

Branches of Faith (Furu' al-Din)

In this concise book we cannot discuss the philosophy and secrets of the Branches of Faith. The Branches of Faith are Divine rules and laws for systemising man's personal and social situations. Furthermore, they systemise the connection between the Creator and the creation.

Thus, Jurisprudence has been compiled under forty-eight titles. Each one of these titles contains many chapters. It is not possible to comprehend the obvious philosophy behind the Jurisprudential titles, let alone that which cannot be understood by the intellect. We will briefly discuss some aspects of the philosophy behind the prayer and the poor-rate.

The Philosophy and Secrets of Prayer

The prayer consists of parts, conditions and rules about what is forbidden:

The condition for the permissibility of the place of the prayer informs the performer that he must not breach upon the rights of others. The condition that a person should be clean from physical and ritual impurities guides to the fact that the physical impurities that can be cleaned with water, or the ritual impurities that affect the spirit that are cleaned with ritual bathing, both cause invalidity of the prayers. They hold back the human being from paying attention to the Honourable and the Glorified.

Based on the above, it is possible to visualise the effect of the impurity of the evil deeds that a person intentionally commits, like lying, dishonesty, oppression and extravagance. It is also possible to imagine the impurity of ill manners in depriving from the reality of the prayers, which is the ascension of every believer and immolation of every pious.

Indeed, the parts of the call for prayer [*adhan*], the call to the presence of Allah, the Exalted, and the parts of *iqamah*, the preliminary for the preparation of the spirit for the ascension to the status of nearness to the Glorified, contain the essence of Islamic teaching.

If one ponders upon the beginning of the call for prayer and its end, then by starting with ‘Allah is the Greatest’ and ending with ‘There is no god but Allah’, illustrates the emphasis upon teaching and training in Islam. When the call for prayer begins with the word ‘Allah’ and ends with it as well, then a worshipper can learn that *He is the First and the Last*.¹ Just as the *adhan* and *iqamah* begin with the Name of Allah and end with His Name, the recommendation to recite them in the ears of the newborn² and to direct the dying person to the words of Divine Unity indicate that human life begins and ends in the Name of Allah.

The repetition of ‘There is no god but Allah’ at the end of *adhan* and *iqamah*, after having said them twice earlier, reveals the role of this pure word in the intellectual and practical development of mankind.

This sentence has other verbal and conceptual specifications:

All the Arabic letters in this sentence [*la ilaha illa Allah*] are the exact letters used in the word Allah. It is a hidden remembrance which showing off cannot reach, for it is possible for the human being to remember Allah with it and not show anyone.

It contains both negation and assertion, firm faith in the two results in negating the falsehood and asserting the truth in beliefs, ethics and actions.

Thus, the meaning of this holy tradition [*hadith al-quds*] in the report of the Chain of Gold narration [*silsilat al-dhahab*] becomes clear: ‘*There is no god but Allah*’ is My fort. Whoever enters My fort is saved from My wrath.³

The depth of the speech of the Noble Messenger reveals: *All Say: There is no god but Allah and you shall all have salvation*.⁴ With this negation and assertion, the spirit forms a connection with the light of the heavens and the earth. It moulds to the ethics of Allah, the Exalted. Likewise, the declaration of the Messengership of the Prophet (S) renews the covenant with him and with what he was sent with.

The declaration is not valuable if it is not with sensory perception in perceptible things, nor is it reliable if it is not with intellectual certainty in rational things.

The bearer of the witness of Divine Unity and the Messengership in *adhan* and *iqamah* perceives with his heart the essence of Unity and the Messengership. Then he proceeds to salvation by saying ‘hasten to salvation’ and to the best of the deeds by saying ‘hasten to the best deed.’

The beginning and the end in the *adhan* and *iqamah* is Allah. The middle of the two is the Right Path, which Allah sent His Messenger with. The servant prepares for the ascension to Allah with pure words that rise to Him and good deeds that Allah elevates.

When the worshipper purifies his spirit by reflecting upon the significance of ‘there is no god but Allah,’ he reaches the level of:

Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the

earth, and I am not of the polytheists. [5](#)

Once the worshipper turns to the Originator of the heavens and the earth, he rises above the earth and the heaven. The seven veils are torn apart by his seven *Allahu Akbar(s)* [6](#) [*takbir*].

When he raises his hands to his ears (to say *Allahu Akbar*), he places everything other than Allah behind him. When he says *Allahu Akbar*, he nullifies all the thoughts and imaginations of the human mind before the Greatness of Allah, the Exalted. He admits that Allah is Greater than can be described and confined.

The worshipper then begins his speech with Allah, the Exalted. The prayer is the word of man with Allah while the Qur'an is the Word of Allah with man. However, man starts his word with Allah, the Exalted, with the Word of Allah itself, because it is not possible for man to praise Allah except with what Allah has taught him of His praise. With the sacredness of the Word of Allah, the Exalted, the word of man becomes worthy enough to be heard by Allah. Therefore, the man says: Allah listens to whoever praises Him.

In accordance with the tradition: *No prayer is acceptable without the Opening of the Book;* [7](#) it is a must to read the Opening chapter of the Qur'an in the prayer. Just as the Qur'an, being the word of the Creator with the creation, begins with the Opening chapter, the prayer, being the word of the creation with the Creator, begins with the same.

The worshipper must perform the Opening chapter and another chapter of the Qur'an with the intention of the recitation [*qir'at*]. However, the attainment of the reality of the prayer is only through knowledge of the meanings, subtleties and elegance which are in the actions of the prayer and its words. Here we will indicate some of the qualities of the Opening chapter:

This holy chapter encompasses the summary of Islam. It describes the recognition of the Origin and the Return. It contains Allah's names and His attributes. This chapter is man's covenant with Allah and Allah's covenant with man. According to some reports, the Greatest Name of Allah is carved in it.

The Opening chapter designates that Allah, the Exalted, has divided it between Himself and His servant. Thus, the half of the chapter which ends with *Master of the Day of Judgment* is for Allah, the Exalted. The other half of the chapter, which starts from *Keep us on the Right Path* till the end, is for man. The verse, *Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help*, is common between Allah, the Exalted, and His servants. The service is for Allah and the help is for man. [8](#)

This chapter begins with the name of Allah, the Exalted, with which the Messengership of Muhammad (S) began. Thus, Allah, the Exalted, said to His Messenger (S):

Read in the name of your Lord, Who created. [9](#)

Amongst the qualities of Allah's name is that it is the name of the essence that comprises all of the best

names. *And Allah's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby.* [10](#)

It is reported from 'Ali (as) that the meaning of the word Allah is:

The One who is worshipped and the One who is taken and served as God. [11](#)

The limit of mankind in His recognition is that he should know that he does not have the ability to fully understand Him. Allah, the Exalted, has attributed Himself as *the Beneficent, the Most Compassionate*.

This concise book does not allow explanation of the difference between the two mercies. It is of significance that Allah, the Exalted, made *In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Compassionate* the beginning of His speech with man and the beginning of the speech of man with Him.

Thus, He made this heavenly sentence foremost among the speech and actions of a Muslim. Allah has made it mandatory to repeat this sentence in the daily five prayers. Thus, Allah teaches man that the system of the universe is established upon mercy and that the constitutional and legislative Book begins with mercy.

Even the Islamic legal punishments are a mercy for the ones who contemplate upon them and fully understand them. A clear example can be given from the stages of the obligation of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If some people in a society avoid righteousness or turn towards corruption, then first they must be treated with kindness and moderation.

As we see in the story of the Prophet of Allah Musa (as), when Allah sends him and his brother with nine clear signs to a tyrant like the pharaoh, He says:

Then speak to him a gentle word haply he may mind or fear. [12](#)

The purpose of sending Messengers is not supremacy and power; rather, it is guidance, reminder and fear of Allah.

As long as an injured part of the body can be treated with medicine, it is not permissible to perform surgery on it. In fact, it is obligatory to protect it. However, if it cannot be treated even with surgery, then it is removed for the betterment of the other parts of the body.

Likewise, if a corrupt person is incurable, legal punishment is a mercy for him to reduce his involvement in criminal offences that would corrupt his world and the hereafter. It is also a mercy for society, because it closes the door of spreading corruption to the rest of the people.

After the first verse, the worshipper reads: ***All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe.*** Thus, he establishes that every praise and extol is for Allah, the Exalted, because He, the Glorified, is ***the Lord of the Universe.*** Every perfection and beauty is a manifestation of His upbringing. When the worshipper

reads this verse and sees the signs of Allah's Lordship and nurture in his own self and the world, the heaven, the earth, the minerals, the plants, the animals and the human beings, he realises that the praise is relevant to Him.

The presence of the signs of His nurture in all creations, from the lowest being to the highest, shows that His mercy is for both the ordinary and the special. Hence, the worshipper says a second time: ***The Beneficent, the Most Compassionate.***

After absorbing Allah's favour and His mercy, the worshipper remembers His justice and says: ***Master of the Day of Judgment.***

The compensation of the servants on the Day of Judgment is necessary for the establishment of justice, because man's disobedience to Allah exceeds His sacredness. Exceeding the sacredness of the Endless cannot be compared with the disobedience of others. Thus, the Possessor of eternal greatness must possess eternal sacredness.

The disobedience of the One Whose right and favour upon humanity is countless and unlimited must be penalised with what is suitable.

The sin which a man commits against his Lord is not a simple matter as some think, because the strength a man exhausts in it is a result of the world, since his life is connected to the world. Therefore, the sin a man commits implies dishonesty against what the whole universe is striving for.

Hence, it is necessary that there must be record, accountability and compensation with justice on that Great Day, which Allah has described as:

O people! Guard against (the punishment from) your Lord; surely the violence of the hour is a grievous thing. On the day when you shall see it, every woman giving suck shall quit in confusion what she suckled, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see men intoxicated, and they shall not be intoxicated but the chastisement of Allah will be severe. [13](#)

Nonetheless, His justice is absolute mercy, because the punishment from the Beneficent over disobedience cannot be compared with what the servant deserves over the tyranny, due to his insolence against the Lord of the Great Throne. Glory be to Him, Who is Generous and Honourable in His obedience and His disobedience.

Indeed, when a gnostic worshipper reads: ***Master of the Day of Judgment,*** his being trembles. This is why when the Imam of the Gnostics, the Beauty of the Worshippers, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) used to reach here, he would repeat this verse and cry until he almost died. [14](#)

Surely, the two verses: ***The Beneficent, the Most Compassionate and Master of the Day of Judgment,*** give the worshipper the two wings of fear and hope. With these two he comes to know the

mercy of Allah and His honour. With the first one he perceives the compensation and punishment, while with the second one he desires forgiveness and reward.

The Consideration in the Address

After the heart of the worshipper turns to the greatness of the Divinity and Lordship, and to His Beneficence, Compassion, Favour and Justice, he perceives that other than Allah is not worthy of worship. Thus, he transfers from speaking in third person to second person and says: *Thee do we worship*.

As worship requires guidance, power and strength, so the worshipper says: ***And Thee do we seek for help***. Thus, in the word: *we worship*, he sees that worship is from him and in the words: *we seek help*; he sees that that is from Allah, the Exalted, ***as there is no strength and no power except with Allah***.

With the words: ***We only worship You***, the worshipper negates compulsion. With the words: *We only seek help from You*, he negates surrender.

When the worshipper speaks in plural tense: *We worship*, he connects himself to all the Muslims. Thus, the word of unity and unification of word are practically ascertained.

Once the worshipper carries out the rituals of worship, he enters the stage of supplication and the stage of seeking from the Master. Hence, he says: ***Keep us on the Right Path***. With these words he seeks the essentials that will benefit him in all stages of life, because the peak of human courage and the honour of the status of the divinity demands that the worshipper ask for something which is great. That is the essence of the guidance to the Right Path, which is secure from all extremes.

The straight path is one. It has no multiplicity. Therefore, Allah is One and His path is one. It is a path that begins with the point of human insufficiency, which Allah, the Exalted, explains as:

And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers—you did not know anything;[15](#)

and ends at the point of absolute perfection:

And that to your Lord is the goal.[16](#)

O my Lord, what has he who has You not? And what has he not who has You?[17](#)

When a Muslim asks his Lord for guidance in his prayers: *The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours*. That is the path which Allah, the Exalted, has made distinct in His Word:

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they.[18](#)

Thus, the worshipper is asking to be granted the company of the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the virtuous. He also seeks to be kept away from those upon whom wrath is brought down and from those who go astray. Thus, it would make it necessary for him to adapt the morals of the prophets and the guardians, and it would make him refrain from the path of those upon whom wrath is brought down and those who have gone astray.

In conformity with the Word of the Exalted:

Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light;[19](#)

the worshipper must turn his full attention to the Holy One, Who is

the light of the heavens and the earth.[20](#)

He must look at the greatness of the Glorified with the eyes of his heart and the reality of his faith. The worshipper then bows down for Allah's reverence in compliance with His Word:

Therefore glorify the name of your Lord, the Great.[21](#)

Hence, he says: **Glory be to my Lord, the Great and praise be to Him.**

With these words, he takes his share of the secrets of the bowing [*rukū'*] and prepares for the closest position to his Lord, which is prostration. He then performs prostration upon earth in compliance with the Word of the Exalted:

Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High.[22](#)

He places his forehead on the earth. He remembers the might of his Lord, Who enlightened the light of his wisdom with darkened clay so that the man sees in his prostration on clay the secret of this verse:

And certainly We created man of an extract of clay.[23](#)

Hence, he says:

Glory be to my Lord, the Most High and praise be to Him.

Then he raises his head and perceives the secret of the verse:

Then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators.[24](#)

Here perceives his worldly life. Then he says: **Allah is the Greatest.** He returns to prostration upon the clay and remembers the day he will face death after his life and take it as an abode. Then he perceives the life after death, so he raises his head and remembers the life after death. From his two prostrations he understands the meaning of the Word of the Exalted:

From it We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it will We raise you a second time. [25](#)

Thus, he understands the phases of his existence.

Certainly, what we have mentioned is only a glimpse or a sparkle from the rays of the sun of the wisdom and guidance of the prayers. We cannot enumerate here the secrets of the chapter to be read after the Opening chapter. Likewise, we will leave out the secrets of the remembrance in prayers, the standing, the sitting, the *qunut*, the *tasbihat*, the *tashhhud*, the *taslim*, the recommendations of the prayers and their manners.

Comparison of Muslim and Christian Prayers

We will mention some examples of Christian worship in comparison with what we have mentioned about Islamic worship. The Bible says:

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

[26](#)

We will discuss a few points from this prayer:

It begins by addressing God with the word: Our father, in the heavens!

The application of the expression ‘father’ to God, if it is with realisation, then Exalted is Allah, the One, the Unique, the Needless, Who begets not, nor is He begotten. If it is anthropomorphism, then High is His Might that He be ascribed with human characteristics. In such a situation their prayers and worship would be for the created and not the Creator.

As for worship in Islam, then it is for Allah, the Exalted, Who has nothing whatsoever like unto Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing; thus, the intellect does not deny Him recognition. He cannot be

anthropomorphised with His creation.

After this praise for God, we see that the Christian prayer teaches him to ask for the bread for his body which is like grass for the body of an animal.

A Muslim, however, after praising his Lord in his prayer, seeks the light of vision in his wisdom so that he may find the right path to move to the purpose of his creation and the success in the way of his goal: *Keep us on the right path*. Thus, there is not any treasure more noble and precious than guidance which is the perfection of the human being. There is no path to the goal more fair, more right and nearer than the right path. And there is no goal higher and above Allah, the Blessed and Exalted.

The Christians do not forgive the people who have committed sins against them, nor do they forgive loans to people. Then how can they say this prayer, because with the words: *as we also have forgiven our debtors*; they would be lying in their prayers. Based on logic, lying is one of the evil acts and according to divine laws it is one of the major sins. Nearness to Allah is not possible through evil deeds and serving Him through sins. Repenting by sinning is another sin.

This short comparison between Islamic prayers and the prayers of other faiths is sufficient.

[The Philosophy of Legislating the Alms-Tax](#)

The prayer is the connection of man with the Creator, while the alms-tax is the connection of man with the creation.

Allah has joined alms-tax with the prayers in numerous verses. Abu Ja'far and Abu 'Abd Allah (as) both have been reported saying: *Allah has made alms-tax obligatory with the prayers.*²⁷ Human beings are social animals by nature. Whatever wealth, position, knowledge and perfection a man gains, is due to his social connections. Thus, the society he lives in has a right and share in his material and spiritual achievements. When a person adapts Islamic rulings in paying his religious dues then he has fulfilled his social right.

Indeed, the Islamic law of alms-tax and other voluntary charitable contributions are wise laws. If they are implemented then a single poor person will not remain in society, and a peaceful city free from oppression of the poor and needy will prevail.

Al-Sadiq (as) said: *Certainly, Allah, the Mighty and High, has placed a share for the poor in the wealth of the rich with which they can spend their life. If He had known that this will not be enough then He would have increased this. The poor are in such a state due to the rich not paying their share not due to Allah, the Mighty and High. If the people had paid their rights then they would also be living an affluent life.*²⁸

Allah, the Exalted, describes the terrible consequences of not fulfilling the rights of the needy:

And (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah's way, announce to them a painful chastisement. [29](#)

Due to the role of sacrifice and generosity in removing poverty from society and in the purification of the souls of the people from greed and miserliness, the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* have urged us to pay alms and make sacrifice. [30](#)

The Virtues of Charity and Generosity

It has come in reports concerning 'the care for the poor' that feeding a poor family, providing clothing for them and saving them from the humility of pleading is better than seventy pilgrimages to Mecca. [31](#)

Islam has increased the circle of charity and the doing of good, and has included doing good to animals. Imam al-Baqir (as) has said: *Surely, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, likes the act of cooling a thirsty liver. Whoever quenches a thirsty liver of an animal or other than it, Allah will give him a shade on the day when there is no shade except His shade.* [32](#)

Islam has not restricted charity to the giving of money. In fact, it considers any kind of help to the weak, like leading a blind person, as charity. Islam has made modesty in helping the needy a charity for rank and position. The charity of knowledge is teaching the ignorant. In brief, Islam has not limited charity to material things only but has said:

And they spend out of what We have given them of subsistence. [33](#)

Subsistence is all that upon which human life depends on in any way. This is why Imam al-Sadiq (as) explains this verse as: *And they spread of what We have taught them.* [34](#)

The Etiquette of Generosity and Almsgiving

Islam has suggested some etiquette for giving charity. An example is to give charity secretly and not announce it, [35](#) to safeguard the honour of a believer and the reputation of a needy. One should think of the charity as less, even if it is a large sum. [36](#) One should know that the one taking the charity is superior to it, [37](#) no matter how great the charity may be. One should not oblige anyone with his charity. [38](#)

In fact, one should understand that the needy has obliged him, because it is he who has become the cause of the purification of his wealth and heart. One should give charity to the deserving before he asks. Al-Sadiq (as) has said: *The goodness is to give without asking. When a person gives because he has been asked then that is due to saving your face.* [39](#)

One should hide himself from the needy so that the needy person does not feel embarrassed. One should ask the needy to pray for him. One should kiss his own hand after giving charity, because

apparently the one taking the charity is the needy, but in reality the one taking it is Allah, the Mighty and High, as Allah says:

Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms. [40](#)

Generosity, Sacrifice and the Levels of Perfection

Islam has conferred such a high status for granting to the needy that it is as opening the door of sacrifice. Allah, the Exalted, says:

And prefer (them) before themselves though poverty may afflict them, [41](#)

while it has made sacrifice the utmost of the levels of perfections. Thus, the Exalted describes the holy ones, may blessings of Allah be upon them:

And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive: We only feed you for Allah's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks. [42](#)

The Social Effects of Generosity

What has been mentioned is only a fraction of the philosophy of legislating alms-tax and charity in Islam. This holy law purifies the souls of the rich from the filth and rust of miserliness and greed. It also purifies their wealth from the rights of the poor, which is like their blood. This way the rich are not afflicted with squeezing the blood of the poor, and the poor with lack of blood. It strengthens the relationship between the upper class and the lower class. It transforms their relationship from hatred to like and reduces the gap between these two classes that make up society.

It is a law that fulfils the needs of the poor, in the shadow of protecting their honour and putting out the fire of jealousy of the poor with the water of the mercy of generosity. Generosity, which encompasses alms-tax and voluntary charity, is to safeguard the wealth of the rich, which is like the blood in the veins of society. It protects the economic system. Hence, the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (as) describes alms-tax as a fortress for the wealth of the rich; he (as) said: *Fortify your wealth with alms-tax.* [43](#)

Will the roots of material and spiritual poverty not be cut from society with the implementation of this programme of granting from the rich their wealth and the learned their knowledge?

An Excellent Islamic City Protects Human Rights and Honour

After this synopsis of the philosophy of Islamic laws concerning prayers and alms-tax, and their effect in the privilege of an individual and society, we will turn to the concept of the city of excellence. Islam can establish this city with its laws, which comprise all human relations, rights, all his acts of motion and acts of stillness, and all that he does or does not do. It regulates collection of all conventional laws and all

Islamic precepts with its types of obligatory, forbidden, recommended, discouraged and permissible acts concerning rights, property, conclusiveness, authority and government, etc.

These laws safeguard the protection of human life, freedom, honour and rights. They guide man to his interests and what is against him, to his benefits and losses in his entire existence, although he may be unable to perceive all of that and it may be difficult for him to accomplish it all. However, whatever is easy from these laws indicates that there is a hidden wisdom in these laws of Islam.

Indeed, just a glance upon the laws and etiquette of what Islam has regulated for the rights of animals which are subjugated for human service, reveal the Islamic view on human rights.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad has reported on the authority of his forefathers (as) saying: the Messenger of Allah (S) said: *An animal has rights over its owner: When one reaches his destination one should feed the animal before eating himself. When one passes by water one should give it to the animal to drink. One should not hit the animal on the face, because it praises its Lord with the mouth. One should not stand on the animals back except in battle. One should not make the animal carry more than it can bear and one should not make the animal travel the distance it cannot bear.* [44](#)

It has also come in a report from the Prophet (S): Every animal has a proof over its owner and that is the right of the animal. The owner must fulfil the rights.

In other reports it has come that one should not make the animal look ugly. One should not make the animal run fast except in barren land. One should let the animal graze in grassland. One should not make the back of an animal a place to converse. [45](#)

If one is eating food in his own house and something drops, then one should pick it up and eat it. However, if one eats in a desert or a place outside then one should leave the remaining for the birds or beasts, even if it was a leg of a goat. Other animals may benefit from it even beasts. [46](#)

The holy divine law has forbidden from urinating in water, because even water has inhabitants. [47](#) This rule was given in an era when no one knew about microscopic organisms.

From these examples of the rights of the animals in Islam, we can understand Islam's plan in preserving human rights and establishing social justice.

The Purpose of Civilisation in this World and the Hereafter

Indeed, Islamic law ascertains civilisation of this world and the hereafter and the safety of both body and soul. Islam has given importance to both material and spiritual lives. Each one is based on its own worth, according to justice and wisdom, connecting this world and the hereafter, and connecting the body and soul.

And seek by means of what Allah has given you the future abode, and do not neglect your portion of this world. [48](#)

Islam has paid full attention to the civilisation of this world. However, human comfort here is dependent while attention to the hereafter is independent, in accordance with the nature of their creation.

The explanation of the ‘good in this world’ in the Word of the Exalted:

Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the fire, [49](#)

has come in the word of the Imam (as) as the comfort in sustenance and living, and good manners, while the good in the hereafter is Allah’s pleasure in the Paradise. [50](#)

Importance of Agriculture and Business in Islam

Islam has given great significance to economic strength, particularly to agriculture and business... Islam has invited the believers to strive in becoming self-sufficient and honourable with the order of the rule:

And to Allah belongs the honour and to His Apostle and to the believers. [51](#)

It has been reported from al-Sadiq (as): *There is no action more beloved to Allah than agriculture.* The Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (as) used to cultivate crops, dig wells and plant trees. [52](#)

In another report al-Sadiq (as) said to a man who had left work in the market: *Begin your day with honour.* [53](#) It has come in a report from the Commander of the Faithful (as): *Embark into business.* [54](#)

In Islam, business, buying and selling is based on intelligence, honesty, planning and knowledge of the rules and regulations of business. Thus, a tradition says: *No one should sit in the market except for the one who has knowledge of buying and selling.* [55](#) Another report says: *First learn law then do business.* [56](#)

Rules of Dealings in Islam

Islam specifies obligatory, recommended, forbidden and discouraged rules concerning dealings.

Because we cannot go in details here, we will list some different types:

Islam has forbidden from interest, from taking an oath to sell the commodity and praising it, from the buyer dispraising the goods he wants to buy, from hiding the defect of something one is selling, from fraud and deception in giving or taking anything.

The dealer should take only that which he deserves and should give that which is right. He should return the endowment and abstain from dishonesty. The seller should accept the excuse of the buyer who regrets buying. If the buyer becomes straitened then the seller should give him time. If someone

designates him to buy some commodity then he should not sell it to him if he has that commodity. If someone designates him to sell something then he should not buy it for himself. The seller who weighs should give a little more and should take a little less from the price.

All businessmen are insolent except for the ones who are truthful. If one promises someone to be good in dealing then one should not take profit from him. One should treat two buyers equally and should not take notice of his relation with them. If a commodity has a fixed price then one should sell it for the same price to ones who negotiate and the ones who do not. One should learn to write and record his work and should not work without it.

One should not hoard the things that people need. One should be easy to deal with and easy to buy from and sell to. One should give what people owe him with ease and take from them what they owe with ease. One should not be hard on the one who owes him. One should not ask for discount after the completion of the deal. One should turn to the mosque at the time of the call to prayers and clean his heart for the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. One should rise from the physical world to the metaphysical world.

In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them; there glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about. [57](#)

Two Points

First Point: Submission to Religion

If one realises the roots and branches of religion, reflects upon their laws of worship and dealings, ponders upon their policies about managing the self, home and city, and reflects upon the collective etiquette of Islam from its recommendations and discouragements, one would perceive with certainty that these laws are established by divine wisdom.

Naturally, understanding the reasons of religious laws, which are made for the privilege of all aspects of human life, is dependent upon our encompassment of these cosmos, on knowing the needs of the human beings in them and the ways of fulfilling them. In fact, the truth is that complete understanding of the reasons of a single divine law is not possible for mankind, because this law is part of the programme for mankind for all aspects of his life.

Therefore, our lack of understanding the reasons of an Islamic law does not mean that there is no reason; rather, it is proof of our shortcoming.

There are decisive and allegorical metaphors in the book of nature; yet, no one knows the reasons of their existence. Logically, it is not permissible to leave what one knows for what one does not know and

to nullify the certainty for the doubt.

Likewise, the book of divine laws contains decisive and allegorical metaphors, which are in conformity with the nature of the law made by the All-Wise, the Subtle and the All-Informed, Who has knowledge of everything and encompasses everything. Indeed, the book of divine laws contains both the decisive and allegorical. If we see an allegorical, it is not correct for us to leave a decisive. We should not think that the creation or the divine law is useless:

None knows its interpretation except Allah, and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord. [58](#)

It is necessary for man to know that the life of this world in relation to the life of the hereafter is like the life of a fetus in the womb of his mother in connection with its life of this world. Thus, no matter how much wisdom and knowledge a fetus may have, it is not possible for it to understand the wisdom behind the creation of its limbs and powers and the reasons why Allah made his sight, hearing and breathing. What are the benefits of these limbs for him? What are the reasons for creating his perception, thinking and intellect? However, when it is born into this world, it understands all that.

Similarly, the fetus of the human spirit lives in the womb of nature and must also have parts and powers, which are the means of his eternal life. Eternal life cannot take place except with implementing the teachings and laws of his Lord. Soon the reasons for these teachings will become clear to him; when he steps into the hereafter he will understand that he was like a fetus in this world.

Consequently, submission to religious laws is from the necessities of human creation. In fact, it is necessary for a man's perfection. The reward of a doer is based upon his action and the reward of an action is based upon the intention. In other words, the reward of an action is based upon the motives of the action. The Prophet (S) has said to this reality in his word: *Surely, the actions are based upon the intentions and for every man is what he intended.* [59](#)

For this reason, the quality of the godly people is that they obey Allah, the Exalted, only for the sake of Allah and regardless of their understanding of benefit or detriment, and interest or loss.

Second Point: Emulation is Obligatory on Other than Experts

The safeguarding of one's health is based upon the abiding by medical rules. To know them one must be a physician, or one must refer to a reliable physician and then follow his direction, or one must practice precaution. Precaution would require him to refrain from everything that may be harmful for his health. He will do this until he finds out the ruling for himself or finds someone who knows it so he may ask him.

In fact, emulation is from the necessities of human life, whether he is ignorant or learned. As for the emulation for the ignorant then it is clear, but as for the learned, it is because the specialisation of every

learned is limited to a part of all the things which are required for human life.

For example, a physician must emulate an engineer and a builder for the construction of his house; he must emulate a mechanic for the repair of his car. When he flies in an airplane, he emulates the pilot. When he rides a boat, he emulates the sailor. In fact, within the departments of medicine, the specialist of one organ or part of the body must emulate another specialist physician, who is in specialisation of another expert.

As a result, the life of any human being is incomplete without emulation. Therefore, any person who believes in any religion and knows that he has been specified with responsibilities and has laws to follow, must act according to logic and nature: either he must become an expert himself, or follow an expert who has the conditions for giving edicts like knowledge, fairness and other conditions, or he must practice precaution.

When he is not learned enough himself, nor does he follow precaution then he only has one choice, which is to emulate an expert. In case of differences in opinions between experts, it is stipulated for him to follow the most learned. When two physicians differ in diagnosing an illness and its treatment, then logically it is obligatory for him to follow the greater expert of the two.

In conclusion, Islam is a religion of knowledge. In Islam, every action must end with knowledge, even if that is through a link. Thus, emulation of an expert in religious matters is acting with knowledge, because it refers to the view of an expert in religious rulings. The basis of emulation is knowledge, wisdom and nature.

And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that.[60](#)

[1.](#) Holy Qur'an, 57: 3.

[2.](#) It is recommended to recite the adhan in the right ear of the newborn and the iqamah in the left ear.

[3.](#) 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (A): vol. 2, pp 135, ch. 37, hadith no. 4; Shaykh Saduq, Divine Unity: pp 63, ch. 1, hadith no. 21; Al-Amali By al- Saduq: pp 306, ch. 41, hadith no. 8; and other Shi'ah sources.

Tarikh Madinat Damishq: vol. 5, pp 462; Yanabi' al-Mawaddat: vol. 3, pp 122; Al-Durr al-Manthur: vol. 4, pp 293; and other Sunni sources.

[4.](#) Manaqib Al Abu Talib: vol. 1, pp 56.

[5.](#) Holy Qur'an, 6: 79.

[6.](#) Allah is the Greatest.

[7.](#) 'Awali al-Liali: vol. 2, pp 218, hadith no. 13.

[8.](#) Al-Tibyan: vol. 1, pp 46; Majma' al-Bayan: vol. 1, pp 48.

[9.](#) Holy Qur'an, 96: 1.

[10.](#) Holy Qur'an, 7: 180.

[11.](#) Shaykh Saduq, Divine Unity: pp 163, ch. 4, hadith no. 2.

[12.](#) Holy Qur'an, 20: 44.

[13.](#) Holy Qur'an, 22: 1-2.

[14.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 602.

[15.](#) Holy Qur'an, 16: 78.

- [16.](#) Holy Qur'an, 53: 42.
- [17.](#) Iqbal al-A'mal: pp 349, supplication of Imam Husayn (A) on the Day of 'Arafah.
- [18.](#) Holy Qur'an, 4: 69.
- [19.](#) Holy Qur'an, 2: 257.
- [20.](#) Holy Qur'an, 24: 35.
- [21.](#) Holy Qur'an, 56: 74.
- [22.](#) Holy Qur'an, 87: 1.
- [23.](#) Holy Qur'an, 23: 12.
- [24.](#) Holy Qur'an, 23: 14.
- [25.](#) Holy Qur'an, 20: 55.
- [26.](#) Matthew: 6.
- [27.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 3, pp 496.
- [28.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 3, pp 497; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah: vol. 9, pp 10, ch. 1, hadith no. 2.
- [29.](#) Holy Qur'an, 9: 34.
- [30.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 4, pp 41.
- [31.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 4, pp 2.
- [32.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 4, pp 58.
- [33.](#) Holy Qur'an, 2: 3.
- [34.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 2, pp 17.
- [35.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 4, pp 7 & 24.
- [36.](#) Man la Yahduru al-Faqih: vol. 2, pp 31, hadith no. 12.
- [37.](#) Al-Khisal: pp 619.
- [38.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 4, pp 22.
- [39.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 4, pp 23.
- [40.](#) Holy Qur'an, 9: 104; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah: vol. 9, pp 433.
- [41.](#) Holy Qur'an, 59: 9.
- [42.](#) Holy Qur'an, 76: 8-9.
- [43.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Saying no. 146.
- [44.](#) Man la Yahduru al-Faqih: vol. 2, pp 187.
- [45.](#) Man la Yahduru al-Faqih: vol. 2, pp 188 & 190.
- [46.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 3, pp 300.
- [47.](#) Al-Khisal: pp 613.
- [48.](#) Holy Qur'an, 28: 77.
- [49.](#) Holy Qur'an, 2: 201.
- [50.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 5, pp 71.
- [51.](#) Holy Qur'an, 63: 8.
- [52.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'ah: vol. 17, ch. 9 & 10, vol. 19, pp 186, ch. 6, hadith no. 2.
- [53.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 5, pp 149.
- [54.](#) Al-Khisal: pp 621, ch. 100, hadith no. 10.
- [55.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 5, pp 154.
- [56.](#) Al-Kafi: vol. 5, pp 150.
- [57.](#) Holy Qur'an, 24: 36-7.
- [58.](#) Holy Qur'an, 3: 7.
- [59.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam: vol. 4, pp 186.
- [60.](#) Holy Qur'an, 17: 36.

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