information.

“This is what Al-Farikah, the author of *Muluk al-Arab* had to say about the Imam: ‘I visited Sayyid Hasan Sadr al-Din in his home in Kazimiyyah and found that he was man of great physique and excellent manners. He had a high luminous forehead, a thick white beard, and spoke like the prophets did. His eyes were bright and his cheeks rosy. He was tall, sturdy and broad-shouldered. He wore a big black turban, and his shirt was wide, open at the chest, with wide sleeves so that when he pointed with his hand as he spoke his forearm showed. Throughout my journeys in Arab lands I have never seen a

person who reminded me of the prophets as they are portrayed in historical accounts or described by poets and artists, the way this great Shi'ah scholar did. How graceful his simple ascetic life was! As I entered his house I thought that I was passing through one of his servants' quarters before reaching him. When I saw him sitting on a mat in a room which had no furniture except for the mat and some cushions (I knew that more than two million people obeyed his *fatwas* and millions of rupees were sent in by the faithful from India and Iran to be spent for charitable purposes while he himself lived his ascetic life spending not a single rupee for other purposes). I realized how great the man was. How I wish our religious leaders strutting in their purple robes with all sorts of deeds to their credit except charity, could boast of a few persons like this man'.

“Another scholar Amin al–Raihani described this unique personality in the same vein. This is, in fact, nothing but the reality, which a study of this man reveals and clear conscience dictates. Those who hold the same view as that of al–Raihani are many, for orientalist and other scholars often visited the Imam and asked about issues that were difficult to solve. He would immediately answer them with convincing proofs, for which they would express gratitude and commendation. They were amazed at how he treated those questions so naturally and adduced ready historical proofs on ambiguous topics on which they spent a lifetime without finding the solution.

“In general the deceased Imam was a great authority to whose judgement Muslims and non Muslims alike, from the east and the west submitted. As a leader, he was preferred to other contemporary scholars in the fields of religious jurisprudence and its principles, Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, biography of hadith transmitters and other Islamic disciplines. During the lifetime of Imam Sayyid Muhammad Hasan al–Shirazi, his master, he was well–known for learning and scholarship. One day the master wanted him to make a study about some difficult intellectual issues to which he responded and wrote a book on those questions and presented it to his master. The master hardly finished reading his write–up before he stretched his hands out in prayer for him and observed: ‘If I should die today I will leave with a peaceful mind because there is someone among my students, whose work reminds me of that of Bahbihani, the researcher’. The latter was the teacher of Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi Bahr al–Ulum who was famous for his studies and research. This glorious testimony gives us a true picture of the greatness of the deceased Imam and his intellectual standing. He was as one poet says:

He is a leader who but for there is no... [12](#)

Deserves the title: A divine prophet

Indeed, the Imam has been immortalized by his righteous deeds and glorious works that number up to a hundred and could be counted among the best pieces ever produced by any scholar. Perhaps we shall write about these works in future, if Allah wills.

“His name is also perpetuated by his two eminent sons who are themselves scholars: Sayyid Muhammad al–Sadr, the leader of the honorable house of Senate and Sayyid Ali al–Sadr. The former

was a beloved leader of Iraq and her think tank, and an outstanding figure in learning and politics.

To him leadership came submissively,

In spite of itself, contemptibly

Leadership approached him in all humility,

He alone deserves it; to him alone does it fit.

Sayyid Ali on his part assumed the mantle of religious leadership after the death of the Imam and so he was strongly supported by the people. They followed his guidance and drank from his fountain of knowledge. May Allah lengthen the lives of both of them, inspire them with perseverance and grant them ample reward.”

The Iraqi press maintained this tone throughout the period of the obsequies in Iraq. Similarly, the press of Iran, Afghanistan, India, Syria and Egypt expressed great sorrow for his death and mourned him reverently.

The Lebanese Press

Lebanese papers adorned their first pages with the portraits of the Sayyid and published the commemorative speech given by the organizing committee¹³ of the obsequies conducted in Tyre. We reproduce it here verbatim:

“The death of Imam al–Sadr–A calamity for Islam: A summary of his biography, his traits, his intellectual attainment and his personality.

With lips hardly able to move and with great uneasiness and anxiety we bring to the notice of the Muslim community the bereavement of Iraq, Islam, and indeed the whole Arab world on the demise of their leader, the great Imam– Sayyid Hasan al–Sadr. He has departed to the proximity of his Lord leaving behind a condition of helplessness and confusion, that could hardly be rectified until Allah blesses us with a similar leader who will look after the community (*ummah*) and work for its interest with similar urbanity and awareness as that of the deceased in all matters; in learning, in action in opinion and in the desire for reviving spirituality, cultivating the intellect and implanting into the hearts, the doctrines of religion and human principles through liberal and inspiring policies.

“More than anyone else the Islamic community, the Arabs, the Muslims and literary circles suffer the anguish of this loss so that little sleep comes their way, in consequence of the calamity which befell them; i. e. the loss of the last reformer who symbolized Allah’s greatness in the hearts of the believers and was a living portrait of the Prophet and the righteous by virtue of his sincerity, righteousness and perfection of the highest degree.

“We pray that Allah the Most High will compensate the *ummah* its great loss with a guide in the way of goodness and charity, one who would work for the progress of the community, for the promotion of learning and rebirth of thought. It is imperative to give a glimpse of his life history, as a part of our obligation towards our saintly Imam, may Allah be pleased with him.”

His Birth

“He was born on Friday, 29th Ramadan of the year 1272, in Kazimiyyah, the place where his ancestors, Imam al-Kazim and Imam al-Jawad, peace be on them were buried. The city of Kazimiyyah is located on a pleasant site less than a league to the north of Baghdad.

His Name and Lineage

‘When a thing excels it becomes self-subsisting,

It is pointless to describe the sun as bright.’

In fact, the deceased excelled to the extent that he became self-sufficient; he was, in his own right, an illustrious lineage and he has achieved great feats. However, it is the tradition of biographers to mention the lineage of all, whether great or otherwise. Anyhow, the deceased Imam enjoys an outstanding lineage which is the noblest of all. His genealogy surpasses that referred to in this verse:

‘A lineage as though it was the brilliance of forenoon, with vertical beams of daybreak.’

“He was Imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan son of Sharif al-Hadi son of Sharif Muhammad Ali, son of Sharif Saleh, son of Sharif Muhammad, son of Sharif Ibrahim who was known as Sharaf al-Din, son of Zayn al-Abidin, son of Muhammad, son of Hasan, son of Ali, son of Muhammad, son of Taj al-Din who was known as Abdul Hasan, son of Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Ahmad, son of Hamza, son of Sa’dullah, son of Hamza, son of Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Muhammad, son of Ali, son of Abdullah, son of Muhammad, son of Tahir, son of Husayn, son of Musa, son of Ibrahim al-Murtada, son of Imam Musa al-Kazim, son of Imam Abu Abdillah al-Sadiq, son of Imam Abu Jafar al-Baqir, son of Imam Zayn al-Abidin Ali, son of Abu Abdillah Husayn, the lord of the martyrs, the grandson of the master of the prophets whose father was the Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) and whose mother was al-Zahra, the best of all women. These dignitaries of the community, the leaders of the Muslims, who were respected by all, were the ancestors from whom he descended. Thus he was a pure one originating from purity itself!”

How he Grew up and a Word on his Talents

“Allah created the Imam in a rare form and fashioned him in the best way the Most Merciful chooses for any person below the level of infallibility, *ismah*. He was of sound disposition, perspicacious, sharp in

comprehension and very lively. He was also endowed with acute presence of mind, a high degree of self-respect and formidable intellect. In addition, he had very obliging manners, eloquence of speech, power of demonstration and sound reasoning. His language was very attractive and exhibited a skilful spirit that carries the listener along with it. He knew how to steer the hearts and subdue the minds with his saintly words which were saturated with his lively spirit. He was never satisfied with the superficial aspects of things but always delved into their essence and chose what was most congenial to his elegant taste and natural disposition.

“He grew up in the way that his Lord wanted him to be. It is quite natural for him to have achieved this level of greatness and glory because those perfect traits and that mood which was free from all sorts of aberration could only spring from a house like that of Imam Hadi, his father. That house resembled an institute of learning or an accomplished college that subjects its students to a rigorous regime of virtue, morals, sincerity and faith. Renowned psychologists and educationists hold that the home is the foundation on which the life of a person is built. It is, therefore, imperative to exercise wisdom and expertise in establishing this foundation to ensure that the young ones grow up with strength, beauty and splendor as a result of a harmonious training program.

In this way, the youth develop step by step by virtue of their natural capabilities and the knowledge they acquire till they attain the exemplary station. Thus, they advance from one stage to another until they become prosperous, enlightened and free from want and ignorance. And who could have laid that foundation more firmly than Sharif Hadi? And who had such a disposition more attuned to receive those instructions and guidelines for a successful life than that of the deceased? Therefore it is only natural that our master should ascend to that high status and reach the positions of the righteous and the leaders.”

His Personal Qualities

He was very kind and always very careful about the common good. He would not draw near him anyone for emotional reasons, just because he loved them nor distance others because he disliked them, nor respect people because of their power. For him the only yardstick was faith and goodness. The philosopher, al-Farikah Raihani once visited him and later described him in his book *Muluk al-Arab*. From his short account you can realise the special position which the Imam enjoyed in Arab countries and the entire Islamic world. Also, equally perspicuous was his asceticism, piety and the purely spiritual way he regarded the fleeting world as the prophets and the pious used to do.”

His Learning and Works

“The deceased master is regarded as the greatest genius and leader of thought in the twentieth century. People who become extraordinary scholars usually go for specialization in one discipline, so that each would take the necessary preparations to train as a philosopher or a jurist or a man of letters, or any

other profession of their choice.

Each would prepare for his chosen field. The student of philosophy, for instance, would devote himself to the study of philosophical pamphlets, the jurist would devote his time exclusively to studying the books of inheritance, transactions and other such other topics, or to the learning of jurisprudential principles and studying such issues as the principles of exemption, (*bara'a*) continuance of a previous condition, (*istis'hab*) established obligation (*ishtighal*) equality of evidences (*ta'adul*) and preferring one evidence over another (*tarajih*) and such themes as certainty (*qat'*) and presumption, (*dhann*) and other verbal (*lafziyyah*) and rational (*aqliyyah*) principles.

The man of letters would be concerned with Arabic literature and its history, and study literary texts by citing some poems of the pre-Islamic, Umayyad and Abbasid periods. He would try to get acquainted with the literary figures that lived in those eras and to attain a position of distinction in one of these areas of learning and culture, working diligently to fulfill some of the aims of these arts.

“However, our master’s aspiration was limitless. He turned his bosom into an encyclopedia that encompasses the subtleties of various sciences and he really worked hard for that. He turned out to be a custodian of the keys to all branches of knowledge through which he was able to bring out glittering pearls from the treasures of intellectual and transmitted sciences.

“One will marvel at the quality of his works, which are more than a hundred in number and some of them run into several volumes. After perusing each of them one will come to the conclusion that this great scholar was a specialist who was so well acquainted with the different aspects of these disciplines as if he was their founder. We shall prepare a special book on his life history and expound on his tireless efforts in writing and rendering services to the Muslim community and to the sciences. As a tribute to him and a service to both the Muslim community and the sciences we pray that Allah be pleased with him and appoint a successor who will be able to continue those services successfully.”

He passed away on 11th Rabi' al-Awwal, 1354. The news of his death plunged into confusion the people of Iran, India, Afghanistan, Iraq, Jabal Amil (a district in southern Lebanon) and other Islamic countries. Funeral ceremonies were held in his honor in Islamic capitals and other cities and villages. In Tyre a crowded funeral was conducted for seven days amidst unabating grief. We pray to Almighty Allah to give the *ummah* the power to bear this loss and we express our sincere condolences to his successor, our honorable master and head of the Iraqi Senate and to all the members of this noble family. May Allah grant them long lives and prosperity.”

Lastly, we urge the Muslim community to derive lessons from the life of the deceased and emulate his example so that they may be granted sincere and trustworthy descendants who will be standard-bearers for the community and who will work for the establishment of a life characterized by sound awareness.”

The Date of his Death in Verse

Your absence threw the hearts in anguish,

And grief that made the eye sleepless.

Would that when I parted with my refuge,

My soul forsook my body.

Take delight in the eternal abode,

It is, by Allah, the most excellent dwelling!

My eyes see you no more,

But yours behold the eyes of Time.

Guidance laments you since you left;

Write down the date the pure comely one has left.

1. The Mirza, is only too well-known leaving no need for any introduction. We mention his life solely to bless this book.
2. It is known in Islamic tradition that at the end of every hundred years, Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, will raise a reviver for this religion. Perhaps the source of this belief is the prophetic tradition (hadith) recorded by Abu Dawud in his Sahih, through a broken chain of transmission, which was sound (according to Sunni standards of accepting hadith). The Messenger of Allah, (S) said; "At the end of every hundred years, Allah will raise someone who shall revive the religion of this nation, ummah." Ibn Al-Athir has reported this hadith in the section on prophethood in his comprehensive work Jami' al-Usul fi Ahadith al-Rasul. In his explanation of the unusual hadiths of this section, this scholar mentioned a number of people regarded to be among such revivers. Among the followers of the Imamiyyah school, he named al-Baqir for the first century, Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha' for the second, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Yaqub al-Kulayni for the third and al-Sharif al-Murtada al-Musawi for the fourth. Now it could be that this issue of sending a reviver is an established idea that deserves to be accepted. In that case, the reviver for the beginning of the fourteenth century is none other than this great master who deservingly occupied the position of religious authority.
3. He was the first to be addressed as 'Proof of Islam' Hujjat al-Islam in Iraq, and he surely deserved it. If only this magnificent title was confined to the likes of him!
4. Among them was Allamah Sayyid Hasan Mudarris and Allamah Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Hasan al-Kalbasi.
5. This is contained in a letter sent by Sahib al-Jawahir to certain rulers in Iran.
6. Among them were Mirza Hasan al-Ashtiyani, Mirza Habibullah al-Rashti, Sheikh Abdullah ibn Ali Ni'mah al-Amuli and Sheikh Ja'far al-Shushtari, Ali Hasan Tehrani, Mirza Abdurrahim al-Nahawandi and others of their rank. These scholars were indeed oceans of knowledge and pillars of the world.
7. It suffices to mention the following: His paternal cousin Mirza Isma'il al-Husayni al-Shirazi, Sayyid Isma'il Sadr al-Musawi al-Amuli, Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni al-Fashariki Sayyid Kazim al-Tabataba'i, Sayyid Hassan Hadi Sadr al-Amuli al-Kazimi (the author) Sayyid Abdulmajid al-Husayni al-Karusi, Sayyid Ibrahim al-Darudi Aga Mir Sayyid Hasan al-Quini, Mirza Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi, Akhund Kazim al-Khurasani, Sheikh Aga Ridha' al-Hamadani, Sheikh Mirza Husayn al-Nuri, Sheikh Fadlullah, Sheikh Nuri, Sheikh Mulla Fath Ali Sultanabadi, Sheikh Hasan Ali Tehrani, Sheikh Mirza

Ibrahim al-Shirazi Mullah Ali al-Nahawandi, Sheikh Isma'il al-Tustari, Sheikh Mirza Abdulfadl al-Tehrani, Sheikh Mirza Hasan al-Sabzawari, Sheikh Muhammad Taqi al-Quini, Sheikh Hasan al-Karbala'i, Mirza Husayni al-Na'ini and their likes. The type of scholars that graduate from their seminaries and the value of their writings are a clear testimony to their excellence. These are the products of Imam Mirza al-Shirazi who trained under his personal care, may Allah reward him with the best of rewards.

[8](#) . When the contract was revoked Imam al-Shirazi announced that the prohibition of tobacco in all forms: planting, selling, buying, smoking and otherwise was not an original one but only an expedient move; as soon as the danger was over the fatwa terminated and the people could revert to their previous ways.

[9](#) . Such as building schools and mosques. He constructed two large schools in Samarra and spent hugely on them. A bridge over the Tigris also cost ten thousand or more Ottoman liras in gold but when it was taken over by the Ottoman government, it could not maintain it. Now the bridge is in shambles. As a result, pilgrims visiting the shrine of Imam al-Askari are once again in danger. We are from Allah and to Him shall we return!

[10](#) . This is just a glimpse of the procession. For more information on the spectacular occasion the reader can refer to the book written by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Ridha' Ali Fadlullah al-Husayni al-Amili.

[11](#) . His paternal cousin Sayyid Imam Isma'il had left Samarra in the same year and he was accompanied by a large number of pious scholars, among whom was the author.

[12](#) . This verse was taken from a poem written by the famous Amir al-shu'ara (Prince of the poets) and the sultan of the ulama Hujjat al-Islam Sheikh Abd al-Husayn Sadiq al-Amuli. The expression "There is no..." alludes to a famous saying of the Holy Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, "There shall be no other prophet after me."

[13](#) . This committee is headed by notable scholars who are experts in their respective fields: religious sciences and modern academic disciplines. They are men of letters who are renowned authors in their respective fields and also members of active and respectable guilds.

They published this speech in the papers and read it at the commemoration. It was previously printed as a separate pamphlet and distributed at the ceremony on the fortieth day after the death. This gathering was well-attended by scholars, men of letters and political leaders, among whom were representatives of the Lebanese and French governments, and delegations from different groups and sects. In attendance also, were people from Damascus, Ba'labak, Beirut, Sidon, Palestine and Jabal Amil, a district of southern Lebanon. A well arranged assembly, it was the epitome of tranquillity and splendour, crowned with a literary contest where orators and poets participated. We decide to include the speech of the organizing committee in compliance with the desire of its writers, its admirers and all those who heard it being read. I therefore incorporated it verbatim although this prolongs our write up.

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