

Chapter 1: The Status of the Qur'an in Religious Society

[The Qur'an as the only heavenly book at the disposal of mankind](#)

If we would like to deal with everything about the Qur'an mentioned in *Nahj al-Balaghah*, it will become a very long discussion. Imam 'Ali ('a) has introduced the Qur'an and its status in more than 20 sermons recorded in *Nahj al-Balaghah*. Sometimes, he ('a) has allocated more than half of a sermon in elucidating the status of the Qur'an, its role in the life of Muslims and their duty towards this heavenly book. Here, we shall only explain some of *Nahj al-Balaghah*'s descriptions of the Holy Qur'an.

The Imam ('a) says in Sermon 133:

وَكِتَابُ اللَّهِ بَيْنَ أَظْهُرِكُمْ، نَاطِقٌ لَا يَعْيا لِسَانُهُ.

“The Book of Allah is among you. It speaks and its tongue does not falter.”¹

That is to say, “The Qur'an is accessible to you. Contrary to other heavenly scriptures like the ones revealed to Hadhrat² Musa (Moses) and Hadhrat 'Isa (Jesus) ('a), the Qur'an is at your disposal.” It is said that in the past, especially among the Jews, the revealed scripture had not been at the disposal of the masses. Only some parts of the Torah were at the disposal of Jewish divines and it was not possible for the masses to have access to it.

Regarding the heavenly scripture revealed to Hadhrat 'Isa ('a), its status has been more worrisome because what is known today as the Gospel [*injil*] among the Christians is not the book revealed to Hadhrat 'Isa al-Masih (Jesus the Messiah) ('a). It rather consists of subjects compiled by certain individuals and known as the Four Canonical Gospels.³ Thus, former communities were deprived of access to the heavenly scriptures. But the Qur'an has a different story.

The manner of revelation of the Qur'an and its reciting and teaching by the Holy Prophet (S) was such that the people memorized its verses and the Qur'an in its complete form was at their disposal.

Among the other important distinctions of this heavenly book is that God the Exalted Himself assumes the responsibility of guarding and preserving the Holy Qur'an from any form of threat. In addition, the Messenger of Allah (S) made sure the Muslims memorized its divine verses so that a good number of Muslims had memorized the whole Qur'an within his lifetime.

They used to prepare manuscripts of verses as soon as they were revealed and gradually memorize them. The duplication of these manuscripts and learning of the Qur'an by heart made it accessible to everybody.

Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) says: "The Book of Allah is among you. It speaks and its tongue does not falter." It is worthy to reflect on the second statement. That is to say, this book has the power of speech and its tongue neither falters nor feels tired. He ('a) continues:

وَيَبْتَ لَا تُهَدَمُ أَرْكَانُهُ، وَعِزُّ لَا تُهَزَمُ أَعْوَانُهُ.

"It is a house whose pillars do not fall down, and a power whose supporters are never routed."

The Qur'anic mode of speech

On one hand, in describing the Qur'an in *Nahj al-Balaghah* Imam 'Ali ('a) says that this book is a talking book and is not tired of speaking. It clearly expresses itself. On the other hand, the Imam ('a) says this Qur'an does not speak. It must be induced to speak and "I am the one who expounds this Qur'an to you." In some instances, he ('a) described the Qur'an as a "silent speaker" [*samitun natiq*].⁴ The Qur'an is a speaker, but a silent one. What does that mean?

It seems that this expression points to two different perspectives on this heavenly book. One perspective holds that the Qur'an is a sacred but silent book placed in a corner. It does not talk to anyone and no one communicates with it. The second perspective is that it is a talking book which addresses all human beings, calls on them to follow its guidance, and gives glad tidings of success and deliverance to its followers.

Obviously, the Qur'an, whose only description is sacredness, consists of words, statements and verses written on paper. The Muslims kiss and show respect to it and place it in the best part of their homes. Sometimes, they recite it in gatherings without paying attention to its meaning. If we view the Qur'an in this manner, then it is a silent book which does not produce a specific sound. Anyone who has such a view of the Qur'an will never hear a word from it and the Holy Qur'an will never solve any of his problems.

Therefore, we are duty-bound to follow the second perspective. That is, we have to regard the Qur'an as the book of life. By cultivating the spirit of submission to God, the Exalted, we have to be prepared to listen to the message of the Holy Qur'an which contains instructions for a better life. It is in this way that the Qur'an speaks and articulates, talking to human beings and guiding them in all aspects of life.

In addition to this interpretation of the Qur'an as "a silent speaker" which we mentioned, there is a deeper meaning of it which is what Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) refers to when he says, "I am the one who expounds this Qur'an to you."

It is true that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God, the Exalted, and the truth of this divine word and the manner of its revelation are beyond our comprehension but since the purpose is the guidance of mankind, this Word of God is simplified in the form of words, statements and verses that can be read and heard by all human beings.

Yet, it is not correct to say that the contents of all verses can be grasped and comprehended by the average mind and the meaning of the verses understood without referring to the interpretation and explanation of the Apostle (S), the infallible Imams ('a) and those well grounded in knowledge.

For instance, details and explanations of the particular aspects of law are not mentioned in the Qur'an. Moreover, verses of the Holy Qur'an are concise, and thus, they are in need of explanation and elucidation. Therefore, for many reasons the Qur'an is "silent" [*samit*]. That is, in the absence of the explanation and interpretation of one who has divine knowledge and awareness, it is of no use for the commoner.

The Apostle (S) and explanation of the Qur'an

One of the responsibilities of the Apostle (S) to the *ummah* is to expound the divine verses. Addressing the Apostle (S), the Holy Qur'an states:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

"We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them."⁵

The Qur'an is God's Word and although it has been much reduced to become words and verses at the disposal of the Muslims, its profound gnosis cannot be comprehended by a layman.

It is for this reason that the Qur'an is "silent" for the commoners and is in need of the interpretation and explanation of the Apostle (S) and infallible Imams ('a) because the verses of the Qur'an have specific interpretations which are known only to the Apostle (S) and infallible Imams ('a) who imparted the sciences of the Qur'an to the Muslims and conveyed its message to the people.

It must be noted, however, that the Qur'an declares its message whether it is pleasant or unpleasant to the addressee. Sometimes, it is consistent with what he likes, and at times, it is contrary to the carnal desires of man. The devils among men have no right to impose whims upon the Qur'an, and in the name of personal understanding of the Qur'an, speculatively interpret God's Word. We shall elaborate on this in the future.

According to the two stated meanings of the Qur'an being "a silent speaker," Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) conveys its message to the people and provides the proof [*hujjah*] to the Muslims.

In describing the Holy Qur'an in Sermon 157, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) thus says:

ذَلِكَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَنْطِقُوهُ، وَلَنْ يَنْطِقَ، وَلَكِنْ أُخْبِرْكُمْ عَنْهُ: أَلَا إِنَّ فِيهِ عِلْمَ مَا يَأْتِي، وَالْحَدِيثَ عَنِ الْمَاضِي، وَدَوَاءَ دَائِكُمْ،
وَنَظْمَ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ.

"It is the Qur'an. If you ask it to speak it won't do so; but I will tell you about it. Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you."

The Qur'an is an ocean of divine knowledge and learning. Only those who have connection with the unseen world can dive into its unfathomable depth and acquire its man-perfecting pearls. God, the Exalted, has also urged the people to acquire the lofty knowledge of the Qur'an under the aegis of the grace, knowledge, assistance, and instructions of the Apostle (S) and the Imams of guidance ('a) because the sciences of the Qur'an are with the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a). As such, their words are those of the Qur'an. For this reason, the Apostle (S) and infallible Imams ('a) are called "the talking Qur'an" [*qur'an natiq*].

In accordance with the abovementioned basis, Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) says: "It is the Qur'an. If you ask it to speak it won't do so." That is, "This is the Qur'an and here you are. As you can see, without the explanation of the infallible Imams ('a) you cannot make use of the Qur'an! These infallible Imams ('a) are supposed to interpret and explain the Qur'an to you and teach you the knowledge and sciences of the Qur'an.

After these preliminary remarks, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) approaches the Qur'an through another angle, calling on the people to refer to and reflect upon the Qur'an. That is to say, the infallible Imam is supposed to impart the knowledge and sciences of the Qur'an to the Muslims, and the Qur'an by itself cannot talk whereas the people are incapable of directly grasping the divine messages. The Imam ('a) then says: "But I will tell you about it."

That is to say, "I will inform you of the Qur'an and teach you the knowledge and sciences pertaining to it, so that you know that everything you need is in the Holy Qur'an: 'Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you.'" That

is, “It is you who must settle your affairs by referring to the Holy Qur’an and the knowledge of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a).”

Mentioning two points

First, the Qur’an is the most important historical document for the Muslims and followers of this heavenly book. Since the Qur’an mentions historical events and says something about the thoughts and beliefs of past nations and communities as well as their way of life and destinies, it is the most credible historical document.

In comparison to historical books and scripts devoid of Qur’anic attestation, even if they are reported with the complete chain of transmission, their value or credibility does not exceed that of the Qur’an. Thus, stories of prophets (‘a) and past communities must be heard from the Qur’an and lessons learned from them.

By referring to the Qur’an and studying the life accounts of past communities and nations we must learn our lessons and set our lives on the path of truth.

Secondly, the Holy Qur’an also gives information about the future. Obviously, to talk scientifically and accurately about the future could be done only by God, the Exalted, and those who are informed of the future by His decree. It is God for whom the past, present or future has no meaning and who can talk and give information about the future.

It is God who can clearly show the way to His servants and teach them how to behave in order to attain success. It is the Holy Qur’an that gives information about the past and future and makes the people aware of them. Hence, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about and stories of the past.”

The role of the Qur’an in life

Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a) presented the Qur’an as the panacea to all problems: “It contains a cure for your ills and regulations for whatever faces you.” The Qur’an’s existence treats all pains and agonies. This medical prescription must be read and studied carefully, and one must be familiar with the way of curing individuals and social ills and predicaments.

Evidently, before experiencing and identifying the pain or problem, it is abnormal to talk about the cure because the individual and social ills must initially be identified and one must be acquainted with them by thoroughly studying the noble verses of the Qur’an. Then, by acting upon this medical prescription one must treat them.

Today, there are many problems—individual and social—in our society and everybody wants to get rid of them. Notwithstanding the astounding advancements in different fields of endeavor, still many problems

remain unsolved and the concerned authorities are trying to solve them in one way or another.

In Sermon 189, he (‘a) says with a slight variation: “[It is] a cure after which there is no ailment.”

The point which must be heeded before anything else is faith in the statement of Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a). That is, we have to sincerely believe that the real cure to our individual and social ills and problems is in the Qur’an. We all acknowledge this fact but people have different degrees of faith [*iman*] and certainty [*yaqin*].

It is true that there are individuals who sincerely believe that if they refer to the Qur’an and act upon its knowledge and instructions, it will prove to be the best medical prescription for all ailments. Yet, such people are very few and perhaps one of the most serious problems of our society is the weakness of faith in this respect, and this is the reason why many problems remain unsolved.

Some individuals may possibly question: “In spite of the fact that the Qur’an is at our disposal and we claim to follow it, why are our problems still unsolved and the people are still suffering from economic problems like inflation, overpricing and thousands of social and individual, moral and cultural problems?” Let us reply to this question.

The Qur’an as the universal source of guidance

The Qur’an is concerned with the eternal destiny of man and it aims for his deliverance and salvation in this world and the hereafter. The Holy Qur’an shows us the highways and main roads by treading which we can have a blissful life. These general ways are beacons that direct actions and movements.

It must be noted, however, that in attaining salvation and felicity in this world and the hereafter, solving problems, and establishing a progressive and at the same time Islamic or religious society, God, the Exalted, has endowed man with two means, viz. religion [*din*] and intellect [*‘aql*].

The Qur’an presents the highways of human progress and perfection, and an Islamic society is duty-bound to pave the ground for the realization of the lofty goals of the Qur’an by using the human intellect and scientific experience. The Qur’an regards knowledge as a divine asset and urges Muslims to acquire it from wherever and whoever they can, irrespective of whether it be a Muslim or non-Muslim. The Apostle (S) urged Muslims to gain knowledge in various fields of study:

أَطِيبُوا أَلْعِلْمَ وَكُلُوا بِالصَّيِّنِ

“Seek knowledge even if it be in China.”⁶

That is to say, “Seek knowledge and make use of the scientific experiences of others even if it requires traveling long distances.” Nowadays, international relations are complex, and, by using the products of

scientific experiments, the arrogant countries and economic powers want to strengthen their hegemonic relations.

Yet, with utmost sagacity and without making the least compromise in the pursuit of our Islamic and Qur'anic objectives, we have to make use of the scientific achievements of man in various fields to improve our economic conditions and solve the daily problems of people.

Therefore, the Qur'an is not meant to address all the big and small problems in the life of man. It rather states the basic ways of achieving felicity and perfection, and calls Muslims towards them. In line with the statement of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) about the healing power of the Qur'an, we shall point out one of the general ways implied by the Qur'an and explain it as a sample.

An example of the general ways of the Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an states:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“If the people of the towns had been faithful and God-wary, We would have opened to them blessings from the heavens and the earth. But they denied; so We seized them because of what they used to earn.”⁷

This is one of the precise verses [*muhkamat*] of the Qur'an in which there is nothing allegorical. Its meaning is clear and unambiguous. There is no doubt in it, and in this linguistic frame only one interpretation can be inferred by those who know Arabic.

This verse contains one of the general ideological guidelines and at the same time indicates a means of solving economic problems and difficulties in life. The noble verse explains with utmost clarity that economic development and progress in the life of the faithful, removal of economic hardships, sending down of divine grace, and in general, opening of blessings from the heavens and the earth lie on faith [*iman*] and God-wariness [*taqwa*].

In contrast, it considers ungratefulness and denial of the divine favors as causing the withholding of blessings and the sending down of calamities and different types of problems. It regards gratitude and appreciation of the favors as the cause of more favors and the denial of them as inviting wrath. The Qur'an says:

لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

“If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing], but if you are ungrateful, My

punishment is indeed severe. ⁸

Here, I shall point to one of the great divine blessings bestowed on the great nation of Iran on account of following the Holy Qur'an. We pray to God to grant the people the ability to give thanks for it and we seek refuge in the Sacred Essence of God from the withdrawal from us of this great blessing on account of ingratitude.

Manifestation of divine grace in the establishment of the Islamic government

We all acknowledge that after the martyrdom of Imam 'Ali ('a), the greatest wish of us Muslims has been the establishment of a just government based upon divine revelation and ordinances. For many long years, our forebears and ancestors had been praying for the establishment of such a government.

While living under the yoke and dominance of tyrants and monarchs and having no significant role in administering their social affairs, the establishment of the Islamic government seemed to be an idealistic, unrealizable and impossible affair.

After almost fourteen centuries, due to the Muslims' resorting to the Holy Qur'an and the leadership of the *wali al-faqih* [jurist-guardian] and deputy of the infallible Imam ('a), God, the Exalted, granted one of His greatest blessings, i.e. the Islamic government to the people of Iran at this point in history.

Obviously, we do not intend to account for the defects and shortcomings or justify outputs. Rather, what we want to emphasize is that the establishment of this sacred system with the aim of implementing the divine decrees is one of the divine graces.

Now, twenty years⁹ after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, what has been the cause of concern and anxiety of the supporters of the Revolution and guardians of the religious and moral values is the loss of faith and God-wariness in society and the gradual diminishing of the religious and revolutionary values.

As a result, the enemies of Islam and Iran might succeed in executing their plans of cultural onslaught and invasion and again dominate the Muslim people of Iran by alienating the people, especially the youth, from the religious and revolutionary values.

At this juncture, this question may possibly be asked: What must be done so that the ideological and religious values of society can be preserved, the enemies fail in executing their plans, and we overcome all our problems?

Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) also pays attention to this point in Sermon 157 of *Nahj al-Balaghah* and presents resorting to the Qur'an and acting upon its commands as the way of solving individual and social problems.

The solution to social problems lies in following the Qur'an

The statement of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) in this regard is a paraphrase of the eternally precious statement of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S) who said:

إِذَا التَّسَبَّتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْفِتْنُ كَقَطْعِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْقُرْآنِ.

“Whenever agitation, worries, problems, instabilities, and seditions cast a shadow upon your society like the dark night and you make no progress in solving problems, you ought to refer to the Qur'an and set its salvation-giving guidelines as the basis of your actions.”¹⁰

The hope-giving injunctions of the Qur'an revive the spirit of hope, victory against all odds, salvation, prosperity in the hearts, and deliver human beings from hopelessness and despair.

Obviously, every victory depends on the will and efforts of human beings. Therefore, if we want to keep our independence, freedom and Islamic government safe from any form of conspiracy under the protection of God, the Exalted, there is no option but to return to God and the salvation-giving decrees of the Qur'an, and repent on account of the ingratitude and profanities of xenomaniacs¹¹ [gharbzadeh-ha] for religious values.

It is naïve for us to think that the Global Arrogance would assist the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran in issues that are beneficial to the Muslim nation of Iran and not consistent with their hegemonic interests.

It is also an extreme act of ingratitude for us to abandon the Qur'an—this everlasting miracle [*mu'jizah*] of the Apostle (S) and guarantor of felicity and salvation—and seek the help of enemies to solve our problems, and to discard *wilayah al-faqih* [guardianship of the jurist] which is the extension of the *wilayah* of the Apostle (S) and infallible Imams ('a) and accept the guardianship and hegemony of the enemies of God. One must seek refuge in God from the day when the Muslim nation of Iran would incur the divine wrath due to ungratefulness for the great blessing of independence, honor and security, and pave the way for its own downfall and disgrace.

In any case, it is the duty of each member of the nation especially those who are in charge of the cultural affairs of the country to guard the sphere of beliefs and religious-moral values of society.

Those who do not have sufficient knowledge of religion and are under the influence of individualistic ideas and secular tendencies regarding the statement of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) think that it refers only to the spiritual and moral problems of the people.

In our opinion, however, this notion is wrong because the subject of discussion includes both individual and social problems and maladies. By stating and expounding the statement of the Imam ('a), the

groundlessness of the notion of separation of religion and politics and the falsity of secularism will become clear.

Organizing social affairs according to the guidelines of the Qur'an

Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) says:

أَلَا إِنَّ فِيهِ عِلْمَ مَا يَأْتِي، وَالْحَدِيثَ عَنِ الْمَاضِي، وَدَوَاءَ دَائِكُمْ، وَتَنْظِمَ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ.

“Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you.”¹²

After stating that the Qur'an contains knowledge of the past and the future and it is the panacea to all ailments, the Imam ('a) mentions this point: "... and regulation for whatever faces you." That is to say, "The system or way of setting right your affairs is in the Qur'an. This heavenly book determines your social relations." In explaining this short statement we have no option but to make short preliminary remarks.

The greatest objective of every sociopolitical system is the maintenance of social order and security. There is no political school of thought in the world that rejects such an objective. In fact, the maintenance of order and security is among the principal duties of every government. It can also be said that the establishment of sociopolitical order is among the objectives of political science just as each political system dominant in the world declares it, at least in its slogan and propaganda, as one of its main objectives.

The role of an objective in social life

At this point, the role of an objective in social life must also be mentioned, for without it one cannot talk about social order. It is the objective that logically dictates certain actions. By doing certain actions in social life, individuals want to achieve that objective. In a sense, the objective also originates from society since every society affirms a specific social order according to its primordial state in line with its culture and thought.

Thus, in line with their hegemonic policies, the imperial powers strive to impel nations toward their imperialistic aims, make these nations alien to their original culture and control their culture and social order by imposing an imported culture.

Therefore, it must be seen what social order and the dominant culture and thought in society affirms. Obviously, the religious culture that originated from the Qur'an and monotheistic worldview affirms the

social order which maintains the realization of the purpose of creation and the assurance of man's felicity and salvation in this world and the hereafter; and what is essentially the concern of Islam and the Qur'an is the salvation and perfection of man.

It is indeed lamentable that some "intellectuals" and liberals who are Muslims but do not have sufficient knowledge of the sociopolitical precepts of Islam and hardly have any religious concerns are unaware of this basic point. Whenever they talk about social order, they refer to the social order derived from Western democracy, and this Western social order stems from their secular thought.

On account of their poor knowledge of religion, these "intellectuals" think that to organize the social affairs and systematically administer society is only possible through the separation of politics and religion. This itself is a product of cultural imperialism and regarded among the successes of the arrogant powers which, by stupefying the minds of the so-called intellectuals of the Third World countries, have been able to alienate them from their religious thought and turn them into promoters of the imperialist culture.

In any case, in the Islamic or monotheistic culture, everything including the social order is evaluated according to the purpose of creation. Obviously, the objective of social order in the religious or Qur'anic culture is not only to guarantee material welfare and worldly interests. Rather, the perfection of man and his success in the hereafter is also taken into account. It is clear that in case of conflict, success in the hereafter takes precedence over worldly affairs.

Now, by taking this introduction into account, we shall review and closely examine the statement of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) about the role of the Qur'an in securing the sociopolitical order of society so as to become more familiar with the viewpoint of *wilayah* regarding the role and station of the Qur'an in social life.

By using an astounding expression, Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) mentions the role of the Qur'an in organizing the social affairs of society and calls our attention to it lest we forgot it. After saying that the Qur'an is "the cure for your ills," the Imam ('a) says: "[The Qur'an contains] regulations for whatever faces you." That is to say, "The system of your affairs and relations is in the Qur'an." In other words, "If you are looking for the desirable and rational system under whose auspices all members of society can enjoy their legitimate rights, you have to regulate your affairs according to the instructions of the Qur'an."

It is no secret to those who are informed that the phrase "... and regulation for whatever faces you" refers to the social affairs and relations of individuals. It is true that every individual is duty-bound to organize his personal and private affairs according to the instructions of the Qur'an but the phrase "... and regulation for whatever faces you" does not encompass the personal affairs of individuals. As it is clear to those who know Arabic that in the statement under discussion Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) wants to state the social dimensions of the Holy Qur'an.

By saying, "Your social order is in the Holy Qur'an," Imam 'Ali ('a) wants to tell the Muslims and his

followers that they must organize their political affairs and social relations according to the Qur'an.

Of course, it is clear that as long as these stated admonitions are considered non-binding moral admonitions by the officials of the Islamic system and are not heartily accepted and believed by them, this heavenly healing prescription will not cure any of the social ills of our society. By mentioning the key points of the policy of the religious system, Imam 'Ali ('a) reveals the truths without acting upon which it is impossible to realize a human society based upon justice and equity, in which all individuals enjoy their rights and attain desirable perfection.

Therefore, the most fundamental and pivotal factor is the faith, belief or conviction of the government officials and authorities in the overall dictum and precepts of the Holy Qur'an. So long as they do not have sincere faith and firm conviction in the Qur'an and the efficiency of its instructions in solving the problems of society and ensuring the happiness of man, not only they do not take the Qur'an as a model in practice, but they also do not want to understand the Qur'an.

Of course, since they rule over Muslim people in an Islamic country, in slogan they might ostensibly call themselves and their government an Islamic government just to preserve their standing in the eyes of their own people and other Muslims. This is while the only government model not discussed by them is the government based on the laws of Islam and patterned after the Qur'an.

Yet, this alienation of so-called Islamic states from the religion and Qur'anic culture especially in relation to politics and the administration of society is something not unknown to the Muslims because they know that the systems of government in their respective countries are not Islamic and the dominant culture and mindset of the government officials are totally different from the mindset and paradigm based upon the Qur'anic culture.

What is astonishing and surprising for man and at the same time a cause of concern and regret is the cultural condition prevailing in our dear Islamic country of Iran—the country where a revolution based on the instructions of the Qur'an and the religious culture and under the leadership of the *wilayah al-faqih* has been successfully staged.

It is indeed a pity and a cause of concern that the statements, stances and actions of some cultural officials show that they do not have sufficient knowledge of this heavenly book and do not regard the efficiency of the government paradigm derived from it as more than any Eastern or Western paradigm. They consistently move away from the principles of the Islamic Revolution and religious values.

Owing to their lack of strong faith and true belief, implicitly or explicitly, they shamelessly express that the age of sovereignty of the Qur'an and the utility of religious culture in the realm of governance has passed and today human society is not in need of divine revelation as it can independently present better ways of administering society and maintaining order and security.

It is appropriate at this juncture to point out the oppressive nature of the existing systems of government

in the world and the tragedies and crimes perpetrated against nations in the name of advanced and civilized systems so as to expose more than ever the groundlessness of the said notion and the faithlessness and self-defeatism of its proponents.

However, in order not to digress from the main topic and avoid prolonging the discussion, we shall not mention the existing injustices, violations of human rights, oppressions, crimes, and insecurities in man-made systems and we shall refer to the relevant references.

It is obvious that the utility of the government based on the instructions of the Qur'an in maintaining justice, equity and order in society will appear provided that the government officials and authorities believe in it, and actually observe the laws and ordinances of the Qur'an. Unless it is such, the Qur'an cannot rule over society.

Therefore, the rule of the Qur'an in society depends on the true faith and belief of government officials in this heavenly book, which depends on their knowledge of this divine healing prescription and realizing the need for religion and divine government. Also, this feeling will not be attained except by generating the spirit of servitude to God and getting rid of the sense of arrogance and megalomania vis-à-vis the sovereignty of God, the Exalted. This sense of arrogance is the same sense of ingratitude that dismissed Satan from the station of proximity to the angelic station and nearness to God and subjected him to eternal perdition.

At this point, it is appropriate for us to pay heed to the discourse of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) in Sermon 175 of *Nahj al-Balaghah* that mentions the unpleasant consequences of drifting away from the Holy Qur'an.

This discourse is a warning to those who, on one hand, present themselves as followers of 'Ali ('a), and on the other, regard the Qur'an and the model of government derived from it as insufficient for the administration of human society today and prefer defective human systems of government to the Qur'anic *wilayah*. It is hoped that in the light of such instructions all members of our society particularly the decision-makers and government officials have stronger faith in the centrality of the Qur'an in Islamic society, and sincerely put its instructions into practice.

Self-sufficiency lies in following the Qur'an

In the said sermon, Hadhrat 'Ali ('a) describes the Holy Qur'an as an indicator, saying:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ هُوَ النَّاصِحُ الَّذِي لَا يَغْشَى، وَالْهَادِي الَّذِي لَا يُضِلُّ، وَالْمُحَدِّثُ الَّذِي لَا يَكْذِبُ، وَمَا جَالَسَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا قَامَ عَنْهُ بِزِيَادَةٍ أَوْ نُقْصَانٍ: زِيَادَةٌ فِي هُدًى، أَوْ نُقْصَانٍ مِنْ عَمَى.

“And know that this Qur'an is indeed an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads, and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Qur'an but that when he rises he will

achieve one addition or one diminution—addition in his guidance or elimination in his (spiritual) blindness.” [13](#)

Then, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says:

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ بَعْدَ الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ فَاقَةٍ، وَلَا لَأَحَدٍ قَبْلَ الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ غِنَىٍّ، فَاسْتَشْفُوهُ مِنْ أَدْوَائِكُمْ، وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِهِ عَلَى لَأْوَائِكُمْ، فَإِنَّ فِيهِ شِفَاءً مِنْ أَكْبَرِ الدَّاءِ، وَهُوَ الْكُفْرُ وَالنِّفَاقُ، وَالْغِيُّ وَالضَّلَالُ.

“You should also know that no one will need anything after (guidance from) the Qur’an and no one will be free from want before (guidance from) the Qur’an. Therefore, seek a cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt and misguidance.” [14](#)

That is, with the existence of the Qur’an and its rule over society, no need will remain unsolved for anyone because the Holy Qur’an is the most sublime divine program for the lives of the monotheists, and God, the Exalted, has guaranteed honor in this world and salvation in the hereafter for the followers of this heavenly book. Therefore, should our Islamic society abide by the revitalizing commands and instructions of the Qur’an and take it as their pattern of behavior by having faith in the truthfulness of its promises, it will solve individual and social, material and spiritual needs of society and make Islamic society needless of anything and anyone.

On the contrary, the Imam (‘a) points out the peril of parting from the Qur’an. He rejects the notion that without the Qur’an—the greater one of the two weighty things [*thiqal al-akbar*]¹⁵—one can solve individual and social problems of society, and says: “No one will be free from want before (guidance from) the Qur’an [and the society will never be needless of the Qur’an.” That is, in forming a society based on justice and equity and other moral values, even if all human learning and experiences are put into use and all ideas and thoughts are applied, in the absence of the Qur’an one will lead to nowhere.

It is because without the Qur’an it is impossible for one to become independent and self-sufficient. As such, the Imam (‘a) says: “Therefore, seek a cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distress.” Then, by mentioning the most serious individual and social ailments and maladies—that is, unbelief, hypocrisy and misguidance—he says that the means of curing these ailments and maladies lies in the Qur’an and one can cure his ailments and maladies by referring to it.

Therefore, the general principles and main ways must be learned from the Qur’an, and problems solved by following those general principles and benefiting from experiences, reflection and thinking. If we intend to solve problems with this frame of mind, we will definitely overcome all odds in all aspects, for this is the divine promise. God, the Exalted, says:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

“And whoever is wary of Allah, He shall make a way out for him”¹⁵

The Qur’an as a panacea for the most serious maladies

The said statement will not be palatable to the arrogant and those whose faith in God is weak, whose knowledge of the Qur’an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) is insufficient, who think themselves equal to God merely because they possess some knowledge of the human sciences.

Yet, every rational person admits that in comparison to his ignorance, all the astounding scientific advancements of man are but a drop vis-à-vis an ocean, and all the claims of atheistic moral philosophies in presenting the model of a virtuous city are nothing compared to the infinite divine knowledge of the sciences possessed by the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) that emanated from divine inspiration.

Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a) regards disbelief [*kufr*], hypocrisy [*nifaq*] and misguidance [*dhalal*] as the worst maladies of human society. These spiritual maladies subject society to a variety of problems and adversity, and their cure can be found in the Qur’an: “It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt and misguidance.”

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) does not mean that the Qur’an, like a medical prescription, explains physical ailments and prescribes a medicine for every sickness, or provides solutions for all economic and military problems, and formulas that can be used in the fields of technology and industry. Anyone who has the least knowledge of life in this world knows that problems require their respective natural means and ways.

As stated before, in solving these problems the Holy Qur’an states the general ways which can be understood and followed by using our God-given intellect, talents and the acquired knowledge in human sciences.

At this point, let me draw the attention of the dear readers to two points:

The first is that natural causes and physical factors have their own effects and outcomes but it is necessary to note that the First Cause of all phenomena is God, the Blessed and Exalted. It is He who has created the system of the universe, based it upon the cause and effect relationship, and it is He who grants causality to the causes and factors. Without His ontological will, no agent can have independence in the effect of his action.

Therefore, in curing all ailments and solving all problems and difficulties, we must essentially turn to God, the Exalted, and pin our hopes on Him. It is true that in solving problems and curing ailments, we resort to natural sources but as demanded by monotheism the cure and solution to problems must essentially be expected and regarded as coming from Him.

The second point is that the way of solving problems and curing ailments should not be considered as solely depending on natural causes and physical solutions. It is incorrect to think that in the absence of

natural causes and physical factors or their inefficiency in solving problems, it is impossible to solve a problem, recover from a sickness, cure ailments, or fulfill any legitimate and rightful demand of man.

By creating the system of cause and effect, God, the Exalted, has not made Himself unable to create phenomenon through an unnatural way. Rather, the precedent of Allah is that initially affairs are conducted through natural agents but are not confined only to natural agents. In fact, quite often, God created things through unnatural means and this can also be called divine precedent.

Curing or treating a disease can possibly be done through natural ways and medical treatment, or under special circumstances, through unnatural means such as the supplications of the infallible Imams (‘a) or other *awliya*’ [saints] of Allah. In the same manner, the combatants of monotheism, who from the perspective of material equipment were condemned to be defeated by the enemy on the battlefield, emerged victorious owing to hidden help and unnatural causes. Such instances can be regarded as part of the Divine causes and factors.

The Holy Qur’an has narrated events that came to pass through unnatural ways. For example, for rain to fall according to its natural course and factors, the water of the seas and oceans must evaporate and turn into clouds. Then, because of the difference between sea and land temperatures, the wind tends to scatter the clouds to other parts of the earth until the drops of water in the clouds fall in the form of raindrops, snow drops or hailstones.

To expect rain without its natural causes and factors according to the scientific perspective is regarded as irrational and futile. However, without considering the natural factors of rain, Hadhrat Nuh (Noah) (‘a) addressed his community [*qawm*] and urged them to repent and ask for forgiveness so that the sky would send down rain:

وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِينَ

“O my people! Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently: He will send copious rains for you from the sky, and add power to your [present] power. So do not turn your backs [on Him] as guilty ones.”¹⁶

It is true that the natural causes and factors of rain and the entire system of cause and effect governing the nature are all under divine power and the will of God, but without taking them into account God, the Exalted, says to the people: “Ask forgiveness for your sins and turn to God. In turn, He will send copious rains from the sky.”

One may possibly say that God, the Exalted, does not mean that without the presence of natural causes, there will be no rain; rather, it means that He will send down rain for us by means of facilitating natural causes. The reply is that this notion is inconsistent with the monotheistic viewpoint because as stated earlier, by creating the system of cause and effect, God, the Exalted, has not made Himself unable to

create phenomena without natural causes and factors. Regarding His power in creating and bringing phenomena into being, God says:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

“When He wills something, all He needs to do is to say to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”¹⁷

The wisdom behind some calamities

In addition to the above subject, sometimes the wisdom of God, the Exalted, demands that He showers His blessings upon His servants through unnatural ways. In doing so, He creates factors different from the known physical ones for people who deserve His mercy. The system of creation is anchored in wisdom, and the purpose of creating man is guidance and perfection.

Guidance and perfection can be achieved through gnosis, reflection on the divine verses, servitude, and acting upon the commandments of the divine prophets (‘a) and the religion of truth. Yet, sometimes, people stray from the path of truth on account of sin and wrongdoing. Usually, when human beings are materially well off and economically well heeled, they pay less attention to God and spirituality. At that time, their human and divine qualities become weak and finally disappear. As a result, the ground for insolence, disbelief, deviation, and misguidance opens up for them.

The Qur’an states:

كَأَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ * أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَعْتَضَى

“Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself without need.”¹⁸

If the dominant spirit of the majority in a society is that of arrogance and insolence, divine grace and favor demand that He warn the people in one way or another and awaken them from the slumber of heedlessness and bring them back to the path of truth and servitude. In order to realize this, He sometimes inflicts them with calamities in the forms of poverty and famine. Simultaneously, He introduces repentance, asking for forgiveness of sins, and returning to Him through prayer and supplication to remove those calamities, so that finally the purpose of creation, which is nothing but the voluntary desire for perfection in man, can be realized.

This process is also one of the astounding precedents of God. He sometimes sent a prophet and subjected his community to hardships so that they would not become heedless of Him and the path of truth, and be protected from the devastation of material pleasures.

Under difficult conditions human beings realize their spiritual needs and are more inclined to accept the

truth and the teachings of the prophets (‘a), compared to the time when they are in comfort. The Qur’an states:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ

“We did not send a prophet to any town without visiting its people with stress and distress so that they might entreat [for Allah’s forgiveness].”¹⁹

Verses 75 and 76 of *Surah al-Mu’minun* also explain this subject:

وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِم مِّن ضُرٍّ لَلَجُوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ * وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَنْضَرُّعُونَ

“Should We have mercy upon them and remove their distress from them, they would surely persist, bewildered in their rebellion. Certainly We have seized them with punishment, yet they neither humbled themselves before their Lord, nor did they entreat [Him for mercy].”²⁰

Therefore, the philosophy behind some afflictions and difficulties is to awaken people and make them return to the path of guidance, although it is possible that these calamities do not awaken some communities as they remain stubborn in their deviation and misguidance. In this case, the guidance [*hujjah*] is exhausted for them and they have to accept responsibility for the sure calamity that will put an end to their lives.

In verses 42 to 44 of *Surah al-An‘am*, the Qur’an addresses the Prophet of Islam (S) thus:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ * فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ * فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُم بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

“We have certainly sent [apostles] to nations before you, then We seized them with stress and distress so that they might entreat [Us]. Why did they not entreat when Our punishment overtook them! But their hearts had hardened, and Satan had made to seem decorous to them what they had been doing. So when they forgot what they had been admonished of, We opened for them the gates of all [good] things. When they rejoiced in what they were given, We seized them suddenly, whereat, behold, they were despondent.”²¹

We have to know that this has been the precedent of God [*sunnat Allah*] with respect to past communities and the *ummah* of the Last Apostle (S) is not an exception to it.

For the people of insight and caution, calamities, problems and adversities act as reminders of guidance. As stated by the Qur'an, there are also people in their midst who are heedless and will not be awakened by any warning, alarm or reminder and come to their senses.

It is important to pay attention to the philosophy behind such events, learn a lesson from the past, repent and return to God. It is indeed a pity that in our society only a few pay attention to this matter. Owing to this heedlessness or weakness of faith, some officials extend their hands to other than God in a bid to be relieved from economic difficulties such as drought and famine.

By allocating a huge budget from the public treasury, they intend to create rain by putting chemical elements in the clouds. How futile! Is the knowledge of the cause of rain by the emergence of clouds and their scattering by means of wind and other limited factors that makes man arrogant, thinking he can produce rain whenever he wants, and instead of drawing the attention of the Muslim masses to God and resorting to His favor and beneficence, he searches and hunts for a fragment of the clouds while on top of a mountain in order to impregnate it, so to speak, and thus send down rain?!

By the way, the said issue calls to mind the story of Hadhrat Nuh (‘a) and his son. After 950 years of inviting them to faith, Hadhrat Nuh (‘a) was disappointed as his people refused to believe in God. After losing all hope of guiding them, and witnessing signs of divine wrath, he urged his son to believe in God and embark on the ark in order to be saved from the definite punishment. In reply to his father, he expressed his atheistic thought, thus:

سَأُوِي إِلَى جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ

“I shall take refuge on a mountain; it will protect me from the flood.”²²

As we all know, he did not believe in God till the last moment and perished. By relating this story, God, the Exalted, reveals the essence of atheistic thought and warns people of it.

Now, this atheistic thought also exists among some people, especially the xenomaniac intellectuals. Instead of having faith in God and drawing the people toward Him in their speeches and writings, they expect and rely on the assistance of the enemies of Islam in solving problems.

It is known to those who are informed that we do not intend to oppose scientific advancement and the achievement of human sciences, because the Qur'an and monotheistic thought—more than any other school of thought—calls upon the people to learn and seek knowledge and make use of the products of human thought and ideas. At this juncture, what we emphatically oppose is this atheistic thought. Unfortunately, those who follow this school of thought are not few in our society.

In any case, the best, shortest and safest way of solving individual and social problems is to return to the Door of the House of God, for treading the way of God ensures our eternal and otherworldly salvation as

well as removes our problems and hardships.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا * يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا

“Then I told [them]: ‘Plead to your Lord for forgiveness. Indeed He is the All-forgiving. He will send for you abundant rains from the sky.’”²³

Therefore, in order to remove deficiencies and find relief from problems the Qur’an proposes solutions to its followers and guarantees the efficacy of these solutions. As experienced many times, the Muslims can try them.

Undoubtedly, the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran is one of the miraculous examples of the divine succor and hidden help of God to our Islamic society. When all the people, by relying upon God and refusing to pin their hopes on other than Him, demanded an Islamic government, God—in accordance with His promise in the Qur’an: “O you who have faith! If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet steady”²⁴—made the people victorious over their enemies, notwithstanding the power of the 2,500-year-old monarchical regime backed up by all the enemies of Islam.

The precedent of God, that when people turn to Him He shall help them, is still true. Once they forget God, seek assistance from other than Him, and turn their backs to Him, they shall incur wrath and ignominy.

Anyway, there is no doubt that the Holy Qur’an is the healing prescription of God, and the salvation of man in this world and the hereafter lies in abiding with its revitalizing injunctions. The way of solving individual and social problems must be sought in it. The Qur’an—this guarantor of the salvation of man—must be recognized and one must strive to respect and honor it and act upon its orders. However, there are two kinds of respect paid to the Qur’an, which we shall cite below.

Outward and real respect for the Holy Qur’an

The respect shown to the Qur’an today in Muslim societies can be called outward respect. The Holy Qur’an has not been revealed to us only to be treated with respect in manner and style. The Qur’an is not meant only for memorization and recitation in a melodious voice.

The Qur’an is the book of life and its divine messages must be followed in his life so as to attain salvation in this world and the hereafter. Government officials in Muslim countries are particularly obliged to organize and implement the overall political policies in accordance with the instructions of this divine book so as to pave the ground for the growth of a Qur’anic culture among the members of society and thus realize the purpose behind the revelation of the Qur’an, which is nothing but the perfection and felicity of man under the blessing of justice and equity on earth.

Unfortunately, the necessity of taking the Qur'an as the axis of the sociopolitical lives of Muslims has been neglected. Now, institutions, from preschool to the tertiary level in many Muslim countries, are engaged in teaching and learning the Holy Qur'an, busy teaching the reading, recitation and memorization of the Qur'an through various methods.

Every year, we witness international competitions on the memorization and recitation of the Holy Qur'an. Various sciences of the Qur'an such as *tajwid*, *tartil* and others occupy a special place among those who are fond of the Qur'an. In addition, the Qur'an is held in high esteem among Muslim masses, such that they do not touch its words and verses without ablution, and sit humbly while reading it.

Many of them do not stretch their feet against a copy of the Qur'an. They cover it with the best of covers and place it in attractive boxes. In sum, such outward forms of respect to the Qur'an are common among Muslim masses.

The observance of the abovementioned forms of respect to this heavenly book is a necessary value. No matter how faithful we are to such practices, we have not paid due respect to this heavenly book and have not expressed due gratitude for this greatest blessing of God, the Exalted, which is the blessing of guidance.

However, the highest form of respect and gratitude for any blessing is to realize its essence and act upon it the way God has commanded. Once we consider the Qur'an with this perspective and pay respect and honor to it, it will become clear that the Holy Qur'an does not have a desirable place in the culture of Muslim societies and due respect and honor are not being paid to it.

The forms of paying respect to the Holy Qur'an by Muslims are necessary but by doing so, the purpose of God Almighty in revealing the Qur'an is not realized. Familiarity with the outward aspects of the Qur'an, reading its divine verses and paying outward respect to this curing prescription are a prelude to acting upon its instructions and injunctions. The true right of the Qur'an cannot be given without making it the axis of the sociopolitical lives of the Muslims.

Evidently, kissing and paying respect to a doctor's medical prescription and reading it in a melodious tone without understanding and abiding with its recommendations and instructions can never cure the disease of a patient. Every rational person believes that recovery lies in following the instructions of a medical prescription. The real form of respect to a medical prescription is to act upon it and not to offer outward respect to the doctor and his prescription.

[The Qur'an as the true light](#)

One of the demonstrative manifestations of God is light. God has likened Himself to light, saying:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.”²⁵

It is because of this light of God, the Exalted, that the world of being exists, and the blessing of existence continuously descends upon the creatures from its Source. As such, the phenomena and creatures subsist.

Sometimes, the word of God is also described as “light”, for it is by means of light that man finds his way and is saved from wandering and getting lost. Since the most disastrous misguidance in the path of life is that which endangers the salvation of man, the real and true light is that which saves human beings from misguidance and clearly shows the true path of human perfection.

In other words, it distinguishes the path of perfection and salvation from the paths of degradation and deviation. As such, God, the Exalted, has described the Qur’an as “light”, saying:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

“Certainly there has come to you a light from Allah and a manifest Book”²⁶

As such, by benefiting from it, you can distinguish the path of felicity from that of perdition.

After describing Islam and the Apostle (S), Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a) thus says in Sermon 189 while describing the Holy Qur’an:

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابَ نُورًا لَا تَطْفَأُ مَصَابِيحُهُ، وَسِرَاجًا لَا يَخْبُو تَوَقُّدُهُ، وَبَحْرًا لَا يُدْرِكُ قَعْرَهُ

“Then, Allah sent to him the Book as a ‘light’ whose flames cannot be extinguished, a ‘lamp’ whose gleam does not die, and a ‘sea’ whose depth cannot be sounded.”²⁷

In describing the Qur’an in this sermon by using three extremely beautiful similes, Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a) wants to acquaint the hearts of the Muslims with the greatness of the Qur’an and draw their attention towards this magnificent divine asset which has been at their disposal.

Initially, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) describes the Qur’an as a “light” whose flames cannot be extinguished and whose gleam does not die. Through a similitude of what is intelligible to what is perceptible, he says that the Qur’an is like the great source of electric energy that illuminates the highways that are running in different directions in the darkness of the night through a network of powerful electric lights.

By installing traffic lights along crossroads, it distinguishes the way that leads to a specific destination from those other ways that end up in terrible abysses for those who want to arrive safely at their destination. The Qur’an also plays the same role in a religious or Islamic society with a difference: the flames emanating from this source of light and illuminating the path of salvation can never be

extinguished.

As such, the path of truth is always straight and illuminated, and the Holy Qur'an and the glowing flames emanating from it continuously warn its followers to be careful and not deviate from the path of truth.

In another part of the sermon, Imam 'Ali ('a) says:

وَنُورًا لَيْسَ مَعَهُ ظُلْمَةٌ.

“[The Qur'an is] an effulgence with which there is no darkness.”²⁸

This is because this heavenly book has innate beacons which incessantly illuminate the path of guidance and felicity. The Imams ('a) who are the interpreters of divine revelation represent the beacons that impart the knowledge of the Qur'an to the people and acquaint them with its truth through their God-endowed knowledge.

Qur'anic lamps and reflections

As we know, according to the Tradition on Two Weighty Things [*hadith al-thaqalayn*], the Qur'an and the 'i^{tr}at [progeny of the Prophet (S)]—these two divine assets along the path of guidance of the monotheists—are complementary. By clinging to one and abandoning the other, the purpose behind the revelation of the Qur'an cannot be realized. The infallible Imams ('a) are lamps whose lights emanate from this divine source and possess the sciences of the Qur'an and its truth.

These holy personages can distinguish the metaphorical [*mutashabihat*] from the precise verses [*muhkamat*] and the true path from the false one, and guide people toward the path of salvation and perfection. Meanwhile, the people are supposed to learn the sciences of the Qur'an from them and act upon them.

God's precedent [*sunnat Allah*] is such that the people have to be acquainted with the sciences of the Qur'an through the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a) and strive to ensure their own salvation in this world and the hereafter by abiding by them. Hence, by instituting the unbroken chain of Imamate [*imamah*], God, the Exalted, has kept open the way of benefiting from the sciences of the Qur'an for those who are in search of salvation. The enemies and materialists throughout history have tried to extinguish the light of divine guidance which is embodied in the school of the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a) but the Qur'an states that they will never succeed in doing so:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah shall perfect His light

though the faithless should be averse. [29](#)

As such, Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a) likens the Qur’an with a lamp whose flames cannot be extinguished and whose gleam does not die.

The sciences of the Qur’an are so profound and extensive that whenever those who are familiar with the knowledge of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) contemplate on them, they acquire new knowledge and facts at every stage. As this heavenly book is a manuscript of divine knowledge, however much those who are thirsty of the truth drink from its pure fountain their thirst is never quenched. In fact, they become thirstier.

As such, we can see that by reciting divine verses in ritual prayers and reflecting upon them, the *awliya*’ of Allah and those who are knowledgeable of the truth of the Qur’an strive to purify their souls and place themselves more than ever at the threshold of the inspirations of God and His infinite knowledge.

The Qur’an is a radiant sun whose gnosis [*ma’rifah*] is endless and whose luminosity is eternal, for this heavenly book is like a deep ocean. It is impossible for anyone to fathom it except the Apostle (S) and the infallible Imams (‘a) who possess the “knowledge of the Book” [*ilm al-kitab*]. Any person who wants to be familiar with the Qur’an or the Word of God and lead his individual or social life based upon the instructions of this heavenly book has no option but to cling to the Qur’an according to the interpretation, explanation and conduct of the Apostle (S) and the infallible Imams (‘a). In proving this, we shall point to certain parts of two traditions:

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) says:

وَنَحْنُ قَنَادِيلُ النُّبُوَّةِ وَمَصَابِيحُ الرِّسَالَةِ وَنَحْنُ نُورُ الْأَنْوَارِ وَكَلِمَةُ الْجَبَّارِ وَنَحْنُ رَايَةُ الْحَقِّ الَّتِي مَنْ تَبِعَهَا نَجَى وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ عَنْهَا هَوَىٰ وَنَحْنُ مَصَابِيحُ الْمِشْكَاتِ الَّتِي فِيهَا نُورُ النُّورِ

“We are the lanterns of apostleship [*nubuwwah*] and the lamps of messengership [*risalah*]. We are the lights of the Light and the word of the Almighty. We are the banner of truth; whoever follows it is saved and whoever abandons it goes astray. We are the lamps of the niche which contains the Light of lights.” [30](#)

A similar statement has also been reported from Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) when he said:

إِنَّ مَثَلَنَا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ الْمِشْكَاتِ وَالْمِشْكَاتُ فِي الْقَنْدِيلِ فَنَحْنُ الْمِشْكَاتُ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ وَالْمِصْبَاحُ مُحَمَّدٌ (ص) الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ نَحْنُ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ مَعْرُوفَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ لَا مُنْكَرَةَ وَلَا دَعِيَّةَ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارُ نُورِ الْقُرْآنِ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ بَأَنْ يَهْدِيَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ إِلَىٰ وَلَا يَتِنَا

“Verily, our example in the Book of Allah is like the niche. We are the niche wherein a lamp is placed

and the lamp is in a glass and the glass is Muhammad (S). (And) the glass is as it were a brightly shining star—lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil lights up, though fire does not touch it. The light of the Qur'an is light upon light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wishes. Allah draws parables for mankind, and Allah has knowledge of all things. Verily, He guides whoever He loves to our guardianship [*wilayah*].”³¹

In this saying, the Imam (‘a) has interpreted verse 35 of *Surah al-Nur* as referring to the Apostle (S) and his *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) or the infallible Imams (‘a). The Imam (‘a) said that the similitude of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) in the Qur'an is that of a transparent glass that reflects the light of the lamp of apostleship [*nubuwwah*]. This light emanates from a blessed tree whose radiance is all-encompassing and undeniable, overflowing with Divine light. This light is neither eastern nor western and neither unknown nor manifest.

Imam al-Sajjad (‘a) says that the truth of the Apostle (S) and his holy *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) is like a luminous lamp which gives light without a flame. The light of the Qur'an is the light (the *wilayah* of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a)) by which God guides whomever He wishes.

Deliverance of the followers of the Qur'an on the Day of Resurrection

As pointed earlier, salvation is of paramount import for man, and life in this world is a prelude for eternal life in the next world. The similitude of man in this world in relation to the other world is that of a traveler who, by working hard day and night in a foreign city, living frugally, and sending his earnings to his motherland or birthplace, intends to build a house and have enough capital so that upon his return home, he can live comfortably with honor and dignity for the remaining part of his life—the only difference being that the otherworldly life is eternal and everlasting.

Man's beliefs and actions are seeds planted by him in this world which will yield fruit in the next world. If, in this world, a farmer plants a seed according to the instructions of an expert on agriculture, his yield at harvest time will be the best possible, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Similarly, if human beings organize their actions and activities according to the instructions of the Holy Qur'an and the teachings and precepts of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) and set their individual and sociopolitical affairs according to the dictates of the Holy Qur'an, in addition to honor and glory in this world, they will enjoy the outcome of their good deeds in the hereafter.

Hadhrat ‘Ali (‘a) calls upon people to preserve the enlivening ordinances of the Qur'an:

فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ بِهِ، وَتَوَجَّهُوا إِلَيْهِ بِحُبِّهِ، وَلَا تَسْأَلُوا بِهِ خَلْقَهُ، إِنَّهُ مَا تَوَجَّهَ الْعِبَادُ إِلَى اللَّهِ بِمِثْلِهِ. وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ شَافِعٌ مُشَفَّعٌ، وَقَائِلٌ مُصَدِّقٌ، وَأَنَّهُ مَنْ شَفَعَ لَهُ الْقُرْآنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفَعَ فِيهِ، وَمَنْ مَحَلَّ بِهِ الْقُرْآنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِ.

“Pray to Allah through it and turn to Allah with its love. Do not ask the people through it. There is nothing like it through which the people should turn to Allah, the Sublime. Know that it is an interceder and its intercession will be accepted. It is a trusted speaker. Whoever the Qur’an intercedes for on the Day of Judgment, its intercession will be accepted. He about whom the Qur’an speaks ill on the Day of Judgment shall testify to its truthfulness.”[32](#)

After saying that the Qur’an is the greatest cure and solution to the ills of society, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) persuades people to look for the cure to their ills in the Qur’an by following it and turn to God by acting upon it, and not take the Qur’an as a means of asking other human beings for their help.

Then, the Imam (‘a) warns the people of the danger of being separated from the Qur’an and invites them to follow this heavenly book and take it as the guideline in their thought and action:

فَإِنَّهُ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: أَلَا إِنَّ كُلَّ حَارِثٍ مُبْتَلَىٰ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَعَاقِبَةِ عَمَلِهِ، غَيْرَ حَرْثَةِ الْقُرْآنِ، فَكُونُوا مِنْ حَرْثِهِ
وَأَتَّبِعْهُ، وَاسْتَدِلُّوهُ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ، وَاسْتَنْصِحُوهُ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ، وَاتَّهَمُوا عَلَيْهِ آرَاءَكُمْ، وَاسْتَغْشُوا فِيهِ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ

“On the Day of Judgment an announcer will announce, “Beware, every sower of a crop is in distress except the sowers of the Qur’an.” Therefore, you should be among the sowers of the Qur’an and its followers. Make it guide you towards your Lord. Seek its advice for yourselves; do not trust your views against it; and regard your desires in the matter of the Qur’an as misleading.”[33](#)

On the Day of Resurrection, when human beings will be resurrected for their reckoning—recompense and punishment—an announcer will announce this truth to the people: “O people! Know that all human beings today will be afflicted with the products and outcome of what they sowed except those whose beliefs and actions are based upon injunctions and instructions of the Qur’an. Only these individuals will be pleased with the products and effects of their deeds and beliefs and not feel cheated.

Admonition and reminder

The life of all creatures including man is limited. This life begins at a certain point in time and ends with death at another point. During this limited span of time, man is always in a state of becoming and his personality in a state of formation. The personality of man results from his beliefs and convictions, actions and behavior. The actions of man will also be manifested on the Day of Resurrection and every person will be made to weep on viewing the product of his deeds.

The point to be highlighted here is that as long as man has not yet departed from this world, he can mend his past ways at any moment by assessing his thoughts, beliefs and actions and change his destiny toward deliverance and salvation in this world and the hereafter.

Sometimes people come to their senses in a transforming moment and through real repentance and

serious decision, they transform their gloomy past into a bright and prosperous future and traverse overnight a distance of a century's journey. It must be noted that the opportunity for assessment and mending is only possible in this world, for there will be no room for reform after death.

If man bases his deeds and activities on the Qur'an and the divine precepts and injunctions in this world, in the words of Hadhrat 'Ali ('a), he will be among the sowers of the Qur'an, and, in the hereafter, enjoy the products of his deeds. The time for action and preparation exists only in this world:

الْيَوْمَ عَمَلٌ وَلَا حِسَابٌ وَلَا حِسَابٌ وَلَا عَمَلٌ

“Today is the time for action and not for reckoning while tomorrow is the time for reckoning and not for action.”³⁴

Imam 'Ali ('a) who knows the reality of this world and the hereafter as well as their relation to each other and is highly concerned about the plight of the Muslims said: “You should be among the sowers of the Qur'an.” That is to say, “If you want salvation, you have to sow good deeds with the blessings of the Qur'an. Be among those who build their abodes in this world and the hereafter by acting upon the enlivening instructions of this heavenly book. Take the Qur'an as your guide so that you will never be in loss.”

The secret of success and the role of the Qur'an

It seems that in order to be successful in any program, especially in educational, cultural and social affairs, there are some basic conditions:

1. The correctness and accuracy of the program with respect to its goal;
2. Conviction and faith in the program and its procedures; and
3. Implementation of the instructions and procedures stated in the program.

Obviously, if any of the three conditions is not met, the efficiency of the program will suffer and the goal not achieved.

We all claim that the Qur'an is God's word and a program of life for Muslims. Yet, mere claim or outward acknowledgment is not enough. Confession will be considered as faith in the Qur'an and its enlivening instructions, provided it demonstrates sincere belief and conviction and total submission to its divine message. Only then will the Qur'an become effective in guiding the society.

The Holy Qur'an says:

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ * الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ * أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“This is the Book; there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God-wary, who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; and who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter. Those who follow their Lord’s guidance, it is they who are the felicitous.” [35](#)

Of course, we are aware that faith [*iman*] has various degrees, and the Islamic society can overcome its problems and achieve victory over the enemies with honor and dignity, provided that the cultural officials of society have sincere belief and faith in the religious government and submit to the precepts and decrees of the Qur’an like the submission of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (‘a), and do not feign belief in the Qur’an by using religion and religious culture only in order to gain popularity.

In the Holy Qur’an, those who do not have faith in the divine laws and ordinances and only pretend to have accepted Islam in order to deceive Muslims and attain their worldly objectives are described as *munafiqin* [hypocrites]. The external and internal characteristics and behavior of this group have been mentioned in numerous verses of the Holy Qur’an.

Ibrahim (‘a) as a model of submission and servitude in the Holy Qur’an

The Holy Qur’an declares the submission of Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) to the divine commandments and orders, as the model of submission and resignation to the divine will, and presents faith, patience, fortitude, and reliance on God, the Exalted, as the secret of his success in facing problems and victory over the polytheists. It also urges us to have such faith and conviction vis-à-vis the command of God and the Holy Qur’an and to be as firm and resolute as Ibrahim (‘a) in executing divine decrees.

Here, we shall briefly discuss the faith of Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) in executing God’s command to sacrifice his son, Hadhrat Isma‘il (Ishmael) (‘a), so that while explaining the spirit of God-centeredness in the monotheistic culture, we can point out our weakness in obeying the instructions of the Qur’an, and acquaint readers with the principal maladies of society.

It can be inferred from the Holy Qur’an that divine decree granted Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) a son after a hundred years. His wish came true after a very long period of expectation. Naturally, every person regards the existence of a righteous child as a continuation of his life. After the birth of Isma‘il (‘a), Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) was commanded by God, the Exalted, to take his child along with his magnanimous mother to the land of Mecca, leave them there in the most difficult conditions of the desert without trace of water and life, and return from Mecca after accomplishing his divine mission.

After sometime, he was allowed to return to Mecca—when his son had grown up into a courteous and handsome youth whose rosy face removed the grief and sorrow of his father and made the pains of separation and problems easy for him. Unexpectedly, at the peak of emotional attachment to such a son, it was revealed to him in a “dream” that he had to sacrifice his son in the way of God. By the way, it is worthy to test our conviction and faith in God, the Qur’an and the divine orders as well as the degrees of our submission to God by the faith and degree of submission of Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) so that we can discern the distance between us and what the Qur’an and God, the Exalted, want from us, and strengthen our faith.

If you and I received an order from Jibra’il (Archangel Gabriel) (‘a) to sacrifice our own son—while we were awake and not in sleep—we cannot be sure of listening to it let alone executing the divine command to sacrifice our own son! Yet, without any hesitation, Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) was determined to obey the divine order. Without entertaining any doubt about the authenticity of what had been revealed to him he informed his son of his dream:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى قَالَ يَا أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“When he was old enough to assist in his endeavor, he said, ‘My son! I see in a dream that I am sacrificing you. Say what you think.’ He said, ‘Father! Do whatever you have been commanded to do. If Allah wishes, you will find me patient.’”³⁶

Such is the degree of faith and submission of Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a). Now, try to observe the degree of faith and submission of the son. Look at the obedience of the son to the command of God and his father, and you will be astonished by the sincerity and faith of individuals whom the pen and tongue are incapable of describing, and hesitate in calling yourselves “Muslims”.

Hadhrat Isma’il (‘a)—this son who learned from his father the lesson of submission to the Will of God—encouraged his father to execute the divine order without asking about the philosophy behind killing him and induce doubt and hesitation in his father. He (‘a) said: ***“Father! Do whatever you have been commanded. If Allah wishes, you will find me patient.”***

Great men act after asking for the help of God, the Exalted, and rely on Him. In all activities, with His succor, assistance and utmost humbleness, they say: “By the will and help of God, I will perform such-and-such deed.” Even here, Hadhrat Isma’il (‘a) did not rely on his own power but on Allah’s help.

God, the Exalted, expresses and describes the visage of Hadhrat Ibrahim (‘a) and his state of submission to God by quoting Ibrahim’s (‘a) words:

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Indeed I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, as a hanif, and I am not one of the polytheists.”³⁷

We must have the same belief and faith of Ibrahim (‘a) in God and the Qur’an, to benefit from the Qur’an, i.e. guide society according to the instructions of the Qur’an.

Therefore, it is clear that in addition to faith and conviction, what will materialize the program on the guidance of the Qur’an is to act according to the instructions of the Qur’an and practice its enlivening commandments in both individual and social life.

- [1.](#) In this volume, the translation of quotations from Nahj al-Balaghah is adapted from Syed ‘Ali Raza, Nahj al-Balaghah: The Peak of Eloquence (Qum: Foundation of Islamic Cultural Propagation in the World, 1995). [Trans.]
- [2.](#) Hadhrat: The Arabic word Hadhrat is used as a respectful form of address. [Trans.]
- [3.](#) That is, the first four books of the New Testament, viz. the Gospels of Mark, Luke, Matthew, and John. [Trans.]
- [4.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 147. It must be noted that throughout this book all citations from Nahj al-Balaghah are based upon Faydh al-Islam Arrangement.
- [5.](#) Surah al-Nahl 16:44.
- [6.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 1, p. 177.
- [7.](#) Surah al-A’raf 7:96.
- [8.](#) Surah Ibrahim 14:7.
- [9.](#) Now, it is almost thirty years.
- [10.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 92, p. 17.
- [11.](#) Xenomaniacs: those infatuated with foreign and especially Western models of culture. This is the translation of a Persian term, gharbzadegan or gharbzadeh-ha, popularized by Jalal Al Ahmad (d. 1969) who was a writer of great influence in his book Gharbzadegi (“Xenomania” or “Occidentosis”). See its English translation, R. Campbell (trans.) and Hamid Algar (ed. and anno.), Occidentosis: A Plague from the West (Berkeley: Al-Mizan Press, 1984). [Trans.]
- [12.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 157.
- [13.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 175.
- [14.](#) Ibid.
- [15.](#) Surah al-Talaq 65:2.
- [16.](#) Surah Hud 11:52.
- [17.](#) Surah Ya-Sin 36:82.
- [18.](#) Surah al-‘Alaq 96:6-7.
- [19.](#) Surah al-A’raf 7:94.
- [20.](#) Surah al-Mu’minun 23:75-76.
- [21.](#) Surah al-An’am 6:42-44.
- [22.](#) Surah Hud 11:43.
- [23.](#) Surah Nuh 71:10-11.
- [24.](#) Surah Muhammad 47:7.
- [25.](#) Surah al-Nur 24:35.
- [26.](#) Surah al-Ma’idah 5:15.
- [27.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 189.
- [28.](#) Ibid.
- [29.](#) Surah al-Saff 61:8.
- [30.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 26, p. 259.
- [31.](#) Ibid., vol. 23, p. 314.
- [32.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 175.

[33.](#) Ibid.

[34.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 32, p. 354; vol. 77, p. 419.

[35.](#) Surah al-Baqarah 2:2-5.

[36.](#) Surah al-Saffat 37:102.

[37.](#) Surah al-An'am 6:79.

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