

Chapter 10: Reasons For Some Religious Precepts And Others

The ‘Addliya¹ from among the Shi‘a and the Mu‘tazilites have unanimously agreed that every precept issues from the Holy Legislator (Allah) is never spontaneous; rather it concerns an inclusive individual and social interest which brings about to them general good, whether this precept is obligatory or recommended; likewise, if the precept is unlawful or reprehensible, for surely it includes an inseparable corruption or not inseparable corruption which causes heavy harm to man, and it is impossible that a precept issues from the Great Legislator and is void of interests or has some acts of corruption, for surely that requires impugning the wisdom of the Legislator; likewise, it requires the voidness and uselessness of legislation. The Ash‘arites have opposed that and maintained that all precepts of the Legislator are spontaneous and devoid of wisdom and interests. The weakness of this view is clear, for many corrupt adhesions result from it and they have been mentioned in the theological books.

Any how, the Imam, peace be on him, has announced that it is necessary for religious precepts to include interests in the side of the obligatory and acts of corruption in the side of the unlawful. He stated that during giving answers to the reasons of some precepts about which al-Fadl b. Sha‘dha’n asked him. He, peace be on him, said:

“If a questioner asks: ‘Is it permissible for the Wise One (Allah) to charge a servant with one of the acts (of worship) without a cause or a meaning?’ It is said to him: ‘That is not permissible, for He is wise, not frivolous nor ignorant.’ If a sayer says: ‘Tell me: Why has He charged the creatures (with acts of worship)?’ It is said: ‘For many reasons.’ If a sayer says: ‘Tell me about these reasons: Are they known and available or are they neither known nor available?’ It is said: ‘Rather, they are known and available with their people.’²”

Any how, many questions about the reasons for some theological researches spread in the time of the Imam. Other questions about the reasons for legislating some religious precepts were also asked. Yet other questions about the conditions of the prophets and the affairs of the bygone communities were

asked. The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about these questions and he answered them. Muhammad b. Sina'n asked him about a group of them, and al-Fadl b. Sha'dha'n heard some of the Imam's answers to them. The questions are as follows:

Theological Questions

As for the theological questions whose reasons the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned, they are as follows:

A. The Reason for ordering the creation to profess Allah

The Imam, peace be on him, has stated the firm reason why it is obligatory on servants to profess Allah, the Most High, His messengers, and what has been brought from Him. He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have the creatures been ordered to profess Allah, His Messenger, His argument, and what has been brought from Allah, the Great and Almighty?'"

The Imam's answer is as follows: "It is said: 'For many reasons, of which are: If men do not profess Allah, the Great and Almighty, do not refrain from disobeying him, do not abstain from committing great sins, do not fear anyone regarding what they desire and enjoy of corruption and oppression, they will be corrupt, attack each other, rape women, plunder properties, shed blood, and killed each other without right. Without doubt, this results in the ruin of the world, the destruction of the creation, the corruption of the tilth and the stock.'

"Yet of which are: Surely Allah, the Great and Almighty, is wise. None is wise and described by wisdom except him who bans corruption, enjoins righteousness, restrains (men) from oppression, and prevent (them) from atrocities. Banning corruption, enjoining righteousness, and preventing atrocities are not (available) except after professing Allah, the Great and Almighty, and recognizing the one who enjoins and forbids.

"If the people were left without professing Allah, the Great and Almighty, and without knowledge of Him, then neither enjoining righteousness nor preventing corruption was established. For there is no one who enjoins (men to do good) and forbids (them from doing evil). Yet some of which are: We have found that the creatures may be corrupt through hidden, covered affairs. So were it not for professing Allah and fear of Him in secret, none, when he is alone with his desire and will, fears anyone regarding giving up sin, violating sacredness, and committing great sins. That is when his deed is covered from the creation and none sees it. So through that is the difference between all creation. Therefore, straightness and righteousness do not occur except through their professing the Omniscient, the All-aware, Who knows the secret and what is yet more hidden, enjoins righteousness and forbids corruption, from Whom no secret remains hidden, that through that they may prevent themselves from all kinds of corruption when they are alone with them.³"

Surely the firmest deed for uprooting crime, driving it away from individual and society, purifying the earth from sins and offenses is planting the faith in Allah, the Exalted, in the depths of souls and hearts, and the faith in that Allah watches him who commits crime or sin with respect to his own soul and his society, and that He will severely punish him because of it.

As man loves his own soul and seeks good for it, he normally refrains from any sin which leads to destruction and misery.

Crimes have increased during these time; terrorist deeds such as killing the innocent, hijacking, and the like from among crimes and offenses have also increased because of the weakness of the faith in Allah and the paucity of the religious restraint in souls.

Surely the forces of good and peace are built on faith in Allah, the Most High. The faith in Him is the firmest way for spreading justice, security, and welfare among men. So man will increase in affliction and misery because he has little faith in Allah or he has no faith in Him.

B. Professing Allah's Oneness

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why has it been made incumbent on them (men) to profess and recognize that Allah is One and Unique?'

" It is said: 'For reasons of which is that if He did not make profession and knowledge (of Him) obligatory on them (men), then it would be permissible for them to imagine (that there were) two directors or more than that; and if that was permissible, they would not distinguish the One Who created them from other than him, for every human being of them did not come to know (of Him), for he worshipped the one other than Him who created him, and obey the one other than Him who ordered him, so they were not sure of their Maker and Creator; neither the command of the commander nor the prohibition of the prohibiter is established with them; therefore, the commander himself is not known; nor is the prohibiter (distinguished) from other than him.'

"Of which is that if it was possible for two (creators to exist), one of the two partners was not worthier of worship and obedience than the other; if it was permissible to obey that partner, then it was permissible not to obey Allah; and if it was permissible not to obey Allah, then that would result in: disbelief in Allah, all His messengers and His Books; establishing all kinds of falsehood; leaving all kinds of right; making lawful all kinds of the unlawful; making unlawful all kinds of the lawful; entering all acts of disobedience; coming out of all acts of obedience; permitting all kinds of corruption; and invalidating all kinds of right.

"Yet of which is that if it was possible for more than one (creator to exist), then it would be possible for Iblis to claim that he was that other (one), that he might oppose Allah, the Exalted, in all His decrees and make the servants incline to him, so, through that, there will be the greatest disbelief and the most intense hypocrisy.'⁴"

This part gives an account of the necessity of faith in the Oneness of Allah, the Most High, and the impossibility of existence of a partner along with Him. The Imam, peace be on him, has stated his wonderful proofs of that, and that the existence of a partner along with Allah, the Exalted, results in the disorder of the regulation, the corruption of the world, and the absence of balance in these worlds.

C. There is Nothing like Allah

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why it has been made incumbent on them (men) to confess that there is nothing like Allah?'

"It is said: 'For reasons of which are that they should not mean other than Him by acts of worship and obedience, and that the affair of their Lord, their Maker, and their Provider is not vague for them. Of which is that were it not for that they knew that there was nothing like him, they would come to know that their lord and maker were those idols, which their forefathers had installed for them, the sun, the moon, and the fires. If it was possible for Him to be vague to them, then that would result in corruption, leaving all acts of obedience to Him, and committing all acts of disobedience to Him according to what came to their knowledge of the stories of these lords, their order and their prohibition. Of which is that were it not for that it was incumbent on them to know that there was nothing like Him, then it would be permissible for them to subject Him to the same (qualities) of the creatures such as incapability, ignorance, change, disappearance, extinction, lying, and aggression. He who is subject to these things, none can give security to his extinction, have confidence in his justice, be sure of his saying, his order and his prohibition, his promise and his threat, his reward and his punishment; and that results in the corruption of the creation and invalidating lordship.'⁵"

In this part the Imam has mentioned the firm reasons why it has been made incumbent on servants to believe that there is nothing like Him. For if there was something like Him, then He would be subject to servants' qualities such as incapability, ignorance, extinction, and the like; and that results in the corruption of the creation and the invalidity of Lordship.

D. The Cause for Charging Servants (with Religious Duties)

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why has Allah, the Exalted, enjoined and prohibited servants?'

"It is said: 'Because their existence and their righteousness are not except through the order, the prohibition, the ban from corruption and usurping each other.'⁶"

The Imam, peace be on him, means that the cause for the religious duties from among the obligatory and the unlawful is the subsistence of man and the continuation of his existence, for therein are his righteousness, keeping his security, his interests, and his happiness; and in leaving them are his misery and his destruction.

E. The Cause for Knowledge of the Messengers

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why it has been made incumbent on them (people) to know the messengers, to profess them, and to yield to them through obedience?’

“It is said: ‘As that through which they complete their interests is not in their creation and their forces, the Maker is far above from being seen, their frailty and their feebleness to attain Him is manifest, there is no escape for them from an infallible messenger between Him and them (in order to) convey to them His order, His prohibition, and His good manners, and to inform them of that which leads to their profits and their harms. So if it was not incumbent on them to know and obey him (the messenger), then there would for them no profit nor fulfilling a need in the coming of the messenger, and his coming not for profit nor righteousness is vanity; and this is not one of the attributes of the Wise (Allah) Who has mastered all things.’”

This part gives an account of the reason why it is obligatory on men to know the messengers, to acknowledge their Prophethood, and to believe in them; otherwise knowledge of them is vanity and nonsense.

F. The Reason for Obeying Rulers

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why He has appointed rulers and ordered (men) to obey them?’ It is said: ‘For many reasons of which is that when the creatures have been ordered to stop by a limited limit and have been ordered not to exceed that limit, because therein is their corruption, that is not established nor stands except through that He must appoint among them a trusted one who prevents them from exceeding and entering that from which He has banned them, for if that was not, then none would leave his pleasure and his profit because of the corruption of other than him, so He has appointed over them a custodian in order to prevent them from corruption and to administer among them the punishments and the precepts.

“Of which is that we do not find a sect from among the sects nor a people from among the peoples subsist and live except through a custodian and a head, and as there is no escape for them from him (the ruler) regarding the affairs of the religion and the world, then it is not permissible in the wisdom of the Wise to leave the creation without him whom He knows that there is no escape for them (the creation) from him (the ruler); nor do they subsist except through him, so they through him fight against their enemy and divide their booty, and he establishes for them their gathering and their community, and prevents their oppressive from their oppressed.

“Yet of which is that if He does not appoint for them an Imam custodian, trusted, protector, and gentle, then the community will be effaced, the religion be removed, the laws and precepts will be changed, the innovators will increase it (the religion), the infidels will decrease it, and make that as vague errors for the people, for we have found the creatures incomplete, needy, not complete, along with their difference,

their different caprices, and their scattered manners. If He does not appoint for them a custodian keeping what the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, has brought, they will become corrupt, as we have explained, laws, practices, precepts and faith will be changed; and in that will be the corruption of the creation in general.’⁷

In this part the Imam, peace be on him, talks about that the Imamate is necessary, and that it is a basic element for establishing Islamic life, administering the punishments and precepts of Allah, the Exalted. The Imam has given many causes and reasons for that.

G. The Imam is from among the Progeny of the Prophet

He, peace be on him, said: ‘If a sayer says: ‘Why is it not permissible that the Imam is from other than the progeny of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family?’

‘It is said: ‘For many reasons of which is that as obedience to the Imam is obligatory, there is no escape from an indication which indicates him, and he is distinguished by it from other than him, and it (the indication) is the famous relationship and the manifest testament, that (the people) may distinguish him from other than him and find the right way to him. And of which is that if it was permissible (to entrust the Imamate) to other than the progeny of the Messenger, then He (Allah) would prefer him who was not a messenger to the messengers, for He would make the sons of the messengers follow the sons of His enemies such as Abu’ Jahl and Ibn Abu’ Mi’yat, for it might be permissible for that (i.e. the Imamate), according to their claim, to pass to their sons if they were believers. So the sons of the Messengers became followers; the sons of the enemies of Allah and the enemies of His Messenger became followed; therefore, the Messenger was worthier of this excellence than other than him.

‘Surely, if the creation acknowledged the message of the Messenger and yielded to obedience to him, then none of them would show haughtiness toward following his own son and obeying his own progeny, and that would not intensify in the souls of the people. And if that (i.e. the Imamate) was (entrusted to) other than the progeny of the Messenger, then each one of them (the people) would feel that he was worthier of it (the Imamate) than other than him; out of that they would be haughty and would not obey those inferior to them; therefore, that would lead to corruption, hypocrisy, and difference.’⁸

The Imam, peace be on him, has established these firm reasons for the necessity that the Imam should belong to the grandsons and progeny of the Prophet, for he would be better for unifying the community and protecting it from the calamities of discord and difference like those occurred when the pure family (of the Prophet) was removed from government and responsibility, so the community differed; caprices spread among it; discords and enmities dominated it; and that was among the disasters and misfortunes which befell the community.

The Causes of the Religious Precepts

Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, has stated many causes for the religious precepts and the reasons of their legislation. That was in the answers which he wrote to the questions of Muhammad b. Sina'n; al-Fadl b. Sha'dha'n has transmitted these answers from him. These researches are wonderful and useful, for they highlight the firm reason why the Almighty Legislator has legislated His holy precepts, and that is as follows:

A. The Ghusl of Jana'ba

The Imam talked about the reason why the Legislator has made the *ghusl* of *jana'ba* obligatory. He, peace be on him, has said: "The reason for the *ghusl* of *jana'ba* is cleanliness and man's purifying his own soul from its harm which befalls him and purifying his entire body, for the *jana'ba* comes out of all the body, so it is obligatory on him to purify his entire body.⁹"

The Imam, peace be on him, has explained the sublime purposes for which Islam has legislated the *ghusl* of *jana'ba*, and they are as follows:

B. Cleanliness

Islam takes great care of cleanliness and regards it as part of faith, for it is among the most modern means of prevention from diseases which results from dirt; and wash (*ghusl*) is among the most manifest means of purity and cleanliness of the body.

C. Returning Vitality to the Body

Surely *jana'ba* (the ejaculation of semen) brings about the emaciation and withering of the body, so wash (*ghusl*) returns activity and vitality to it, and this has been emphasized by the modern medical researches.

D. The ghusl for the two 'Ids and Friday

In his answers to the questions of Muhammad b. Sina'n, the Imam, peace be on him, said: "The cause for the *ghusl* for the two 'Ids, Friday, and other *ghusls* is that, through it, the servant magnifies his Lord, receives the Generous and the Great (Allah), and asks Him to forgive him his sins, and that it may be for them a known 'Id when they gather in order to mention Allah, the Exalted, so *ghusl* has been appointed therein in order that it may be magnified, preferred to all days, and an increase in the supererogatory prayers and the acts of worship. And that purity for it (the body) should be from Friday to Friday.¹⁰"

It is recommended to wash on the day of 'Id al-Addha', 'Id al-Fitr, Friday, and other religious occasions such as the day of 'Id al-Ghadir, the visitation to the Shrines of the pure Imams, peace be on them, and other than that from among which the jurists have mentioned. The Imam, peace be on him, has shown

the reason for legislating *ghusl* on these occasions as follows:

1. It (*ghusl*) makes man magnify His Great Creator when he asks pardon and forgiveness from Him, the Exalted.
2. It makes the Muslims magnify the ‘Ids and urges them to associate with each other.
3. The Muslims must prefer these days to the rest of the days of the year, for this great occasion occurs in them.
4. They must increase the acts of worship and to celebrate these days through mentioning Allah, the Exalted.
5. As for the reason for the *ghusl* for Friday, it is that the body is pure and clean from Friday to Friday.

E. Ghusl al-Maiyit

The Imam, peace be on him, has given two reasons for that *ghusl al-maiyit* [11](#) is obligatory:

Regarding the first reason, he, peace be on him, said: “The cause of *ghusl al-maiyit* is that he is washed, for he becomes pure and is free from the dirt of his illness and all kinds of maladies which befall him, for he will meet the angels and associate with the people of the hereafter. When he goes to Allah, he meets the pure people; they touch him and he touches them, then it is recommended for him to be pure and clean, that they may turn to Allah and to intercede for him with Him.”

Regarding the second reason, he, peace be on him, said: “Yet another reason is that the semen from which he had been created comes out of him, so he is impure, and accordingly he is washed. [12](#)”

Islam takes great care of the dead Muslims; it summons the Muslims to escort them to their final resting places and to console their families on their misfortunes; it has made it incumbent, sufficient necessity, to wash them, to payer over them, and to bury them. The Imam has justified washing them as follows:

- A. The dead should be cleansed of dirt and the germs which are in his body and which result from his illness, and that is through washing him with water mixed with leaves of nabk tree (*sidr*) and camphor which are among the things which sterilize the body.
- B. Surely after washing, the dead are pure. If they are believers, then they will shake hand with the angels and the believers from among the inhabitants of the next world.
- C. The last thing which comes out of the bodies of the dead is the sperm from which they had been created. For this reason it is obligatory to wash them. Some modern theories have emphasized this meaning, and they believe that the sperm from which man is created remains living, and that from it he will be raised from the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

Any how, Islam has legislated for the dead the most wonderful precepts such as washing (*ghusl*) and burying in the ground.

F. Ghusl for Touching a Corpse

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for his washing because of washing him (the dead) or touching him, so it is purity of what befalls him of the sweat of the dead, for when the soul comes out of him, most of his blight remains, so he must cleanse himself of it and he becomes pure.[13](#)”

When one touches the cold corpse of the dead, he should wash his body. The Imam, peace be on him, has justified this *ghusl* saying that it is obligatory because man becomes a mass of germs after his death; therefore, it is obligatory on him who touches the cold corpse of the dead to wash his body in order to get rid of germs.

G. Ghusl for Urine and Feces is not obligatory

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for decrease regarding urine and feces because they are more abundant and lasting more than *jana'ba*, so *wudu'* has been made obligatory for them, for they are abundant, hard, come without any will, and no libido results from them; *jana'ba* does not occur except through their practicing pleasure and forcing their own souls.[14](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, has given reasons that *ghusl* for urine and feces is not obligatory, and that it is sufficient to cleanse the two places, for making *ghusl* for them obligatory is an intense and unbearable difficulty, so the Legislator has raised it.

H. Wudu

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why have they (men) been ordered to perform *wudu*’ and to start with it?’

“It is said: ‘Because the servant is pure when he stands up before the Almighty (Allah), says whispered prayers to Him, obey Him regarding what He has ordered him, pure of dirt and uncleanness; in addition to that (*wudu*) drives away inactivity, dismisses drowsiness, and purifies the heart before the Almighty.’[15](#)”

The Imam, peace be on him, has justified *wudu*” through the following spiritual reasons:

A. Surely *wudu*” is the precondition and essence of the prayers; it is coming to Allah, the Creator of the universe and Giver of life. It is obligatory on the worshipper to rid himself of the concerns of life, to come through his feelings and sentiments to Allah, the Most High. When Imam al-Hasan^{رض}the master of the youths of the Garden and sweet basil of Allah’s Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family^{رض}stood up for prayer, he would shake with fear of Allah and his skin would turn yellow. He was asked about that,

and he answered: "I am going to stand before the Almighty King." So *wudu*" is a precondition for this great act of worship, and it means freeing the body from dirt and uncleanness, and this is of that which suits the greatness of the prayers.

B. Surely, *wudu*" dismisses inactivity, takes drowsiness away, and prepares the worshippers for the prayer with activity and vitality.

C. Surely, *wudu*" purifies the heart and soul, for it is a precondition for standing before Allah, the Exalted.

Moreover, it leads to the spiritual profits which the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned. In other words it results in health profits of great importance of which is that it protects the eyes from Trachoma, for they are washed with clean water several times a day.

Of which is washing the nose with cool water which protects (man) from cold, which is the key to diseases.

Of which is washing the face and the hands in order to protect them from skin diseases and inflammations, for it has been mentioned in modern medicine that many microbes bring about diseases to man through penetrating his skin, and especially as it concerns parasites. Without doubt washing the uncovered parts of man's body frequently is an important way to get rid of parasites.

And of which is that the germs which enter man's body through the mouth result from the pollution of the hands, so if the hands are washed and always clean, then it will be the best way to get rid of germs.[16](#)

I. The Acts of "Wudu"

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why has He made it obligatory to wash the face and the hands, appointed the rubbing to the head and the feet, and has not made that full washing or full rubbing?'

"It is said: 'For various reasons of which is that the greatest act of worship is *ruku*" (bow) and *suju'd* (adoration) which one performs through the face and the hands, not through the head and the feet.'

"Of which is that the creatures cannot every time bear washing the head and the feet, and that it is difficult for them (to perform that) during cold, travel, illness, and times of the night and the day. Washing the face and the hands is easier than washing the head and the feet. He (Allah) has imposed the religious duties according to the least of the healthy people in obedience, and then He has made them (religious duties) include both the strong and the weak."

"Yet of which is that the head and the feet are not every time apparent and manifest like the face and the hands, because of wearing the turban, the sandals, and the like."[17](#)

Wudu" in the viewpoint of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, peace be on them, is washing the face, the hands, rubbing the head and the feet. As for the Imam, peace be on him, he has mentioned the reasons for the acts of *wudu*" as follows:

- A. The main parts of the prayer, for which *wudu*" has been legislated, are *rukū'* and *suju'd*, which one performs through the face and the hands, so washing is for them, not for other than them.
- B. Surely, washing the head and the feet brings about intense difficulty, especially during the days of cold, travel, and illness. So the Legislator is content with rubbing them.
- C. The apparent limbs in man's body are the face and the hands apart from other than them, so washing is for them only.

In his answers to the questions of Muhammad b. Sina'n, the Imam, peace be on him, has given another reason for *wudu*" similar to the one mentioned above, saying: "And the reason for *wudu*" for which the washing of the face and the hands, rubbing of the head and the feet has been (legislated) is because of his standing before Allah, the Great and Almighty, his receiving Him with his apparent limbs, and his meeting with them the noble scribes.

"So washing the face is for *suju'd* and submission, washing the hands for receiving (Allah) with them, to ask (Him), to fear (Him), to devote himself (to Him) with them. Rubbing is for the head and the feet because they are apparent and uncovered, and he receives with them (Allah) in all his circumstance, and there is (nothing) in them of submission and devotion to (Allah) just as that in the face and the hands.¹⁸"

J. The Prayer

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have they (men) been ordered to perform prayer?'

"It is said: 'Because through prayer one professes Lordship, and it (profession) is general righteousness, because therein is depositing equals before the Almighty (Allah) with submissiveness, yielding, submission, humility, profession, asking forgiveness from the past sins, placing the forehead on the ground by day and night; that the servant may praise Allah, not forget Him, be lowly, afraid, abased, seeking, desirous for an increase in the religion and the world, along with refraining from corruption. The prayer has become obligatory on the servant by day and night lest he should forget his Lord and his Creator and standing before his Lord; and it (the prayer may) restrain him from the acts of disobedience and prevent him from all kinds of corruption.'¹⁹"

The believer can use prayer as a ladder to ascend to the heaven, and through it the Allah-fearing can seek nearness to Allah. The Imam, peace be on him, has stated some interests in legislating prayer as follows:

A. Some profits and fruit of prayer are: The worshipper absolutely professes Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty Creator, *nothing like a likeness of Him*. He increases in lowness, submission, and abasement before Allah. He asks Him to pardon him and to forgive him his sins which he has committed during his lifetime.

B. Prayer protects man from acts of disobedience, prevents him from evil deeds, and guides him to good, on the condition that he should perform it in the right manner and conform to its preconditions.

C. If man repeats prayer every day, he will have firm and constant links with his Creator and Director of his affairs. In addition to these profits which the Imam, peace be on him, has stated, prayer is the best way of providing society with creative, spiritual forces.

If man spiritually communicate with his Creator, then he feels no loneliness and depression. So prayer helps him communicate with the Generous Creator. It removes from him fear, loneliness, and depression. Moreover it supplies him with spiritual forces through which he can face all difficulties and hardships.

K. The Adha'n of Prayer

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Tell me about *adha'n* (the call to prayer): Why have they (people) been ordered to say it?'

"It is said: 'For many reasons of which are: It reminds the inattentive (of prayer), calls the attention of the heedless (to it), makes him who is ignorant of time and forgets prayer know (it), and summons (men) to worship the Creator. It makes (men) desirous of prayer, profess His Oneness, declare faith publicly, announce Islam. It calls him who forgets it (prayer to perform it). It is said that he is a *mu'adhin* because he says the *adha'n* (the call to prayer).'²⁰"

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reasons for legislating the *adha'n* or call to prayer as follows:

- A. It reminds the inattentive of prayer and draws the attention of the heedless, that they may perform this religious duty.
- B. It makes the Muslims know the timing of prayer, that they may prepare themselves for performing it individually or in congregation.
- C. It summons men to worship the Great Creator and to profess His Oneness.

L. The Phrases which make up the adha'n

The Imam, peace be on him, has given an account of the reasons for the phrases which make up the *adha'n* as follows:

A. Starting with *takkbir* or exclaiming ‘Allah is Great!>:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why does he (*mu’adhin*) starts it (the *adha’n*) with *takkbir* (Allah is Great!) before *tahlil* (there is no god but Allah)?’

“It is said: ‘Because he wants to start with His name, for the name of Allah, the Exalted, is in the first letters of *takkbir*, and in *tahlil* (His name) is in the last letters, so he starts with the letters in which the name of Allah is at the beginning, not at the end.’²¹

The Imam, peace be on him, has shown the reason for starting the *adha’n* with exclaiming *Allahu akbar* (Allah is Great!) before starting it with *la’ ila’ha illa’lla’h* (there is no god but Allah). That is because the *mu’adhin* (the person who recites the *adha’n*) may start the *adha’n* and open it with His name, the Exalted, and that is contrary to *tahlil*, for His name, the Exalted, is at the end of it, and this is not appropriate for starting the *adha’n*.

B. *Al-takkbir arba’an* or exclaiming ‘Allah is great!’ four times:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has the *takkbir* at the beginning of the *adha’n* been made four (times)?’

“It is said: ‘Because the *adha’n* starts suddenly, and there is no speech before it in order to call the attention of the listeners to it, so it has been made (four times) in order to call the attention of the listeners to that which is after it in the *adha’n*.²²

The purpose of the *adha’n* is to draw the attention of the Muslims in order to prepare themselves for performing prayer, and for this purpose the *takkbir* therein has been made four times, just as the Imam, peace be on him, says.

C. The phrases which make up the *adha’n* are said two times by two times:

He, peace be on him, said: “Why has it (the *adha’n*) been recited two (times) by two (times)?

“It is said: ‘Because it is repeated in the ears of the listeners and is emphasized for them. If someone is heedless of the first (time), he is not heedless of the second (time). And because prayer (is performed) two *rak’as* by two *rak’as*, and for this reason (the phrases of) the *adha’n* (are recited) two (times) by two (times).’²³

Surely each of the phrases which make up the *adha’n* summons men to good, salvation, and success. So repeating them fixes these concepts in the minds of the listeners.

D. Regarding the *shaha’datayn* or twin formulae of faith: “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has He placed the *shaha’datayn* after the *takkbir*?’

“It is said: ‘Because the first (part) of faith is Oneness and professing the Oneness of Allah, the Great and Almighty, and the second (part of faith) is professing the message of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, that obedience to them and knowledge of them are associated (with each other), and that the origin of faith is the *shaha'datayn* (the twofold testimony), so He has placed the *Shaha'datayn* just as He has placed *Shaha'datayn* (two testimonies) in the rest of the rights; therefore, if one professes the Oneness of Allah and the message of the Messenger, then he professes the entire faith, for the origin of faith is professing Allah and His Messenger.’²⁴

The *adha'n* is opened with the *Shaha'datayn* after the *takbir*: bearing witness that Allah is One and that Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, is His Messenger, and these two witnesses are the origin and slogan of Islam, so he who believes in them enjoys all the Muslim's rights such as sparing his blood and protecting his property. As the rest of the rights are established by these two testimonies, Islam is established by them.

E. The Call to Prayer (*haya 'ala'sala'h*):

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer say: ‘Why has He placed the call to prayer (*haya 'ala'sala'h*) after the *shaha'datayn*?’

“It is said: ‘Because the *adha'n* has been placed for prayer, and it is the call to prayer, so the call has been placed in the middle of the *adha'n*. The *mu'adhin* says four (phrases) before it: the two *takbirs* and the *shaha'datayn* (two testimonies). Then he says four (phrases) after it calling (men) to salvation (*fala'h*) urging (them) to kindness and prayer. Then he calls (them) to the best of actions (*khayr al-'amal*) making them desirous of it (prayer), its action, and its performing. Then he calls through the *takbir* and the *tahlil*, that he may complete after it four (phrases) just as he completes four (phrases) before it, and that he may complete his speech through mentioning the name of Allah just as he opens it through mentioning the name of Allah, the Exalted.’²⁵

Islam takes great care of prayer, so it has placed it among its foremost religious rites, and legislated the *adha'n* as a sign for entering the timing of prayer, that the Muslims may prepare themselves for performing this great, religious duty. It has placed *hayya 'ala'sala'h* (make haste to the prayer) after the *shaha'datayn* (the two testimonies), and it (*hayya 'ala'sala'h*) is a call to begin prayer. Similarly, the call to salvation (*fala'h*) and the best of actions (*khayr al-'amal*), which are two of the phrases of the *adha'n*, include prayer; therefore, prayer is part of salvation(*fala'h*) and of the best actions (*khayr al-'amal*).

F. The *tahlil* at the end of the *adha'n*:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has He placed the *tahlil* at the end of it (prayer), and not placed the *takbir* at the end of it just as He has placed the *takbir* at the beginning of it?’

“It is said: ‘Because the name of Allah is at the end of the *tahlil*, so Allah, the Exalted, desires to end the speech with His name just as He has opened it with His name.’”

Surely, the *tahlil* (there is no god but Allah) at the end of the *adha'n* means negating all kinds of gods except Allah, the Most High, the Originator of the universes and Creator of life. The *adha'n* is started with *Alla'hu akbar* (Allah is Great!) just as it is ended with *la' ilaha illa'llah* (there is no god but Allah).

G. The *tasbih* instead of the *tahlil*

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why He has not placed the *tasbih* (glory belongs to Allah), the *tahmid* (praise belongs to Allah), and the name of Allah instead of the *tahlil* at the end of it (the *adha'n*)?’

“It is said: ‘Because the *tahlil* is professing the Oneness of Allah and removing the equals other than Allah; it is the beginning of faith and is the greatest of the *tasbih* and the *tahmid*.’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reason for placing the *tahlil* at the end of the *adha'n* instead of the *tasbih* (glory belongs to Allah) and the *tahmid* (praise belongs to Allah), for it is the greatest of them in professing the Oneness of Allah, the Most High, and negating all gods except Him. As for the *tasbih* and the *tahmid*, they do not give this meaning.

M. The Phrases which make up the Prayer

The Imam has mentioned the reasons for most parts and conditions of prayer as follows:

1. The seven *takkbirs*:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has He made the *takkbir* at the beginning seven times?’

“It is said: ‘He has made that because the *takkbir* in the first *rak'a*, which is the origin, is seven times: the *takkbir* for the commencement which is *takkbirat al-ihra'm* through which the prayer is commenced; the *takkbir* for the *ruku'* during bow down; two *takkbirs* for *suju'd*. So if man mentions the *takkbir* at the beginning of prayer seven times, then he achieves the entire *takkbir*. If he forgets some of them or leaves them, then there is no decrease in his prayer.’”

For this purpose the seven-time *takkbir* has been legislated during commencing prayer, one of these *takkbirs* is *takkbirat al-ihra'm*.

2. Reciting the Qur'an:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why have they been ordered to recite (the Qur'an) in prayer?’

“It is said: ‘Lest the Qur'an should be deserted and lost, and that it may be kept, so it will not disappear; nor will it be unknown.’”

For this reason men have been ordered to recite surat al-Fa'tiha and another sura of the Qur'an in the first and second *rak'a* of prayer.

3. Reciting Surat al-Fa'tiha:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why does he (the worshipper) starts (prayer) with reciting (surat) al-Hamad (al-Fa'tiha) apart from the rest of the suras?'

"It is said: 'Because there is nothing in the Qur'an and the Speech has brought together good and wisdom just as surat al-Hamd has done, and that is according to these words of Him, the Exalted:

"**Praise belongs to Allah** means the thanksgiving which Allah, the Exalted, has made incumbent on His servants, and (also means) showing gratitude (toward Him) for the good through which He has given success to His servant.

"**The Lord of the Worlds** means glorifying, praising, and professing Him, and means that it is He who is the Creator and Master.

"**The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful** means seeking sympathy, mentioning His boons and favors toward all His creation.

"**Master of the Day of Judgment** means acknowledging before Him the Resurrection, the Reckoning, the repayments, regarding as obligatory that here and the hereafter belong to Him.

"**You do we serve** means (seeking) wish and nearness to Allah, the Great and Almighty, (and means) sincerity in work for Him apart from other than Him.

"**And You do we beseech for help** means asking Him for more success and acts of worship, asking Him for continuing what He has bestowed upon him and made him see.

"**Guide us to the right path** means seeking guidance to His good manners, holding fast by His covenant, seeking more knowledge of his Lord, His tremendousness, and His magnificence.

"**The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favors** means an emphasis on the request and the wish, mentioning His previous benefits, His favors toward His friends, and a wish for such favors.

"**Not (the path) of those upon whom Your wrath is brought down** means seeking refuge (in Allah) from being one of the stubborn unbelievers who disparage Him, His command, and His prohibition.

"**Nor of those who go astray** means seeking protection from being one of those who go astray who have lost the (right) path without knowledge, while they think that they do well.

"So it (Surat al-Hamd) contains inclusive good and wisdom regarding the affairs of this world and the next to the extent that nothing can contain them (more than it can)."

Because of these great requests and sublime meanings, the Legislator has ordered prayer to be commenced by Surat al-Fa'tiha, not by other than it from among the Suras of the Holy Qur'an. It has been reported from Imam al-Ridha' that there is no prayer except through the opening sura of the Book. This negation is the negation of the essence; if prayer is commenced by a sura other than al-Fa'tiha', then it is incorrect.

4. The *tasbih* in the *ruku'* and the *suju'd*:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why the *tasbih* (glory belongs to Allah) has been placed in the *ruku'* and the *suju'd*?"

"It is said: 'For reasons of which is that through his submission, his lowliness, his worship, his piety, his yielding, his abasement, his humbleness, and his (seeking) nearness to Allah, the servant must call Him holy, praise Him, glorify Him, magnify Him, thank his Creator and Provider, that thinking and wishes do not take him to other than Allah.'"

Because of these exalted meanings, the *tasbih* has been placed in the *ruku'* and the *suju'd* apart from the rest of the phrases through which Allah is mentioned.

5. The *ruku'* and the two *sajdas*:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have one *rak'a* and two *suju'ds* been specified?'

"It is said: 'Because the *ruku'* is one of the actions of the *qiya'm* (standing position) and the *suju'd* is one of the actions of the *julu's* (sitting position); the prayer of one who sits is the half of that of one who stands, so the *suju'd* has been doubled that it may be equal to the *ruku'*, so there is no difference between them, for prayer consists of *ruku'* and *suju'd*.'"

For this reason the *suju'd* has been doubled so that it may equal the *ruku'*, just as the Imam, peace be on him, has stated.

6. The supplication in the *Qunu't*:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why has the supplication been placed in the first *rak'a* before the recitation? And why the *qunu't* has been in the second *rak'a* after the recitation?'

"It is said: 'Because it is recommended for him (the worshipper) to start his standing and his act of worship for his Lord with praise, sanctification, wish, and fear; and he ends them with (phrases) similar to these; and he must stand a longer time during the *Qunu't*.'

The Imam, peace be on him, has shown the reason for that it is recommended to recite a certain supplication before entering prayer. That is because one must show absolute submission to Allah, the Most High. The supplication during the *qunu't* must be longer, that one may show obedience to Allah,

the Exalted.

7. The loud and quiet recitation:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why are some prayers (recited) loudly, while others are not?'

"It is said: 'Because the prayers which are performed loudly are performed in dark times, so it is incumbent on him (the worshipper) to perform them loudly, that the passer-by may know that there is a group of people here. So if he (the passer-by) wants to perform a prayer, he can perform it. If he cannot see a group of people pray, he hears and knows that because of hearing. As for the prayers which are not performed loudly, they are performed by daytime, and in bright times. So he understands that because of vision and is in no need of hearing.'"

As for the prayers which are performed loudly, they are the morning prayer, the evening prayer, and the night prayer. They are performed in such a manner, that the passer-by in the dark may be attentive and prepare himself for performing the prayer, just as the Imam's justification. As for the prayers which are performed quietly, they are the noon prayer and the after noon prayer. There is no reason for performing them loudly, and that is because there is no darkness during their timings.

8. Raising the hands during the *takbir*:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why does he (the worshipper) raise his hands during the *takbir*?'

"It is said: 'Because raising the hands is a kind of supplication and imploring. As for Allah, He wants His servant to supplicate and implore Him when he mentions Him. And because raising the hands means that the intention is present and the heart attends to what he says and means.'"

As for raising the hands during the *takbir*, it is a kind of the absolute submission to Allah, the Most High as well as during it is the intention, which is the beginning of entering prayer.

9. The timings of the prayers:

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have the prayers been confined to these times? And (why) are they not advanced or delayed?'

"It is said: 'Because the famous and known times include the people of the earth in general, so the ignorant and the learned know (that they are) four: the setting of the sun is famous and known, the evening (prayer) is obligatory during it; the falling of the evening twilight is famous and known, the night (prayer) is obligatory during it; the daybreak is famous and known, the dawn (prayer) is obligatory during it; the declination of the sun is famous and known, the noon (prayer) is obligatory during it; and there is no known time for the afternoon, so its time (i.e. the time of the prayer) is after finishing the payer before

it.”

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the causes of the timings specified for the prayers, and that they are famous and known with the entire people of the earth regardless of their different languages. As these times are exact, they have been appointed for the prayers.

The Imam, peace be on him, added another cause to the timings of the prayers, saying: “Yet there is another cause: Surely Allah wants men to start every act with obedience to Him in the first place. He has ordered them to start the day with worshipping Him; and then they can spread regarding what they like of the affairs of their world. He has made the dawn prayer obligatory on them. When midday comes and men leave their work and it is time for them to take off their clothes, take a rest, busy themselves with their food and their siesta, Allah has ordered them to start first of all with remembering and worshipping Him, so He has made the noon prayer obligatory on them, then they can turn to what they like of that. When they finish their wish and want to spread for work to the end of the day, they should also begin with an act of obedience to Him. When they attain what they like of that, He has made the afternoon prayer obligatory on them, then they can spread for what they like of the affairs of their world. When the night comes and they leave their embellishment and return to their houses, they should start in the first place with worshipping their Lord, then they can return to what they like of that, so He has made the evening prayer obligatory on them. When the time of sleep comes and they are free from that with which they are busy, He wants them to start first of all with worshipping and obeying Him, then they can attend to what they attend of that; therefore, they start every work with obeying and worshipping Him, so He has made obligatory on them the night prayer; therefore, if they do that, they do not forget Him and are not heedless of Him, their hearts do not become cruel, and their desire does not decrease.”

The Imam has shown the reason why the prayers have been legislated in these specified times and not in other than them. He has also shown the benefits of these times.

10. The afternoon prayer:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Therefore, why is there no famous time for the afternoon prayer like these times? Why has He not made it obligatory between the night prayer and the early morning one or between the early morning prayer and the noon one?’

“It is said: ‘Because there is no time lighter nor easier nor better than this time, that He may include the weak and the strong through this prayer. And because all people work in commerce and dealings at the beginning of daytime; they go to accomplish (their) needs and reside in the markets. So He does not desire to divert them (through prayer) from seeking their daily bread and the affairs of their world. And (because) not all creation are able to rise for the night (prayer); nor do they feel it; nor are they aware of its time if it is obligatory; nor are they capable of that, so Allah has decreased (that for) them. He has not placed it in the most difficult times for them; rather He has placed it in the easiest time for them; just as He, the Great and Almighty, says: *Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you*

*difficulty.*²⁶

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the cause for extending the time of the afternoon prayer up to the end of daytime. That is because Allah desires to relieve people, though an excellent time has been appointed for performing the afternoon prayer, and it is that when the shade is equal to two sevenths of the stake (*sha'khis*), and that the excellent time ends when the shade is equal to four sevenths of the stake.²⁷

11. Congregational prayer:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why He (the Legislator) has (ordered prayer to be performed in) congregation?’

“It is said: ‘Because sincerity, Oneness, Islam, and acts of worship to Allah are apparent, uncovered, famous; because manifesting them is an argument for only Allah, the Great and Almighty, against the people of the east and of the west; because the hypocrites and those who disparage Islam and believe in it apparently are kept under observation; because the people can bear witness to each other through Islam and their witness is permissible and possible; and because performing prayer in congregation includes help, kindness, Allah-fearingness, and protection from the acts of disobedience to Allah, the Great and Almighty.’”

Congregational prayer is the most important act of worship in Islam, for the Muslims take advantages of it, for example, they know each other; love and friendship spread among them; and they appear as one rank in front of their enemies. In this part of his speech, the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reason why prayer is performed in congregation.

12. *Sala't al-sunna* or supererogatory prayers:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has *sala't al-sunna* been confined to thirty-four *rak'as*?’

“It is said: ‘Because the obligatory (prayers) are seventeen *rak'as*, so (*sala't*) *al-sunna* has been specified twice as much as the obligatory (prayers), as the perfection of the obligatory (prayers).’”

As for *sala't al-sunna*, which is the daily supererogatory prayers, is eight *rak'as* before the noon prayer, eight *rak'as* before the afternoon prayer, four *rak'as* after the evening prayers, two *rak'as* in sitting position and regarded as one *rak'a* after the night prayer, eight *rak'as* for the late night prayer, the two *rak'as* of the even prayer after it (the late night prayer), the *rak'a* of the odd prayer after it (the even prayer), and two *rak'as* before the dawn prayer, so they are thirty-four *rak'as*. The Imam, peace be on him, has justified that through making *sala't al-sunna* twice as much as the obligatory prayers, that it may perfect them.

13. *Sala't al-sunna* or supererogatory prayers are performed in various times:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has *sala’t al-sunna* appointed in various times, and has not appointed in one time?’

“It is said: ‘Because the best times are three: during the declination of the sun, after the evening, and the early mornings, so He desires him (the worshipper) to pray for Him in all these three times, that is because if (*sala’t*) *al-sunna* is separated into various times, then their performing is lighter and easier than gathering them together in one time.’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reason for separating the times of *sala’t al-sunna*, for they have appointed in the most excellent time and the most lovable of them to Allah, the Most High. In addition to that, performing them in one time brings about confusion and difficulty.

14. Prayer is ended by the *taslim*:

He, peace be on him, has said: “Why has the *taslim* been made (as means for) ending prayer? (Why) has neither the *takbir* nor the *tasbih* nor another kind has been placed in stead of it?”

“It is said: ‘As the speech of the creatures is unlawful during entering prayer (that they may) turn toward the Creator, it is lawful and they can return (to the previous state) and begin speaking after the *taslim*.’”

For this reason speech is lawful after the *taslim*; the Legislator has made it unlawful on the worshipper to speak during prayer and other acts of worship. As for this prohibition, it ends after the *taslim*.

The Friday prayer:

Imam al-Ridha’, peace be on him, has mentioned some reasons for the Friday pray as follows:

A. The Friday prayer is two *rik’as*:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why does the Friday prayer consist of two *rik’as* if it is performed by the Imam? And why does it consist of two *rik’as* and two *rik’as* (i.e. the worshipper performs the noon prayer) if it is performed by other than the Imam?’

“It is said: ‘For various reasons of which is that the people come from distant (places), so Allah, the Great and Almighty, desires to decrease it for them because they are tired when they arrive at the place (of the prayer).’

“Of which is that the Imam prevents them from going, that he may deliver his sermon and make them wait for the prayer, for he who waits for the prayer performs a complete prayer.

“Of which is that the prayer performed by the Imam is more complete and more perfect because of his knowledge, his understanding, his justice, and his excellence.

“Yet of which is that Friday is ‘Id, and the ‘Id prayer is two *rik’as*, and it (the Friday prayer) is not

shortened because of the two sermons.”

The Friday prayer has been shortened and become two *rik'as* for this reason and the reasons which have been mentioned by the Imam, peace be on him.

B. The cause for the sermon in the Friday prayer:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has the sermon been determined?’

“It is said: ‘Because the Friday (prayer) is a general view, so He (Allah) desires the Imam to be a cause for preaching to them in order to make them desire the acts of obedience, fear the acts of disobedience, aware of what He desires (to do) for the interest of their religion and their world, and to tell them about harm and profit which he has gained from the times and the conditions’”

Surely the greatest interest in the Friday prayer is the sermon which the Imam delivers, for it spreads political and religious awareness among the Muslims, develops good inclinations in their souls, and guides them to the right path.

C. Two sermons in the Friday prayer:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has two sermons been determined?’

“It is said: ‘Because one (sermon) is for lauding, praising, and sanctifying Allah, the Great and Almighty. And the other is for needs, excuses, warning, supplication, and what he (the Imam) desires to teach them of His command and prohibition including righteousness and corruption.’”

The Imam has stated the reason for legislating two sermons in the Friday prayer, so the first sermon is regarding lauding Allah, the Most High, the Creator of the universe, and Giver of life, explaining his tremendousness concerning what He creates of His marvelous creatures. As for the second sermon, it concerns explaining that which set the Muslims right in this world and the next.

D. The Friday sermon is before the prayer:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has the Friday sermon been determined before the prayer while it has been determined after the prayer on the two ‘Ids?’

“It is said: ‘Because Friday is an everlasting condition; it is several (times) in the month and many (times) in the year. So if the people regard it (the sermon) as many, they pray and leave it; they do not persist in it and scatter from it. So it (the sermon) has been determined before the prayer so that they may wait for the prayer, may not scatter and go away.’

“As for the two ‘Ids, they are twice in the year; they are greater than Friday; the congregation therein is more (than that on Friday); and the people are more desirous of them. So if some people scatter, then most of them remain. They (the two ‘Ids) are not so many that they (the people) are tired of them or

disparage them.”

Shaykh al-Sadu’q, may Allah rest him in peace, has commented on this tradition, saying: “The tradition has been mentioned in this manner; the two sermons on Friday (are before the prayer); (the two sermons of) the ‘Id are after the prayer because they are with the same rank to the two final *rak‘as*, and that ‘Uthma’n b. ‘Affa’n was the first to advance the two sermons. Because he had done what he did, the people did not persist in the sermon and said: ‘What have we to do with his sermons while he had done what he did?’ As a result he advanced the two sermons, that the people might wait for the prayer and not scatter from him.”

E. The Friday prayer is obligatory on those who live within two leagues (about six miles):

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has the Friday (prayer) been made obligatory on him who (lives) within two leagues, not more than that?’

“It is said: ‘Because the distance in which the prayer is shortened is two *barids* (24 miles) going or one *barid* (12 miles) back and forth. And the *barid* is four leagues, so the Friday (prayer) is obligatory on him who (lives) within half a *barid* because of which shortening (the prayer) is obligatory. And that is because he (the traveler covers) two leagues when he comes and two leagues when he goes. So that is four leagues, and it is the half of the road of the traveler.’”

For this reason stated by the Imam, peace be on him, the Friday prayer is obligatory on those who live within two leagues, not more.

F. The Friday supererogatory prayer:

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has four *rak‘as* been added to the Friday supererogatory prayers?’

“It is said: ‘Because this day should be magnified and distinguished from the rest of the days. It is recommended to perform twenty *rak‘as* as supererogatory prayers on Friday. So four *rak‘as* has been added to the sixteen supererogatory prayers which are performed during the rest of the days. It is recommended for (the worshipper) to perform six (*rak‘as*) of them during the extension (*inbisa’t*) of the sun, six during its rising, six before the declination (of the sun), and two *rak‘as* during the declination.’”

N. The Traveler’s Shortened Prayer

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has prayer been shortened on journey?’

“It is said: ‘Because the obligatory prayers are ten *rak‘as*, and the seven (*rak‘as*) was later added to them. So Allah has decreased that increase for them because of his (the traveler’s) place of travel, his tiredness, his pains, his taking care of his affairs, his departure, and his residence, lest he should busy himself with (something other than) that which is his livelihood. (This is) mercy and sympathy from Allah,

the Great and Almighty, toward him (the traveler); except the evening prayer, it is not shortened, for it is originally a shortened prayer.”

The Imam, peace be on him, has displayed the reason for the traveler’s shortened prayer, and that is because the traveler faces during his journey troubles and difficulties, especially as it concerns those times when travel was confined to animals and ships which caused to him hardships and sufferings. So the Legislator has shown favor and mercy toward servants when He omitted for the traveler the half of the four- *rak‘a* prayer.

O. The distance making shortening prayer obligatory

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has shortening prayer confined to eight leagues, no less, no more than that?’

“It is said: ‘Because eight leagues is a day’s travel for the commoners, the caravans, and the baggage, so it is obligatory to shorten (prayer) during a day’s travel.’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has explained the reason for that the Legislator has determined eight leagues as a distance for shortening prayer, then he, peace be on him, has commented on that, saying: “If a sayer says: ‘So why is it obligatory to shorten (prayer) during a day’s travel, not more?’

“It is said: ‘Because if it was not obligatory (to shorten prayer) during a day’s travel, then it would not be obligatory during a year’s walk, and that is because every day which follows this day is like this day. So if it was not obligatory (to shorten prayer) on this day, then it was not obligatory on the like of it if the like of it was similar to it, and there was no difference between them.’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has stated that if the distance for shortening prayer was not determined in eight leagues, which is a day’s walk, then the distance necessary for shortening prayer would be on the following day, for it is the like of the previous day and has no excellence over it; like this is on the days that follow, and this leads to the vicious circle.

The Imam added, saying: “If a sayer says: ‘Walk may be different, so why has a day’s travel confined to eight leagues?’

“It is said: ‘Because eight leagues is the walk of camels and the caravans, and it is the distance which covered by the camel-drivers and those who hire animals.’”

P. Daytime supererogatory prayers are canceled

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why does the traveler leave the daytime supererogatory prayers and does not leave those are by night?’

“It is said: ‘Because you do not leave the supererogatory prayers of every prayer which you do not

shorten. And that is the evening prayer is not shortened, so the supererogatory prayers after it are not shortened; likewise, the dawn prayer is not shortened, so the supererogatory prayers before it are not shortened.”

The Imam has stated that the daytime supererogatory prayers are canceled, and that the night ones are not canceled. The reason for that is that the supererogatory prayers are canceled when the prayer is shortened. As the evening prayer and the dawn one are not shortened, their supererogatory prayers are not canceled. Then he commented on that, saying: “If a sayer says: ‘The night prayer is shortened, so why is its two-*rak‘a* (supererogatory prayer) not canceled?”

“It is said: ‘These two *rak‘as* are not of the fifty (supererogatory prayers); rather they are an addition to them, that each two *rak‘as* of the supererogatory prayers may complete one *rak‘a* of the obligatory player.’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned that the night prayer is shortened during journey while its supererogatory prayer, which is two *rak‘as* in sitting position, is not abolished. So the Imam, peace be on him, answered: “Surely in the viewpoint of the Legislator, the supererogatory prayer of the night prayer is equal to one *rak‘a* in standing position.” And the reason for that is that each two *rak‘as* of the supererogatory prayers are instead of one *rak‘a* of the obligatory prayer. As a result the traveler has no right to cancel the supererogatory prayer of the night prayer as well as he must perform the late night prayer at the beginning of the night.

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why is it permissible for the traveler and the sick to perform the late night prayer at the beginning of the night?’

“It is said: ‘Because they are busy and weak, that they may attain their prayer, so that the sick may take a rest at the time of their rest, and the traveler may busy himself with his works, his departure, and his journey.’”

Q. The Prayer for the Dead

The Imam, peace be on him, talked about some reasons for the prayer for the dead as follows: “If a sayer says: ‘Why have they (the people) been ordered to pray over the dead?’

“It is said: ‘Because they intercede (with Allah) for him and asked (Him) to forgive him. Because he is not at any of those times more needy of intercession (with Allah) for him, asking, and seeking forgiveness than that hour.’”

Surely the supplication of the believers who pray over the dead is the most important thing which the dead need, that Allah may respond to their supplication, pardon the dead, forgive them their sins, and give to them His good pleasure.

R. The five takkibs over the Dead

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has five *takkibs*, and not four or six, been determined (for the dead)?’

“It is said: ‘Surely the five (*takkibs*) have been taken from the five prayers by day and night.’”

Surely, the five (*takkibs*) stands for the daily prayers, which are five.

S. The Prayer for the Dead without “wudu”

He, peace be on him, said: “Why has He (the Legislator) made it permissible to pray over the dead without *wudu*?”

“It is said: ‘Because it has neither *ruku*’ nor *suju’d*; rather it is a supplication and an asking. It is permissible for you to supplicate Allah and ask Him in all circumstances; *wudu*” is obligatory on (men when they perform) the prayer which has *ruku*’ and *suju’d*.”

T. The Prayer for the Dead is at all Times

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why have you made it permissible to pray over the dead before the evening and after the dawn?’

“It is said: ‘Because this prayer is obligatory at the time of the presence, and that is because it (the prayer) is not timed like all the prayers; rather it is the prayer which is obligatory when an event occurs; regarding it man has no option; rather it is a right which is performed; and it is permissible to perform the rights at any time if the right is not timed.’”

The Legislator has not appointed a certain time for the prayer for the dead. Rather the people pray over them at any time, for the prayer is one of their rights against the living, and the right is performed at any time.

U. Ghusl al-maiyit

We have already talked in detail about this matter.

V. Shrouding the Dead

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why have they been ordered to shroud the dead?’

“It is said: ‘Because they (the dead) will meet their Lord and their bodies are pure, lest their private parts should appear before those who carry and bury them; lest the people should come to know about some of their conditions, their ugly view, the change of their smell; lest the heart should not be cruel out of

looking many times at the like of that of handicap and corruption, and that they may be more agreeable to the souls of the living; that a bosom friend may not detest them, so he will cancel their names and his love (for them), so he will not maintain them in what they have left behind, willed, and ordered; whether it is obligatory or recommended.”

For these firm reasons of great importance, the Great Legislator (Allah) has made it incumbent on men to shroud the dead as a sign of respect for them and covering their corpses which the living hate and disdain when they look at them.

W. The Burial of the Dead

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why have they been ordered to bury the dead?’

“It is said: ‘Lest the people come to know about the corruption of their corpses, their ugly view, the change of their smell; lest the living should be harmed by their smell, their illness, and their corruption, that they may be covered from the friends and the enemies, so their enemies will not gloat over them; nor will their friends be sad for them.’”

For these firm reasons, it has been made incumbent on the living to bury the dead. For if their corpses decay and their bad smell spread, the air is polluted and diseases spread. In addition to this, their view is ugly, their smell is abominable, and the like from that which the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned.

X. The Prayer for an eclipse of the Sun

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: “Why has prayer for an eclipse (of the sun) been determined?”

“It is said: ‘Because it is one of the signs of Allah, the Great and Almighty. None knows whether for a mercy or a punishment it appears. So the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, desired his community to resort to its Merciful Creator during that (time), that He (Allah) may drive away its evil from it (the community) and protect it from its ordeal just as He had driven away (the punishment) from the people of Yunus when they pleaded to Allah, the Great and Almighty.’”

For this reason the Legislator has ordered a prayer to be performed during an eclipse of the sun or the moon, during heavenly or earthly fearful things such as the black and red winds, an earthquake, and the like from among that which the jurists have mentioned.

Y. The Reason for the Performance of the Prayer for Unusual Natural Events (Aya’t)

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: “Why has it (the prayer) been determined in ten *rak’as*?”

“It is said: ‘Because the obligatory prayer which was first sent down from the heaven to earth regarding the day and the night was ten *rak’as*. So prayer was gathered together, and the *suju’d* was determined

in it, because every prayer which has the *ruku'* has the *suju'd*, and that they may also complete their prayer with the *suju'd* and submission. It (the prayer) has been determined in four *suju'ds*, because every prayer whose *suju'd* is less than four *suju'ds* is not a prayer, because the least religious duty in prayer is *suju'd*, and it is not (correct) unless it is four *suju'ds* (i.e. prostration four times).”

The prayer for unusual natural events (*Sala't al-Aya't*) consists of two *rak'as*; each of five *ruku'*s; the worshipper should rise after each *ruku'*. After the worshipper has risen for the fifth *ruku'*, he should perform two *sajdas*, recite the *tashahud* and *sala'm*. The Imam has given an account of the reason for determining this prayer in ten *ruku'*s, and that it represents the ten -*rak'a* prayer which was first imposed on servants.

'Id al-Fitr

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has the day of fast breaking been regarded as ‘Id?’

“It is said: ‘That the Muslims may have a meeting place in which they meet, appear for Allah, the Great and Almighty, so they praise Him for what He has bestowed upon them, so it is the day of ‘Id, the day of meeting, the day of fast breaking, the day of *Zaka't*, the day of desire, and the day of supplication, and because it is the first day of the year in which eating and drinking is lawful, for the first of the months of the year with the people of the Truth is the month of Ramada'n, so Allah, the Great and Almighty, desires that they may have a meeting place in which they praise and sanctify Him.’”

For these reasons which have been mentioned by the Imam, peace be on him, the day of fast breaking has been regarded as ‘Id for the Muslims; they gather together therein and congratulate each other on that Allah has made them successful in fasting the blessed month of Ramada'n.

The ‘Id Prayers

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has the *takkbir* therein (‘Id prayers) been made more than that in the prayers other than it?’

“It is said: ‘Because *takkbir* is for Allah and is glorification (for Him) for guiding (them) and (giving them) well-being, just as Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said: ***That you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for His having guided you and that you may give thanks.***²⁸’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has expressed the reason for making the *takkbir* in the ‘Id prayer more than that in the other prayers, and that is because this excellent day is great with Allah, the Most High.

Fasting

The Imam, peace be on him, talked about the reason for legislating fasting, and about some reasons for the legislation concerning the blessed month of Ramada'n.

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have they been ordered to fast?'

"It is said: 'That they may come to know about the pain of hunger and thirst, so they conclude the poverty in the hereafter, and that the fasting person may be lowly, abased, miserable, rewarded, relying (on Allah), and patient toward that which befall him of hunger and thirst, so he is worthy of reward, in addition to refraining from desires, and this may be a preacher for them in the immediate, a trainer for them against what He has entrusted to them, and a guide for them to the deferred, and that they may know the severity of that (hunger and thirst) against the people of poverty and misery in the world, so they give to them what Allah has apportioned as a religious duty in their properties.'"

The Imam has mentioned the profits which result from fasting of which is showing sympathy for the poor, for when the fasting person becomes hungry, he feels the pain of hunger, and this urges him to show affection toward the poor and the needy. Among the reasons for fasting is equality between the rich and the poor in this religious duty.

Yet another reason for it is that it strengthens man's will, and that is through his refraining from eating and drinking. Jiha'dat, a German author, has written a book on building and strengthening will through fasting. He believes that fasting is the effective means for the authority of the soul over the body, and that man lives holding the reins of his own soul and is not a captive to his material inclinations.

These are some reasons of fasting. As for the Imam, peace be on him, he has mentioned many profits of it.

The Month of Ramada'n

He, peace be on him, said: 'If a sayer says: 'Why has fasting been appointed especially in (the month of Ramada'n) apart from the rest of the months?'

"It is said: 'Because (the month of Ramada'n) is the month in which Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Qur'an, and therein is a distinction between right and wrong, as Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said:

The month of Ramada'n is that in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction.²⁹ In it Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, was appointed as a prophet, and in it is *Laylat al-Qadr*, ***which is better than a thousand months, therein every wise affair is distinct***; it is new year; He ordains therein what is in the year of good and evil, harm or profit, provision or death, and for this reason it has been called *Laylat al-Qadr*."

For this reason Allah, the Most High, has made fasting obligatory in this blessed month and

distinguished it from the other months.

Fasting is confined to the Month of Ramada'n

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have they been ordered to fast the month of Ramada'n, not less than that nor more (than it)?'

"It is said: "Because it is the strength of worship through which He includes the strong and the weak; Allah has made religious duties on most things, and He has included the strong, then He has given permission to men of weakness, and make men of strength desire for excellence, and if they are set right by the less than that, then He will decrease them, and if they are in need of more than that, He will increase them."

Surely Allah's wisdom and His directing things require that the interest of servants is in fasting thirty days, and if the interest was less than that, he would decrease them; likewise, if the interest was more than that, he would increase them.

The menstruating Women leave Fasting and Prayer

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why does the menstruating woman not fast nor pray?'

"It is said: 'Because she is in the limit of uncleanness³⁰, so Allah desires that she does not serve Him except (when she is) pure, and because one who does not pray does not fast.'"

For this reason the menstruating woman does not fast; nor does she perform prayer. However, she has to compensate for fasting when she is pure.

The menstruating Women have to compensate for Fasting

He, peace be on him, said: "Why has she to compensate for fasting and has not to compensate prayer?'

"It is said: 'For various reasons of which is that fasting does not prevent her from serving herself, serving her husband, setting right her house, undertaking her affair, and fulfilling her livelihood, while prayer prevents her from all of that, for prayer is several times by day and night, so she is not able to (do) that, while fasting is not as such.'

"Of which surely there are suffering and tiredness in prayer and the limbs are busy, and there is nothing of that in fasting; rather it is refraining from eating and drinking, and the limbs are not busy therein.

"Of which is that when a time comes, on her obligatory is a prayer new in day and night, while fasting is not as such, because it is not whenever a day comes fasting is obligatory on her, and whenever a time comes prayer is obligatory on her."

For these firm reasons, the Legislator has not ordered the menstruating woman to compensate prayer, for performing it causes difficulties and tiredness to her, and it is contrary to fasting, for compensating for it causes to her neither difficulties nor tiredness.

Compensating for the Month of Ramada'n

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'If a man falls ill or travels in the month of Ramada'n and does not end his travel nor does he recover from his illness until another (month of Ramada'n) comes to him, then a redemption for the first (month) is obligatory on him and the compensation drops. If he recovers or rises between them and does not compensate for it, then (both) compensation and redemption are obligatory on him?'

"It is said: 'Because that fast was obligatory on him in that month, in that year. As for him who does not recover during the whole year, and Allah, the Exalted, overcame him and made a way for him to perform it, then it is not obligatory on him to perform it; likewise, those whom Allah overcomes such as the one who faints for a day and a night, so it is not obligatory on him to perform the prayer; just as al-Sa'diq, peace be on him, has said: 'If the servant is overcome by Allah, then he has an excuse, for the month (of Ramada'n) has come while he is still ill, so it is not obligatory on him to fast in the month of him nor in the year of him because of the illness in which he is, and redemption is obligatory on him, for he is with the same rank to him on whom fasting is obligatory but cannot perform it, so redemption is obligatory on him.' Just as Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said: ***Let him fast for two months successively; then as for him who is not able, let him feed sixty needy ones.***³¹ And as Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said: ***A compensation by fasting or alms or sacrificing.***³² So He has put alms in the place of fasting when it is difficult for him (the worshipper to fast).'"

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned those whose illness lasts from a month of Ramada'n to another, and they do not recover, so compensation for fasting is not obligatory on them; rather redemption is obligatory on them. As for those who recover during the year and have not fasted yet, it is obligatory on them to compensate for the fast, for they are able to fast as well as redemption is obligatory on them.

Then the Imam commented on that, saying: "If a sayer says: 'If he (the worshipper) was unable (to fast) at that time and is able now?'

"It is said: 'As another month of Ramada'n has come to him, then redemption for the past (months) is obligatory on him, for he is with the same rank to him on whom fasting in religious expiation is obligatory, but he was not able to fast it, so redemption is obligatory on him. And if redemption is obligatory, then fasting is not obligatory; fasting is not obligatory but redemption is obligatory. If he (the worshipper) recovers between them (the two months of Ramada'n) but had not fast it, then redemption is obligatory on him, because of his negligence, and fasting because he was able (to fast).'"

Fasting instead of Releasing a Slave

He, peace be on him, said: “Regarding the religious expiation due on him who cannot find, why is it obligatory on him to release a slave, fasting apart from the hajj, prayer, and the like?

“It is said: ‘Because prayer, the hajj, and all the religious duties prevent man from being changeable in the affairs of his world and interest of his livelihood, in addition to those reasons which we have mentioned regarding the menstruating woman who has to compensate for fasting and has not to compensate prayer.’”

For these reasons the Legislator has decided fasting instead of releasing a slave, and He has not decided prayer, the hajj, and the like instead of it, for this requires stopping works and makes man unable to get his daily bread.

Fasting two successive Months

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘So why has He made it obligatory on him (the worshipper) to fast two successive months, and has not made it obligatory on him to fast one month or three months?’

“It is said: ‘Because the religious duty which Allah has made incumbent upon people is one month, so He has doubled the religious expiation of this month as sign of emphasizing strictness.

The Succession in fasting two Months

He, peace be on him, said: “Why has the two months been made successive?

“It is said: “Lest he (the worshipper) should find it easy to perform (them), so he disparages it (fasting). Because if he compensate them separately, then compensation (for fasting) is easy for him.””

Surely the succession in fasting the two months is a punishment on him who intentionally breaks the fast and violates the things made unlawful by Allah, the Most High. So Allah, the Exalted, is severe with him regarding that.

The Hajj

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reason for legislating the hajj and the reasons for some precepts concerning it.

The Hajj is obligatory

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has He ordered them (to perform) the hajj?’

“It is said: ‘The reason for the hajj is to seek to be the guest of Allah, to request more blessings, to part with past sins, to feel repentant about the past, and to look forward to the future. It is due to spending on the trip, seeking nearness to Allah, tiring the body, abstaining from pleasures and desires, seeking nearness to Allah by worshipping Him, yielding and submitting to Him, looking up towards Him in cases of hot weather and chilling cold, during security and fear, incessantly doing so, and due to all the benefits in it in the east and west of the earth, and those who are in cold and heat³³, from among those who perform the hajj and from among those who do not perform the hajj, from among the merchants, the importers, the sellers, the buyers, the tradesmen, the needy, those who hire animals, the poor, and accomplishing the needs of the people of the outskirts in the places in which it is possible for them to collect expenses and reporting the news of the Imams, peace be on him, to every region and district, just as Allah, the Exalted, has said:

Why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious? ³⁴”

The hajj is a general conference aiming at great purposes and important benefits bringing about general good to Islamic world, and Imam al-Ridha’, peace be on him, has stated some of them. If we desire to mention the fruits and benefits of the hajj, the book will be unduly long. Any how, the most important thing in the hajj is that the Muslim peoples come to know about each other, that they may reach an exalted level among the peoples and communities of the world, and, in addition, it is useful from economic point of view, for every Muslim country has industries and products which are not available in other than it, and through the hajj it is possible for the Muslim countries to make commercial agreements in order to exchange such industries and products.

Any how, the hajj aims at raising the level of the intellectual, scientific, and economic life of the Muslims; therefore, it is a unique conference in the world.

The Hajj is one Time

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘So why have they been ordered to perform the hajj one time, not more than that?’

“It is said: ‘Because Allah, the Exalted, has decided the religious duties according to the minimum (degree) of the people, just as He, the Great and Almighty, has said:

Whatever offering is easy to obtain ³⁵,

namely one ewe, that the strong and the weak may be able to perform it; likewise, all the religious duties have been decided according to the minimum strength of the people, so one of these religious duties is the hajj which is obligatory one time, then He has made the men of strength desire for (more than one time) according to their ability.”

The obligatory hajj in Islam is one time, and performing the hajj many times is not obligatory according to the reasons which have been mentioned by the Imam, peace be on him, and of which is that Islam has legislated its religious duties and precepts according to the least of the people in strength, and the least of them in body and property is not able to perform the hajj more than one time.

For this reason it is incumbent on everybody to perform the hajj one time, yes, the hajj may be obligatory through vow, hiring, and the like from among that which the jurists have mentioned.

The Ihra'm

The Ihra'm 36

He, peace be on him, said: "If a sayer says: 'Why have they been ordered to enter the state of ritual consecration (*ihra'm*)?'

"It is said: 'Because they become humble before they enter the sanctuary and security of Allah, the Great and Almighty; lest they should amuse and busy themselves with one of the affairs of the world and its embellishment, that they may be earnest regarding that which is among them, heading for it, walking toward it thoroughly, and, in addition, they magnify Allah, the Exalted, and His House, abase their own souls during their heading for Allah, the Exalted, for they are His guests, hoping for His reward, fearing His punishment, going towards Him, walking towards Him with abasement, submission, and yielding.'"

If the pilgrim enters the state of ritual consecration, then he has to abstain from desires and pleasures; it is unlawful for him to practice the means of luxury and embellishment such as women, wearing sewn clothes, and perfume. He has to have his hair cut and to abstain from obscene words, for there is neither sexual intercourse nor fornication nor quarreling during the hajj.

Surely the *ihra'm* trains soul to bear exertions and hardships, to magnify Allah, the Most High, and to be humble before Him, and the like from among the reasons which have been mentioned by the Imam, peace be on him.

The Procession round the Ka'ba

In his answer to Muhammad b. Sina'n, the Imam, peace be on him, wrote: "The reason for the procession round the Ka'ba is that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said to the angels: ***And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth vicegerent, they said: What! Will You place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood.***³⁷ So they answered Allah, the Exalted, with this answer; then they repented, sought refuge in the Throne and asked (Allah) for forgiveness. Allah, the Great and Almighty, desired (servants) to serve Him with such an act of worship. He placed a House called al-Dura'h in the fourth heaven, then He placed in the heaven of the world a House called al-Ma'mu'r beside the inhabited House. Then He ordered Adam to go round it and he did, so Allah, the Great and Almighty, forgave him, and this (procession) has been put into practice by his (Adam's) sons

till the Day of Resurrection.”

Surely the circumambulation round the Holy Ka‘ba consists of high lessons of which are: It immortalizes the Magnified Place which was built by the Shaykh of the prophets, Ibra‘him, peace be on him, that men may wherein serve Allah, the One and the Compeller. That was in the time when there was no place of worship except it. And of which is that circumambulation round the Ka‘ba is a ladder for the believer like prayer, for through it soul becomes sublime and communicates with the Great Creator, and the like from among the fruits and benefits.

Kissing and Touching the Black Stone

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for kissing and touching the (Black) Stone: Surely when Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, took a promise from the children of Adam, he fed him the stone, and then He entrusted the people with undertaking that promise, and then it is said: ‘I have accomplished my trust and the promise I have undertaken by the (Black) Stone, that it may bear witness that I am truthful.’ Yet of which is the statement of Sulayma’n: ‘Surely the (Black) Stone will come on the Day of Resurrection like Abu’ Qubays having a tongue and two lips bearing witness to the sincerity of him who comes to it.’”

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reason for kissing and touching the Black Stone, which is the place of sanctification and magnification with the Muslims. That is because the Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, had honored and kissed it. Without doubt this indicates the exalted position of this Stone, which will bear witness to the sincerity of him who comes to it on the Day of Resurrection.

The Hajj in Dhu al-Hijja

He, peace be on him, said: “If a sayer says: ‘Why has its time been appointed on the tenth of Dhu al-Hijja?’

“It is said: ‘Because Allah, the Exalted, desires to be served with this act of worship during *ayyām al-tashriq* [38](#) and it was the first time when the angles performed the hajj (to the Ka‘ba) and circumambulated it. As for the prophets: Adam, Nu‘h, Ibra‘him, Musa’, ‘Isa’, and Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, they performed the hajj at this time. So their children have regarded it as *sunna* (a religious practice) until the Day of Resurrection.’”

For these reasons the hajj has been appointed at this blessed time, and not at a time other than it.

Philip Hatti’s Statement regarding the Hajj

It is worth mentioning that we end this research on the hajj with the statement of Dr. Philip Hatti, who has said: “And the hajj is still throughout the ages a system with which (no system) competes for

strengthening the ties of Islamic understanding and harmony among the different classes of the Muslims; and thanks to it that it is possible for every Muslim to be a traveler at least one time during his lifetime, to meet with other than him from among his believing brothers at a brotherly meeting, and to unify his feeling with the feeling of other than him from among those who come (to Mecca) from the parts of the earth. And by virtue of this system, it is easy for the Negroes, the Barbers, the Chinese, the Persians, the Turks, the Arabs, and the like, whether they are rich or poor, great or paupers to harmonize with each other in language, faith, and thought. Islam has made a success which no religion in the world has made in abolishing differences due to gender, color, and nationality, especially among its followers, for it does not recognize any difference among mankind except that which stands between the believers and unbelievers. Without doubt the meeting in the season of the hajj has rendered a great service in this path.³⁹"

Zaka't

In his answer to Muhammad b. Sina'n's questions, the Imam, peace be on him, said:

"And the reason for *zaka't* (alms) is for the sake of the food of the poor and fortifying the properties of the rich, for Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has entrusted the healthy with undertaking the affairs of the sick and the afflicted; just as Allah, the Exalted, has said: ***You shall certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls.***⁴⁰ Respecting your wealth is through giving *zaka't*; respecting your souls is through adjusting the souls to patience; in addition to showing gratitude toward the blessings of Allah, the Great and Almighty, craving for an increase, showing affection and mercy to the weak, sympathizing with the miserable and urging to help them, strengthening the poor and helping (them) with the affairs of the religion, for they are an exhortation for the rich and a lesson for them, that they may be shown the way to the poor of the next world through them; and this urges them to thank Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, for what He has entrusted them with and given to them; (*zaka't* urges) them (the rich) to supplicate and plead (Allah) and to fear (Him) lest they should be like them (the poor) in many affairs; they should pay *zaka't* and alms, tighten the bonds of kinship and do favor."

Zaka't is a creative, social system which keeps balance among the classes of the community and puts an end to poverty which is the cause of all crimes. Extreme creeds and wild deeds spread among the communities who lead a poor life.

Surely *zaka't* removes from souls miserliness, cruelty, selfishness, greediness, and the like from among dirty, social vices which lead to discords, hatred, and enmities. As for the Imam, peace be on him, he has talked about *zaka't* which leads to general, social benefits.

The Reasons for some unlawful Things

In his answer to the questions of Muhammad b. Sina'n, the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reasons for some unlawful deeds in Islam as follows:

1. Killing the Soul

He, peace be on him, said: “And Allah has made it unlawful to kill the soul, for if He made it lawful, then it would lead to the corruption of the creation, their annihilation, and the corruption of direction.”

Premeditated murder is the most dangerous one, for it disturbs peace. As for Islam, it has forbidden it and legislated a severe punishment on him who commits it. In this connection Allah, the Most High, has said: “And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding.[41](#)” If this crime was made lawful, then it would result in the corruption and annihilation of the creation.

2. The Disobedience of Parents

He, peace be on him, said: “And Allah has made unlawful the disobedience of parents because therein is the violation of reverence.”

Surely Allah, the Most High, has associated the rights of parents with His rights and obedience to them with obedience to Him. The ugliest and most unlawful thing is the disobedience of parents and denying their kindness to their children.

3. Adultery

He, peace be on him, said: “And adultery is prohibited due to the corruption it causes such as murders, loss of lineage, child desertion, chaos regarding inheritance, and other such aspects of corruption.”

Adultery is among the ugliest kinds of vice; Allah, the Most High, has described it in the Qur'an as an indecency, saying: “And go not nigh to adultery; surely it is an indecency and evil is the way.[42](#)”

As for the adulterer, he causes crime to society. For if a child results from him, then the child will have no father to look after him, commit the most horrible crime and, in addition, adultery results in the loss of lineage. As for lawful marriage, it is a natural law which makes it incumbent on one to sacrifice his own life for educating his own children with righteous education, that they may be the delight of his eye.

The Punishment for Adulterer

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for flogging adulterer with the severest flogging is due to his committing adultery in which the whole body takes pleasure, so flogging has been determined as a punishment for him and a lesson to other than him; and it (adultery) is the greatest crime.”

An example of the good Islamic legislation is this heavy punishment for this vice, which is one hundred lashes for the single adulterer and stoning for the married one. In this respect Allah has said: “(As for) the adulterer and the adulteress, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day, and let a party of the believers witness their chastisement.[43](#)”

The Testimony which establishes Adultery

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for the witness of four (witnesses) regarding adultery and two (witnesses) respecting all the rights is due to the severe punishment of the married, for therein is killing, so the witness regarding it (adultery) has been doubled due to killing his soul, the loss of the lineage of his children, and the corruption of the inheritance.”

Surely the punishment is not established except through four just witnesses. So if one of them fails to attend, then the three witnesses are liable to the punishment of slander. The witness has been made strict lest people should carelessly accuse each other.

4. Sodomy and Lesbianism

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for prohibiting males for males and females for females is due to that which has been created in females and that which males have by nature, and due to the cessation of progeny, the corruption of planning, and the destruction of the world which happens when males (practice sodomy) with males and when females (practice lesbianism) with females.”

As for sodomy, it is among immoral crimes and leads to deviation from the laws of nature, and Allah has named it indecency. He, the Exalted, has said: **“And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people: Most surely you are guilty of an indecency which none of the nations has ever done before you.”⁴⁴**

The punishment for sodomy is killing, because this crime leads to the loss of lineage and the destruction of the world, as the Imam, peace be on him, has said.

As for lesbianism, it is among immoral vices and leads to deviation from the law of Allah, the Most High, and man’s nature.

5. Looking at the hair of women

He, peace be on him, said: “Looking at the hair of married and single women is prohibited, for it excites men, and this excitement results in (committing) the unlawful; likewise (looking at) that which is like hair (is unlawful) except that concerning which Allah has said: ***And (as for) women advanced in years who do not hope for a marriage, it is no sin for them to put off their clothes without displaying their ornaments.***⁴⁵ He means other than the garment; there is no harm in looking at the hair of such a kind of women.”

Surely looking at woman’s hair excites man and motivates him to commit the unlawful. As for looking at the hair of women advanced in years, it does not excite man, so Islam has made it permissible.

6. Usury

The Imam, peace be on him, explained the reasons for prohibiting usury (*riba’*) as follows:

A. He, peace be on him, said: “And as for the reason for prohibiting usury is because Allah has prohibited it; because it corrupts funds, for when one buys a dirham for two dirhams, then the price of the dirham is a dirham, and the price of the other is injustice, so the sale of usury is any how a loss for the buyer and the seller. So Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has prohibited usury because of the corruption of funds just as He has prohibited fund to be given to the fool until his sane is perceived. For this reason Allah has prohibited usury and the sale of the two dirhams hand in hand.”

B. He, peace be on him, said: “The reason for prohibiting usury after the evidence because it (makes the usurer) disparage the unlawful, and it is a great (sin) after the explanation, and the prohibition of Allah, the Exalted, for it. And that does not occur through him (the usurer) except disparaging the unlawful; and disparaging that (means) entering disbelief.”

C. He, peace be on him, said: “The reason for prohibiting usury is because it eliminates favors, ruins funds, causes greed for profit, causes people to abandon their dealing with loans to each other or in paying with cash, or when they do one another favors, and due to all the bad consequences of corruption and oppression and the exhaustion of funds.”

Islam has inclusively prohibited usury and regarded it as the most excessive of all kinds of oppression. Usury opposes the Islamic teachings which summon men to help each other and have mercy on one another. It brings about enmity and hatred, spreads misery and poverty among men.

It has been established that usury is a means for colonizing and occupying peoples, for some colonists double the profits against loans, accordingly those who take such a kind of loan are unable to repay them and fall into the net of the colonists who plunder their wealth and spread poverty in their countries.

Usury has decisively been prohibited in the Qur'an. Allah, the Exalted, has said: **“O you who believe, do not devour usury, making it double and redouble.”**⁴⁶ He, the Exalted, has also said: “O you who believe, be careful of (your duty to) Allah and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers. But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allah and His Messenger; and if you repent, then you shall have your capital; neither shall you make (the debtor) suffer loss, nor shall you be made to suffer loss.”⁴⁷

Islam has cursed the capitalist, the creditor, the scribe, and the witness, for they help the usurer with that which Allah has prohibited.

7. Swallowing the Property of the Orphans

He, peace be on him, said: “Swallowing the property of the orphans unjustly has been prohibited for many reasons of the aspects of corruption. The first of that is that if one swallows the property of the orphan, surely he helps with killing him, for the orphan is not free from need; nor does he undertake his own soul; nor does he know his affairs; nor has he anyone to take care of him and spare him as his parents do. So if one swallows his property, he kills him, makes him poor and needy. And due to that

Allah, the Great and Almighty, has frightened (men) through the punishment He has decided in these words of Him, the Great and Almighty: ***And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account; so let them be careful of (their duty to) Allah, and let them speak right words.***⁴⁸

“And due to the statement of Abu’ Ja‘far, peace be on him: ‘Surely Allah, the Great and Almighty, has promised two punishments regarding swallowing the property of the orphan: one punishment is in the world and the other is in the next. So through making the property of the orphan prohibited, the orphan subsists, depends on himself, the offspring are saved from what has befallen him, because of the punishment Allah has promised regarding it (swallowing the property of the orphan), and, in addition, the orphan will avenge himself when he becomes a grown-up; enmity and hatred occur to the extent that they annihilate each other.’”

Islam has strongly prohibited swallowing the property of the orphan and ordered men to maintain his property until he becomes an adult. Allah, the Most High, has said: “And test the orphans until they attain puberty; then if you find in them maturity of intellect, make over to them their property.”⁴⁹

The Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned the reasons for prohibiting swallowing the property of the orphan.

8. Theft

He, peace be on him, said: “Theft is prohibited. If it was permissible, then it would lead to the corruption of funds, killing, disputes, envy, abandoning trades and industries, and acquiring properties without any right.”

As for theft, it is among the ugliest prohibited things, for it means swallowing the funds of people without any right. The thief takes the funds of those who have sacrificed their own souls for gathering them, makes them lead a life of neediness, while he leads a happy life through the funds he has taken. Theft is among the worst kinds of injustice, for this reason Allah, the Most High, has said: “And (as for) the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned.”⁵⁰

The jurists have mentioned numerous conditions regarding cutting the hand off. If these conditions are available, the thief’s hand is cut off.

Amputating the right hand of the Thief

He, peace be on him, said: “And the reason for amputating the right hand of the thief is because he undertakes the things with his own right hand, which is the best of his limbs and most useful of them to him. So amputating the right hand has been decided as a punishment and lesson to the creatures lest they should seek taking funds without any right; and because he (the thief) most times undertakes theft

with his own right hand.

“Usurping and taking funds without right has been prohibited, for it results in kinds of corruption; corruption is prohibited because it leads to total ruin, and other aspects of corruption.”

For these firm reasons which the Imam, peace be on him, has mentioned, Islam has ordered the right hand of the thief to be cut off, and not his left hand.

9. Wine

He, peace be on him, said: “Allah has prohibited wine because it leads to corruption, changes the intellects of those who drink it, makes them deny Allah, the Great and Almighty, and fabricate lies against Him and his apostles, and makes them do other things such as corruption, murder, slander, and adultery; therefore they do not refrain from the unlawful. For this reason we have decided that all intoxicating drinks are unlawful for they result in that which results from wine; therefore, he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should turn aside from it, show love for us, for there is no safeguard between us and those who drink it (wine).”

As wine does man and society abundant harm, Islam has decisively prohibited it. In this connection Allah, the Most High, has said: ***“O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the Shaitan’s work; shun it therefor that you may be successful.***[***51***](#)

Surely wine brings about all vices and leads to committing all the prohibited such as fornication and theft, and, in addition, it destroys man’s health, for it gives rise to enteritis, high blood pressure, and the like. Moreover, the drunk’s blood is full of alcohol to the extent that it burns just as alcohol does. I (the author) have mentioned the damages of wine in my book *Work and the Rights of the Worker in Islam*.

10. Dead Animals

He, peace be on him, said: “As regarding dead animals, the prohibition of eating their meat is due to the damage such meat will cause to the body, and due to the fact that Allah has made lawful the meat of animals slaughtered in His names so that that would be a distinction between what is lawful and what is not.”

As for eating the meat of dead animals, it gives rise to many diseases and, perhaps, death.[***52***](#) That is because dead animals are still accompanied by germs which sometimes do not die even through roasting their meat, as it has been mentioned by modern medicine.

11. The Blood

He, peace be on him, said: “And Allah, the Great and Almighty, has prohibited the blood just as He has

made unlawful dead animals, for it (the blood) gives rise to the corruption of the bodies, the yellow water, bad breath, bad smell, bad manners, the cruelty of the heart, the paucity of graciousness and mercy, to the extent (that the one who drinks it) kills his father and his friend."

Islam has prohibited drinking the blood, for it conveys deadly secretions and poisons. If one drinks the blood of a sick animal, surely his blood will have the germs of such an animal. Physicians have unanimously agreed on that the blood is never a food.

12. The Spleen

He, peace be on him, said: "The spleen has been prohibited because of the blood it contains; the cause of its prohibition is similar to that of the blood and dead animals; it is equally bad in its consequences."

Islam has prohibited the spleen and regarded it as the blood and dead animals, for eating it causes damages and corruption to man's body, just as the Imam, peace be on him, has stated.

13. Pigs and Apes

He, peace be on him, said: "And pigs are prohibited; their creation was distorted by Allah in order to provide a moral lesson to the creation, and in order to remind them to fear Allah, and as evidence of Allah's might to distort what He creates at will, and because the food they eat is the filthiest of filth, in addition to many other reasons.

"And likewise, pigs are prohibited; (Allah) distorted their creation as He distorted that of pigs in order to provide a moral lesson to the creation, and as evidence of Allah's might to distort what He creates at will; and He has placed in them (qualities) similar to that of man in order to indicate that they (apes) belong to the creation upon whom (His) wrath was brought down."

Islam has prohibited the meat of pigs, and, through that, it has saved the Muslims from great evil. Bity Wdikson says: "Surely the infection by the worms of the pig's meat is about general in special regions from France, Germany, Italy, and Briton, but it is rare in the eastern country, for the religion of its people has prohibited eating pig's meat; pig's meat also conveys Tarnjina to man."

The following are some realities on pig's meat and the extent of its danger:

- A. The specialist physician cannot decide that one pig is not infected by these worms; rather all pigs are infected by them.
- B. Each female of these worms lays 1500 ova in the mucous membrane of the sick person's bowels. So the blood distributes and spreads the million ova laid by all the female worms all over the body, and the fetuses come together in muscles, so they give rise to severe aches, and very painful muscular inflammations, and after that one is inflected by malignant tumors.

C. There is no medicine for this disease and, in addition, pig's meat coveys to man some germs and paratyphoid, and they cause to him an acute poisoning accompanied by severe inflammations in the digestive system, and they may give rise to death within some hours.[53](#)

14. Rabbits

He, peace be on him, said: "The rabbits are prohibited because they are with the same rank to cats: their claws are like those of cats and like wild animals, so their behavior is equally wild, in addition to their own inner dirtiness and due to their bleeding which is similar to the bleeding of women during their menstrual period; and because they are miscreants."

As for eating the meat of rabbits, it is prohibited according to the reasons given by the Imam, peace be on him. However, some Islamic schools do not regard rabbit as dirty, and they have regarded eating the meat of rabbits as permissible.

15. Beasts and Birds of Prey

He, peace be on him, said: "Beasts and birds of prey are prohibited because they eat carcasses, the flesh of men, feces, and the like. So Allah, the Great and Almighty, has placed signs in the lawful and the unlawful animals and birds. And just as my father has said: 'Beasts with canine teeth and birds with claws are prohibited; birds with gizzards are lawful.'

"Yet another reason for distinguishing lawful birds from unlawful ones is these words of him, peace be on him: 'Eat birds which flap their wings and do not eat those birds which glide their wings.'"

Islam has prohibited birds of prey such as falcon and Egyptian vulture; likewise, the birds which have neither crop nor gizzard nor spurs on their feet; it is sufficient when one spur is on the feet of the lawful birds.[54](#)

The Imam, peace be on him, has stated that such birds and animals are prohibited because they eat carcasses, the flesh of men, feces, and their meat is affected by that, so their meat is not appropriate for man's stomach.

16. That over which any other (Name) than that of Allah has been invoked

He, peace be on him, said: "It is prohibited (to eat) that over which any other (name) than that of Allah has been invoked, for Allah, the Great and Almighty, has made it incumbent on His creation to profess Him and to invoke His name over the lawful sacrifices; lest that through which they seek nearness to Him and that which has been made as act of worship to Satan and idols should be equal, because invoking the name of Allah, the Great and Almighty, (over sacrifices) means professing His Lordship and His Oneness. As for that over which any other (name) than that of Allah has been invoked, it has nothing except associating others with Him and seeking nearness through it to other than Him, that mentioning

and invoking the name of Allah over sacrifice may be a difference between what Allah has made lawful and what He has made unlawful.”

It is prohibited to eat the meat of the sacrifices over which any other name than that of Allah is invoked, for they are slaughtered to seek nearness to other than Allah such as idols, and this was the custom of those people who lived before Islam, and who had neither awareness nor thought; rather they were like beasts. When Islam came, it prohibited their sacrifices. It regarded their thoughts and works as dirty, their sacrifices as unclean and inedible.

17. Eating the Meat of Mules is Reprehensible

He, peace be on him, said: “It is reprehensible to eat the meat of domestic mules because the people are in need of their backs and employing them; and for fear that they may be few; not because of the dirtiness of their creation nor because of the dirtiness of their food.”

Islam has made it reprehensible to eat the meat of domestic donkeys and mules, for they were the most important means for transportation during those times. If they had been slaughtered, the means of transportation would have been few. As for their meat, it is eatable and has nothing to damage general health.

18. Man may marry up to four Women

He, peace be on him, said: “Why may a man marry up to four women, while a woman is prohibited from marrying more than one man? Because when a man marries four women, his children will all be related to him; had a woman married two husbands or more simultaneously, nobody would know for sure who fathered the sons she gave birth to, since they all were in cohabiting with her, and this causes a complete disorder for relating one to his father, and who should inherit who, and who is the kin of who.”

The Imam, peace be on him, has explained the reason why a man may marry four women, while a woman may not marry two husbands or more simultaneously. Had it was permissible for her to marry more than a husband at the same time, then who would father the son she gave birth to? Surely such a kind of marriage loses lineage and corrupts inheritances.

19. Repeating the Divorce Statement thrice

He, peace be on him, said: “The reason for repeating the divorce statement thrice is due to the time interval between each, and due to a possible desire for reconciliation or the calming of anger, if any, and to teach women to respect their husbands and deter them from disobeying them.”

The revocable divorce (*tala’q al-‘idda*) is that the husband divorces his wife when the pre-conditions are available; then he has the right to return to her during the ‘idda and to remarry her. Then he divorces her during another purity, so it is prohibited for him to remarry her until she marries another husband; the

reasons for such a kind of divorce has been mentioned by the Imam, peace be on him.

20. The Woman divorced nine times

He, peace be on him, said: “The reason why a husband can never remarry his wife whom he divorced nine times is that it is his right penalty so that men do not take divorce lightly or take advantage of women and think of them as weak, and so that the man would be considering his affairs, remaining awake and aware, so that he would lose all hope of a reunion after the ninth pronouncement of the divorce statement.”

If a woman is divorced in the manner mentioned in the previous question, and someone else marries her, then he divorces her, and her first husband marries her and divorces her three times in the previous manner, then it is prohibited for him to marry her until she marries someone else. If someone else marries her and divorces her, then her first husbands marries her and divorces her thrice in the previous manner, then he can never marry her again. As for the reasons for such a kind of divorce, they have been mentioned by the Imam, peace be on him. If the divorce is not revocable, the divorced woman can never be prohibited, even if the divorce is more than nine times.

21. The Inheritance of Woman

As for the inheritance of a woman, it is that she inherits half what men get of inheritance. The Imam, peace be on him, has given two reasons for that:

Regarding the first reason, he, peace be on him, said: “The reason for giving women half what men get of inheritance is that when the woman marries, she receives, while the man gives; therefore, Allah decided to assist the males to be able to give.”

Regarding the second reason, he, peace be on him, said: “Yet another reason for giving the male twice as much as the female is that the female is considered dependent on the male when she needs, and he has to take care of her living expenses and to spend on her, while the woman is not required to take care of the expenses of the man, nor can she be required to pay his expenses if he was in need; therefore, Allah decreed to give the man more according to these words of Him, the Great and Almighty:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given the one more than the other, and because they support them from their means.⁵⁵

As the man is responsible for paying the expenses of the woman such as those of house, food, clothes, and others mentioned by the jurists, the woman is given half what the man gets of inheritance, just as the Imam, peace be on him, has stated. With this question we will end our talk about the reasons for some precepts which have been reported from Imam al-Ridha’, peace be on him.

The Conditions of the Prophets and Bygone Communities

The Imam, peace be on him, was asked about the reasons for the conditions of some prophets and bygone communities, and he answered. The following are some of them:

The Drowning of Pharaoh

Ibra’him b. Muhammad al-Hamada’ni narrated, saying: “I asked Abu’ al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Musa’ al-Ridha’, peace be on him: ‘What is the reason for which Allah, the Great and Almighty, drowned Pharaoh even after Pharaoh had believed in Him and admitted His unity?’”

He, peace be on him, answered: “Because he believed only when he saw Allah’s retribution, and belief to avoid danger is not accepted. This is Allah’s judgment regarding past and future generations. Allah, the Great and Almighty, has said:

When they saw Our punishment, they said: We believe in Allah, the One, and we reject the partners we used to associate with Him. But their professing the faith when they (actually) saw Our punishment was not going to benefit them.[56](#)

And He, the Great and Almighty, has said:

The day that certain signs of your Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe in them then, if it did not believe before nor did it earn righteousness through its faith.[57](#)

“So when Pharaoh was about to be drowned, he said:

I believe that there is no god except the One in Whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who submit (to Allah in Islam). (It was said to him): Ah now! But a little before were you in rebellion! And you did mischief (and violence)! This day shall We save you in your body, so that you may be a Sign to those who come after you![58](#)

“Pharaoh was dressed in iron from head to foot; he had worn it on his body. When he drowned, Allah placed him in his body on an upland, that he might be a Sign to those who came after him, so they would see him on a lofty ground though he was heavy in iron; heavy things go down and do not go up; and that was a sign and mark.

“And for another reason Allah, the Great and Almighty, drowned Pharaoh; and it is that when he was about to be drowned, he sought the help of Musa’ and did not seek the help of Allah, so Allah, the Great and Almighty, revealed to Musa’: *O Musa’, why do you help Pharaoh? Because you did not create him. If he asked Me for help, I would help him.*”

The Drowning of the World during the Days of Nu'h

'Abd al-Sala'm b. Sa'lih al-Harawi narrated, saying: "I asked al-Ridha', peace be on him: 'O son of Allah's Messenger, what is the reason for which Allah, the Great and Almighty, drowned all the world in the time of Nu'h, while there were among them children and those who had no sins?'

"He, peace be on him, answered: 'There were no children among them because Allah, the Great and Almighty, sterilized the loins of the people of Nu'h and the wombs of their wives for forty days, so their progeny ceased. They were drowned and there was no child among them; and Allah, the Great and Almighty, does not destroy with His punishment him who has no sin. As for the rest of the people of Nu'h, they were drowned due to the lying of the liars; and he who is absent from an affair and is satisfied with it is like him who witnesses and does it.'

The Miracle of Musa'

Ibn al-Sikkit asked Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him: "Why did Allah, the Great and Almighty, send Musa' (Moses) b. 'Umra'n with a miraculous cane and white hand and the tool of sorcery, 'Isa' (Jesus) with miraculous medicine, and Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, with miraculous speech and oratory?"

He, peace be on him, replied: "When Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, sent Musa', sorcery dominated the minds of the people of his time, so he brought them from Allah, the Great and Almighty, something which they never had, nor could they bring about anything like it, thus rendering their sorcery void and proving his argument against them. When Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, sent 'Isa' during a period of time when chronic diseases were widespread and people were in dire need of cure, 'Isa' brought them from Allah, the Great and Almighty, something they never had, bringing the dead back to life, curing those born blind and the lepers by the will of Allah, proving his argument against them. And when Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, sent Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, during the time when speeches and oratory dominated the minds of the people of his time, he brought them the Book of Allah, the Great and Almighty, and with the wisdom and counsel, thereby voiding their arguments."

Ibn al-Sikkit admired this answer of the Imam and said: "By Allah, I have never seen anyone like you! What is the argument against people these days, then?"

"Reason," answered the Imam, "through it can you come to know who tells the truth about Allah, so you believe in him, and who tells lies about Allah, so you disbelieve in him."

"This, by Allah, is the right answer," retorted Ibn al-Sikkit.

Ulu' al-'Azm

The Imam, peace be on him, said: "Ulu' al-'Azm have been called Ulu' al-'Azm because they were the

possessors of the laws and resolutions, and that is every prophet after Nu'h, and every prophet during the days of Ibra'him and after him adopted his law and his method and followed his Book, to the time of our Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family. So these five (prophets) are Ulu' al-'Azm (the Possessors of Constancy); they are the most excellent of the prophets and the messengers; the shari'a (law) of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family, is not abrogated until the Day of Resurrection, nor is there a prophet after him until the Day of Resurrection. So if one claims prophecy after him or brings a book after the Qur'an, then his blood is permitted for all those who hear that from him."

Al-Hawariyu'n (the Disciples)

'Ali b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Fadda'l narrated on the authority of his father, who said: "I asked Abu' al-Hasan al-Ridha', peace be on him: 'Why have the Hawariyu'n been called the Hawariyu'n?'"

He, peace be on him, answered: "In the opinion of the people is that they have been called the Hawariyu'n because they shortened (their clothes) purified their clothes of dirt through washing; and it is a name derived from *al-khubz al-hawa'* ⁵⁹. In my opinion the Hawariyu'n have been called the Hawariyu'n because they purified their own souls and purified those other them of the dirtiness of sins through preaching (to them) and reminding (them of Allah)"

He ('Ali's father) said: "I asked him (al-Ridha'): 'Why have they been call al-Nasa'ra'.'"

"Because they were from a village called Na'sira in Syria (*bila'd al-Sha'm*) inhabited by Maryam (Mary) and 'Isa' after their return from Egypt," he answered.

Ibra'him, the Bosom Friend of Allah

Al-Husayn b. Kha'lid narrated on the authority of Abu' al-Hasan al-Ridha', peace be on him, who said: [I heard my father relate on the authority of his father, peace be on him, who said:] "Allah, the Great and Almighty, took Ibra'him for friend because he did not come to anyone and never asked anyone except Allah, the Great and Almighty."

Isma'il, the Truthful in his Promise

Sulayma'n al-Ja'fari narrated on the authority of Abu' al-Hasan al-Ridha', peace be on him, who said: "Did you know why Isma'il was called the Truthful in his promise?"

"No, I did not know," replied Isma'il.

"He promised a man and sat down for a year waiting for him," retorted the Imam.

With this matter we will end our talk about the reasons which the Imam, peace be on him, has given for the conditions of some prophets and bygone communities.

The Reasons for some Islamic Affairs

A group of traditions regarding the reasons for some Islamic affairs has been reported from the Imam, peace be on him, as follows:

The Qur'an is always new

Ibra'him b. al-'Abba's narrated on the authority of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him, that he narrated on the authority of his father that a man asked Imam al-Sa'diq, peace be on him, saying: "Why does the Qur'an not increase during spreading and studying but newness?"

He, peace be on him, replied: "Because Allah did not send it down to a time apart from a time nor to a people apart from a people, so it is new every time and is fresh with every people until the Day of Resurrection."

Surely the Qur'an is the great miracle of Islam, and that is because therein are moral lessons appropriate for all times and developments; therein is nothing deviates from the laws of the cosmos or opposes innate; moreover, it is wonderful in eloquence and great in style, so it is fresh and new throughout times.

'Ali is the Divider of Paradise and of Hell

Al-Ma'mu'n asked Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him: "O Abu' al-Hasan, tell me about your grandfather the Commander of the faithful: Why is he called the divider of Paradise and of Hell, and how that attribute came to be applied to him?"

He, peace be on him, in turn asked him: "O commander of the faithful, have you not narrated from your father from his forefathers quoting 'Abd Allah b. 'Abba's saying that he had heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, saying: 'Loving 'Ali is belief and hating him is unbelief?'"

"Yes," replied al-Ma'mu'n.

"If the distribution of Paradise and of Hell is done according to loving and hating him, then he is the distributor of Paradise and of Hell," explained al-Ridha', peace be on him.

So al-Ma'mu'n said: "May Allah never permit me to live after your demise, O Abu' al-Hasan! I witness that you are the heir of the knowledge of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family."

Abu' al-Salt al-Harawi said: "After al-Ridha' had gone back home, I came to visit him, and I said to him: 'O son of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, what an excellent answer you have given the Commander of the faithful! He said: 'O Abu' al-Salt, I spoke to him in the way he understood best, and I have heard my father telling a tradition from his forefathers, on the authority of 'Ali, who said:

'Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'O 'Ali, you are the distributor of Paradise and of Hell on the Day of Judgment; you say to Hell: 'This is mine, and that is yours.'"

Imam 'Ali the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, stands for every noble deed in Islam. Without doubt he is the distributor of Paradise and of Hell. In this respect many authentic traditions have been reported from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family.⁶⁰ Al-Ma'mu'n admired this firm justification of Imam al-Ridha', peace be on him.

'Ali does not restore Fadak

'Ali b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Fadda'l narrated on the authority of his father, who said: "I asked al-Ridha', peace be on him, about the Commander of the faithful (Imam 'Ali), peace be on him, as to why he did not restore Fadak (to its rightful owners) when he undertook the affairs of men? He, peace be on him, replied: 'We are members of a family who, upon becoming rulers, do not take their rights from those who confiscated them. Should we become in charge of the Muslims, we shall rule them and restore their confiscated rights to them, but we do not do so for our own selves.'"

Abu' Bakr confiscated Fadak and took it from the hand of Fa'tima, the Leader of the women of the world. As for the reason for that, it is that he desired to undermine the rank of the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him. He intended to wage an economic warfare against the enemy forces to paralyze them. Fadak remained in the hands of the governors and the rulers. However, the 'Alawide Sayyids restored it during the days of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz and of al-Ma'mu'n. The talk about it has many branches, and the judge is Allah, the Exalted, Who will decide among His servants on the day when neither property nor sons will avail.

The Companions of the Prophet

Muhammad b. Musa' b. Nasr al-Ra'zi narrated, saying: [My father related to me, saying: al-Ridha', peace be on him, was asked about the tradition of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family: 'My companions are like the stars: If you follow any of them, you shall receive guidance.' And about his tradition: 'Leave my companions to me.' So he, peace be on him, replied:]

"Yes, he did say this tradition, meaning thereby the companions who did not make any alteration after him or any change (to the Islamic creed)."

The Imam was asked: "How can you tell that they altered and changed?"

He answered: "This is due to what is reported about him (the Prophet), may Allah bless him and his family, that he said: 'Certain individuals among my companions will be pushed away by force from my Pool (of Kawther) on the Day of Resurrection just as strange camels are pushed away from the watering place, and I shall say: 'O Lord! My companions! My companions!' And it shall be said to me: 'You do not know what innovations they invented after you.' So they will be pushed away towards the left side

(where Hell is), and I shall say: ‘Away with them; ruined they shall be.’ Such will be the penalty of those who alter and change (the Prophet’s traditions and practices).[61](#)”

As for companionship, it did not protect the Prophet’s companions from making mistakes, for some of his companions were Samra b. Jundub, ‘Amru b. al-‘As, al-Mughira b. Shu‘ba, and the like from among the heads of hypocrisy and mischief.

The People desert ‘Ali

‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Fadda’l narrated on the authority of his father, who said: [I asked Imam al-Ridha’, peace be on him, about the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, as to why the people deserted him after knowing his distinction, his past feats, and his rank to Allah’s Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family. He, peace be on him, answered:]

“They deserted him and preferred others over him after having come to know his merits simply because he had killed a great number of their fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, and other relatives who defied Allah and His Apostle; therefore, they kept their grudge against him inside their hearts and they did not like him when he became their ruler. They did not have grudge against anyone else as much as they had against him, for nobody else was so forceful in making *jiha’d* in the defense of Allah’s Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, as much as he was; so, they deserted him for someone else.”

Imam ‘Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, killed those far and close for the sake of Allah, the Most High, and struck off the heads of those polytheists with his own sword through which he established Islam, so they harbored malice against him and deserted him for someone else.

Imam ‘Ali does not take his own Right

Al-Haythem b. ‘Abd Allah al-Rumma’ni narrated, saying: [I asked ‘Ali b. Musa’ al-Ridha’, peace be on him, saying: ‘O son of Allah’s Messenger, tell me about ‘Ali b. Abu’ Ta’lib, peace be on him: Why did he not fight his enemies during the twenty-five years after the demise of Allah’s Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, as he did during the days of his caliphate?’ He, peace be on him, answered:]

“It is due to his following the example of Allah’s Apostle, may Allah bless him and his family, who did not fight the polytheists of Mecca during the thirteen years after his Prophethood, or the ones in Medina during the nineteen months period of his stay there; it is due to the numbers of his supporters being too small. Likewise, ‘Ali did not engage himself in fighting his enemies because his owner supporters were too few. Since the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, was not nullified by the fact that he did not make *jiha’d* during the period of thirteen years (in Mecca) and nineteen months (in Medina), the Imamate of ‘Ali was not nullified because he did not perform *jiha’d* for twenty-five years, for the deterring factor in both examples was one and the same.”

Surely Imam ‘Ali, the Commander of the faithful, peace be on him, left his own right and did not make *jihad* against his enemies, for his own supporters were too few. In this connection, he has said: “Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on his death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throats.”

Surely Imam ‘Ali had no group of people to support him, though he had many enemies and opponents, so he, peace be on him, was patient and left his own right preferring over it the general interest and keeping the word of the Muslims.

With this matter we will end our speech about the reasons which the Imam, peace be on him, has given for some Islamic affairs.

- [1.](#) The ‘Addliya are those who believe in Divine Justice.
- [2.](#) ‘Uyu’n Akhba’r al-Ridha’, vol. 2, p. 99.
- [3.](#) Ibid., p. 100.
- [4.](#) Ibid., p. 102.
- [5.](#) Ibid., p. 103.
- [6.](#) Ibid.
- [7.](#) Ibid., p. 100–101.
- [8.](#) Ibid., p. 102.
- [9.](#) Ibid., p. 88.
- [10.](#) Ibid., pp. 88–89.
- [11.](#) Ghusl al-maiyit: obligatory ceremonial washing of the corpse of a Muslim.
- [12.](#) ‘Uyu’n Akhba’r al-Ridha’, vol. 2, p. 89.
- [13.](#) Ibid.
- [14.](#) Ibid.
- [15.](#) Ibid.
- [16.](#) Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, al-Isla’m wa al-Tibb al-Hadith, pp. 62–63.
- [17.](#) ‘Uyu’n Akhba’r al-Ridha’, vol. 2, p. 104.
- [18.](#) Ibid., p. 89.
- [19.](#) Ibid., p. 103–104.
- [20.](#) Ibid., p. 105.
- [21.](#) Ibid.
- [22.](#) Ibid.
- [23.](#) Ibid.
- [24.](#) Ibid.
- [25.](#) Ibid.
- [26.](#) Qur’an, 2, 185.
- [27.](#) Minha’jj al-Sa’lihin, vol. 1, p. 113.
- [28.](#) Qur’an, 2, 185.
- [29.](#) Ibid., 2, 185.
- [30.](#) Perhaps the correct is: She is in the state of uncleanness.
- [31.](#) Qur’an, 58, 4.
- [32.](#) Ibid., 2, 196.

33. Perhaps the correct is in the land and on sea.
34. Qur'an, 9, 122.
35. Ibid., 2, 196.
36. Ihra'm is entering into the state of ritual consecration.
37. Qur'an, 2, 30.
38. Ayya'm al-tashriq are the days following the day of immolation.
39. Ta'rikh al-'Arab (2nd edition), vol. 1, p. 187.
40. Qur'an, 3, 185.
41. Ibid., 2, 179.
42. Ibid., 17, 32.
43. Ibid., 24, 2.
44. Ibid., 29, 28.
45. Ibid., 24, 60.
46. Ibid., 3, 129.
47. Ibid., 2, 278–279.
48. Ibid., 4, 9.
49. Ibid., 4, 6.
50. Ibid., 5, 38.
51. Ibid., 5, 90.
52. Dr. 'Abd al-'Aziz Isma'il, al-Isla'm wa al-Tibb al-Hadith, p. 17.
53. Ru'h al-Din al-Isla'mi (3rd edition), p. 405.
54. Minha'jj al-Sa'lihi'n, vol. 2, p. 274.
55. Qur'an, 4, 34.
56. Ibid., 40, 84–85.
57. Ibid., 6, 158.
58. Ibid., 10, 90–92.
59. Al-khubz al-hawa'r it is that which is sifted several time; and in al-Qa'mu's, it is the white flour.
60. Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhrqa, p. 75. In Kanz al-'Umma'l, vol. 6, p. 402, it has been mentioned: "Ali said: 'I am the distributor of Hell.'" And in Kunuz al-Haqqa'iq by al-Manawi, p. 92: "Allah's Messenger, may Allah bless him and his family, said: 'Ali is the divider of Hell.'"
61. Al-Bukha'ri (vol. 6, p. 119, al-Amiriya edition) has narrated on the authority of 'Abd Allah b. Mas'u'd, on the authority of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family, who said: "I shall be the first to reach the Pool, then the souls of some men from among you will be resurrected and they shall be prohibited from coming near me, and I shall say: 'O Lord! These are my companions!' And it shall be said to me: 'You do not know what they did after you.'" Narrations similar to this are numerous.

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