

## Preface

### In The Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful

Just as the human body needs food, clothing and a shelter, so does his soul need ethics and education. A person who is ignorant of the facts of creation, who is not nurtured with moral conducts, and is not void of obnoxious traits is only superficially a human being; he is in fact far away from humanity. Regarding this, Sa'di from Shiraz (the famous poet) says:

What makes a human body honorable is his soul; beautiful garment does not make a man;  
If eyes, tongues, ears and noses made a man;  
Then what would the difference be between a man and a painting on the wall;  
Be truly a man, or else you would be  
A bird talking human language;  
If you could eliminate your fierce nature you would live a human life all life-long.

For this very reason the significant portions of the agenda of the Prophets and divine Messengers include education and the enhancement of ethical considerations and well-adjusted conduct. These dignitaries, in accordance with the prevailing situations, have made use of either practical means and suitable behavior, or sermons and maxims, or treatises. [1](#)

Among these treasures is the Treatise of Amir al-Mu'minin (pbnh), which is the subject of the present translation. It is appropriate here to draw your attention to the following points:

### What Is Ethics?

According to the Islamic scholars, [2](#) ethics includes all human traits which are brought about either by heredity or environment and which make up one's personality influencing one's deeds, conducts thoughts and speech.

Raghib in his Mufradat al-Qur'an says that the two terms "*Khalq*" (creation) and "*Khulq*" (human traits) are, in fact, identical; but the former refers to superficial configurations which are observable with naked

eyes, whereas the latter refers to the internal powers and innate goodness which are only observable with the hearts.[3](#)

Regarding this, Imam 'Ali (as) has said: "*Khulq* refers to the soul, whereas *khaliq* refers to the body".[4](#)

As the bodies are different among people; some are beautiful, and some are ugly, the souls are different as well; some are nice, others are inhuman. In the final analysis, the structure of human body relies on the rules of creation, which are beyond humans to tamper with; whereas sour behaviors and traits are for the most part learned and are formed through hardships.

Ibn Miskawayh in his book *Taharat al-A'raq* writes, "*Khulq* is one of the traits of human self which entices man to carry out his daily affairs without thinking. It is of two types:

Some part of it is natural and rests on the human nature. An example is when a man becomes furious over minor things or fears insignificant events or becomes happy or depressed.

The other part of it relies on our customs and practices. This part at first rested, no doubt, on thought but later, due to practice and repetition takes on a habitual status; then it works with no thought at all."[5](#)

Thus, our physical traits are not considered as our ethical traits unless they have become constant. For instance, a person does not acquire the trait of generosity by random acts of generosity; neither is he termed brave by just randomly engaging in brave actions.

Thus traits take on the status of *khulq* only when they manifest themselves as constant, occurring without thought or consideration.[6](#)

But this does not contradict the optional nature of these traits since man is capable of either carrying them out or avoiding them as a whole,[7](#) although it is hard to stop doing habitual things.[8](#)

Furthermore, as it is proven elsewhere, since from the beginning he could either form habits or abandon them, thus he has been free from the beginning to make the choices he likes.[9](#)

## [The Need For Ethics In Life](#)

In order for a man to enjoy all his instincts and wishes to a logical degree, to live at peace with others and to attain prosperity both here and in the hereafter, he has to observe ethical standards.

The advancements and degenerations of human societies do not depend solely on sciences and material progress. Rather, it is the observation of these ethical standards which bring about either prosperity or fall of such societies. The poet says:

Ethics keeps the human race alive; a tribe of humanity which lacks ethics is doomed to die.

At times, the lack of observation of one of the ethical standards might create a human disaster such as

the world wars<sup>10</sup> or affect the good desires of a good-doer. On the contrary, observing such standards saves a man who is going to fall, or covers his faults.

Thus, ethics is a requirement for both statesmen and the Messengers of Allah. That is why, the magnificent Qur'an, after eleven oaths, emphasizes that: he who attains salvation is one who purifies his soul of ethical corruptions and the wretched is one who corrupts his soul:

"قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا"

***"He will indeed be successful who purifies it (the soul) and he will indeed fail who corrupts it".*** <sup>11</sup>

The Prophet (S) was appreciated by God for holding the highest degree of ethical codes:

"وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ"

***"And most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality."*** <sup>12</sup>

And the secret for his appointment to the prophetic mission was his attainment of highest degree of sublime morality.

But unfortunately, the present world, especially the West, has turned into robots lacking souls and morality codes.

Alexis Carrel, the renowned French scholar, writes in this regard, "As soon as we renounced the precepts of the Gospel, we renounced all interior discipline. The new generation is not even aware that such a discipline ever existed. Temperance, honor, truthfulness, responsibility, purity, self-mastery, love of one's neighbor, heroism are outworn expressions; meaningless words which provoke nothing but a contemptuous smile from the young".

"For modern man, the only rule of conduct is his own good pleasure. Everyone is enclosed in his own egoism like the crab in its shell and, again like the crab, seeks to devour his neighbor.

"Elementary social relations have changed profoundly; everywhere, division reigns. Marriage has ceased to be a permanent bond between man and woman.

"Both the material and the psychological conditions of modern existence have created a propitious climate for the breaking up of family life. Children are now considered a nuisance, if not a calamity.

"This is the final result of having abandoned those rules which, in the past, Western man had the courage and wisdom to impose on his individual and social conduct"<sup>13</sup>

## Good Actions And Noble Moral Traits

In the ethical guide-lines of Islam, praiseworthy temperaments have two aspects: good actions and noble moral traits.

Among the good actions are the following:

The cleanliness of body and dress, good humor and smile, respect for others, politeness of speech, visiting the sick, avoidance of haughtiness, and suspicion.

But those human traits, such as magnanimity, justice, keeping promises, trustworthiness, and manhood, which are considered as true human traits, are among noble moral traits. The important point is that attaining good moral actions is more or less possible for nearly everybody: every body can do so by doing the right things such as treating people justly and politely and visiting the sick and avoiding haughtiness.

But the attainment of the noble moral traits and superb human traits is extremely difficult. Not everybody can attain them. Only those individuals can attain such a status, who possess high souls and are in control of their selves, and who are in the habit of respecting human principles and obeying God.

The great Messengers of God, by using the sublime Islamic education, have attempted to encourage people to engage in ethical affairs. The Great Messenger of Islam (S) has said

"افضلُ الناسِ ايماناً احسنُهُم خُلُقاً"

*"The most excellent of people in faith are those who are the best in moral traits."* [14](#)

On the other hand, the Great Messenger of Allah has mentioned that the reason of his prophetic mission was to perfect the ethical training.

Imam 'Ali has said:

"ذَلُّوا اخلاقكم بالمحاسنِ وقودوها الى المكارم"

*"Subdue your natures with beautiful actions and lead them toward noble moral traits"*. [15](#)

The narrator says: I asked Imam Sadiq (as) what the limit of good humor was. He answered:

"تَلَيِّنْ جَانِبَكَ وَتُطَيِّبْ كَلَامَكَ وَ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِبِشْرٍ حَسَنٍ"

*"You should be gentle, speak pleasantly and meet your brethren with a cheerful face"*. [16](#)

A man came to Imam Sadiq (as) and said: "O son of God's Messenger, let me know what the noble moral traits are". Imam as-Sadiq (as) replied to him,

"العَفُو عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ وَصِلَّةُ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ وَإِعْطَاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ وَقَوْلَ الْحَقِّ وَلَوْ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ"

*"Forgiving one who has wronged you, establishing ties with one who has severed relations with you, giving one who has deprived you, and speaking the truth even if it is against yourself."*<sup>17</sup>

In his *Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah*, in the supplication Makarim Al-Akhlaq, "The noble moral traits," Imam 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn (as) invokes God by saying:

"اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَسَدِّدْنِي لِأَنْ أُعَارِضَ مَنْ عَشَّنِي بِالنُّصْحِ وَأَجْزِي مَنْ هَجَرَنِي بِالِپِرِّ وَأُثِيبَ مَنْ حَرَمَنِي بِالْبَذْلِ وَأُكَافِيَ مَنْ قَطَعَنِي بِالصِّلَةِ وَأُخَالِفَ مَنْ إِغْتَابَنِي إِلَى حُسْنِ الذِّكْرِ وَأَنْ أَشْكُرَ الْحَسَنَةَ وَأُغْضِي عَنِ السَّيِّئَةِ"

*"O God, send your blessings to Muhammad and his offspring, and guide me so that I may counter with good advice whoever acts dishonestly towards me, so that I may make amends with whoever parts company with me, so that I may reward with generosity whoever deprives me, so that I may recompense with union whoever cuts himself off from me, so that I may oppose with excellent mention whoever slanders me, so that I may give thanks for good, and so that I may shut my eyes to evil."*<sup>18</sup>

The Great Messenger (S), who had been badly hurt by the Quraysh, forgave them when he conquered Mecca.

He allowed Abu Sufyan's house to be a shelter for people.

In the Siffin war, when Mu'awiya had so inhumanly denied Imam 'Ali's army the water of the Euphrates, someone asked Imam 'Ali to do the same to Mu'awiya's army. But he answered, "We will not retaliate for a wrong; we will not deny them the use of water."

When an impolite shopkeeper poured trash over the head of malik al-Ashtar, an important officer in Imam 'Ali's army, Malik went to the mosque and prayed for him and forgave him.

When Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as) was insulted by a relative, he went to his house telling him:

"إِن كُنْتُ قَدْ قُلْتُ مَا فِيَّ فَانَا اسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ مِنْهُ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُ مَا لَيْسَ فِيَّ فَغَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَكَ"

*"If what you say is true, I ask God to forgive me. But if what you say is not true, then I ask God to forgive you."*

The above-mentioned cases and similar events which are recorded from the Prophet and the Imams of Islam in their diaries are among the noble moral traits.

Thus, there are differences between good actions and noble moral traits.

Good actions are usually a means for material welfare, but noble moral traits are a way to the attainment of spiritual advancement. The former provides our lives with discipline; whereas the latter satisfies human sublime tendencies.

The former are in harmony with personal desires and legitimate self interest, but the latter deal with interest in others.

All Messengers and Imams of Islam completely enjoyed noble moral traits. But among their students there are few who are in possession of these assets. Anybody who possesses these assets should be thankful to God. Those who lack them should try to acquire them. In this regard Imam Sadiq (as) has said."

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ خَصَّ رَسُولَهُ بِمَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ فَأَمْتَحِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَتْ فِيكُمْ فَاحْمَدُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ وَإِنْ لَا تَكُنْ فَاسْتَلُوا اللَّهَ وَارْغَبُوا إِلَيْهِ فِيهَا"

*"God distinguished His Messengers with noble moral traits. Thus, examine yourselves, if you possess them, be thankful to God for these precious assets and know that it is from good; if you lack them, then ask God and supplicate Him for them."*[19](#)

A person who possesses noble moral traits has an exalted soul and therefore performs good deeds not out of his material interest but rather for God.

Imam 'Ali (as) says: *"I am amazed when a Muslim goes to another Muslim for some help, but he is turned down."*

"فَلَوْ كَانَ لَا يَرْجُو تَوَابًا وَلَا يَخْشَى عِقَابًا لَقَدْ كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يُسَارِعَ إِلَى مَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ فَانْهَاهَا مِمَّا تَدُلُّ عَلَى سَبِيلِ النِّجَاةِ"

*"Even if he did not expect reward and did not fear the punishment, it would have been proper for him to hasten towards noble moral traits for they are of those things that lead toward the path of salvation."*[20](#)

A man from desert came up to the Messenger of God asking him, "O Messenger of God, sometimes a man fights for booty, sometimes for fame and sometimes for the recognition of his bravery; which one of these ways is right?"

The Prophet (S) answered:

"مَنْ قَاتَلَ لِتَكُونَ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ"

*"The one who fights so that ‘.the word of God is the highest..’ (9:40) – he is on the path of God."*[21](#)

This type of prayers is called "the prayers of free men" by Imam 'Ali (as).

إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ التُّجَّارِ وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوهُ شُكْرًا  
" (حُبًّا) فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ

*"Some people worship God out of desire (for reward); that is the worship of traders. Some worship God out of fear (of punishment); that is the worship of slaves. But others worship God in gratitude (out of love for Him); that is the worship of free men".[22](#)*

In some Islamic traditions the cases of noble moral traits are enumerated. For instance, in Ibn Bekir's tradition from Imam as-Sadiq (as) it is said:

قُلْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ وَمَا هِيَ؟

قال: هُنَّ الْوَرَعُ وَالْقَنَاعَةُ وَالصَّبْرُ وَالشُّكْرُ وَالْحِلْمُ وَالْحَيَاءُ وَالسَّخَاءُ وَالشَّجَاعَةُ وَالْغَيْرَةُ وَالْبِرُّ وَصِدْقُ الْحَدِيثِ وَأَدَاءُ  
" الْأَمَانَةِ

*I asked Imam as-Sadiq (as) what the noble moral traits were. He answered, "They are self-control, contentment, patience, thanking God, forbearance, modesty, generosity, bravery, possessing a sense of honor for what is sacred, righteousness, truthfulness, fulfilling the trust."[23](#)*

## The Role Of Education

The term (*Ta'leem*), which is derived from 'ilm (knowledge) means to teach, and the term "*tarbiyah*" is derived from "*rabw*" meaning nurture.

Animals, when born, know their duties and plans of life through their instincts. They would need no instructors.

The young fish, after being hatched, know how to swim, breathe, feed, protect themselves against enemies, and how to reproduce. They do not need to be taught.

The Anopheles mosquito is vegetarian but because the new-born insects should feed on worms, the mother hunts a special worm, stings it so that it is paralysed. In this way, the mother provides its new-born with fresh meat. The mother does it through her instinct; not through training.

The bee sucks the sweet nectar, turns it into honey, makes symmetrical shelters and divides the affairs of the hive among individual bees all because of divine inspiration and natural instincts.

"وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ"

***"And your Lord revealed to the bee saying: Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in***

**what they build.”[24](#)**

This is the fact which is brought about by Prophet Moses (as) and his brother when they introduced their God to Pharaoh:

"قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَى قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى"

**“Pharaoh said: And who is your Lord, O Musa? He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal).[25](#)**

The Giver who provided the flower with nectar and the clay with soul;  
Gave each one what He deemed necessary.

But man, in carrying out his daily duties and arriving at perfection needs more than instincts and innate inspiration: besides being equipped with wisdom, he needs instructors.

He would perhaps walk like animals if he were not helped. He would most probably be dumb if words were not put in his mouth. Mawlawi says:

A deaf person cannot speak; the speaker is the one who has heard from the mother.

Thus, in order to recognize facts of the world and to appreciate the secrets of creation, man needs a teacher. Without an instructor, man is unable to grasp such secrets.

Man needs an instructor to nourish his physical and spiritual capabilities and to arrive at his ideals and to prune the wicked parts of his character, If God's Messengers had not risen to correct man, he would, no doubt, have had a much worse life than the Middle Ages. In this regard the Holy Qur'an says:

"لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ"

**“Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves, reciting to them His communications and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error.”[26](#)**

As you will observe the appointment of a Messenger among the corrupted people to guide them was one of God's blessings.

Still in another verse, God considers the Messengers' teachings as true life, those not receiving it are considered as dead:

"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ"

***“O you who believe! Answer the call of Allah and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life”.<sup>27</sup>***

## **Education Is the Bringing Up Of Capabilities**

Sometimes we make a thing out of something without any internal attraction inside that "something". For instance we make furniture out of a piece of wood by working on it. Thus, a character or feature is created.

But some other time, a thing has got internal impetus for change and becomes something else. In this case guidance is necessary and in many others lack of guidance may mislead the object. An example is the child who has the innate capacity for sucking its mother's breast and acquiring knowledge. However, if it is not directed to the right way, it may either die from hunger or stay ignorant or might suck some dangerous objects in place of its mother's breast or might learn some pernicious knowledge which might harm it. This change of the innate capacity into practical acts is called education.

Thus, education is not industry; rather the subject of education should be an organism which has innate capacity for development.

Since man has some innate capacities such as truth-finding, ethical conscience, love for beauty, love for freedom, self-interest, and love for life he needs an instructor who will bring out these capacities and lead them in the right direction.

Quanttime, the famous French psychologist believes that man's soul has four dimensions at the time of birth, i.e. man has the following four capacities at the time of his coming into this world:

### **1. The Scientific And Rational Capacity Or The Fact-Finding Capacity:**

The advancement of science, the discovery of the secrets of creation, the human perseverance in finding facts all stem from this dynamic capacity.

### **2. Ethical Conscience:**

Man is created in such a way that he enjoys doing good deeds, justice, showing piety, discipline, self-control, bravery, sacrifice, and truthfulness.

On the other hand he abhors injustice and lies, uncleanness and debauchery, untidiness and indecision, meanness and indifference, and the like.

### **3. Love For Beauty:**

Man cares for the beauties in nature such as the blue starry sky, magnificent flowers and sceneries, limpid water with fish swimming in it, beautiful birds, deer in the desert, pleasant songs, elegant

paintings, poems, and chirographies and gracious statures. This very capacity has made man create art and enrich life as a whole.

#### 4.The Capacity For Worshipping:

Man believes in God from the bottom of his heart. He has worshiped God throughout the history and has consecrated this worship. To keep this consecration and holiness, he has endured lots of hardships.[28](#)

With regard to the above issues a good instructor is the one who guides all man's innate capabilities in the right direction and does not let these abilities go astray.

For instance, man has sexual drive but he should guide it in the right way. Its suppression does not solve any problem. Man loves arts and beauty and must make use of them in the proper way. He should not deprive himself of these assets. Educating and nourishing man's skills is in harmony with the innate characteristic of religion. In this regard the Holy Qur'an says:

"فَاقِمِ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفاً فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ"

***“Then set your face upright for religion in the right state – the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion.”[29](#)***

#### Animals Have Limited Potential For Education:

Animals know their ways of life by instinct. These innate inspirations, which manifest themselves as instincts, drive them toward a limited state of perfection. However, some animals such as dogs, horses, elephants, monkeys, dolphins, foxes and bears possess a higher status of intelligence. They could be trained to protect the herds, the police, and to purchase commodities, and to perform circus performances. We have all seen such extraordinary performances in the films and elsewhere.

But, it is to be noted that the sphere of animal performances is highly restricted because their capabilities are narrower than those of man. For this reason, however hard we try to train them, they will never be able to solve mathematical problems, analyze the inside of the atom, make space-ships to be sent to the Mars or to the Jupiter, to discover medical remedies for hard-to-cure diseases, to cure TB and cancer sufferers and finally to carry on surgical operations on hearts, brains and kidneys.

This is only man who can, through right education, discover everywhere and solve problems and manifest his capabilities and make himself "God's vicegerent on the earth".

## Education Versus Training

As we saw before animals naturally recognize their good and evil, their food sources, and their ways of life. In this way, their capabilities manifest themselves. On the contrary, man knows neither his pains nor their remedies, neither his friends nor his foes, and possesses neither instruments nor his defense mechanisms. He has obtained all these through education and experience:

"وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئاً وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ"

***“And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers – you did not know anything – and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks.”<sup>30</sup>***

In order for man's skills and capabilities to flourish in diverse dimensions such as talking, having high morals, walking, living honestly, and loving justice, he needs instructors. Thus, education helps him improve his knowledge and culture; whereas training is employed to direct his innate capabilities and his spiritual dispositions. An educator teaches him the things he does not know, whereas a trainer guides his innate abilities in the right direction.

## Ethics Versus Education

In the past Education was a branch of ethics. It dealt with the educating children and bringing forth their skills. In books written on education the encouragement for learning science and the ways of learning useful sciences were emphasized.<sup>31</sup> But because of its significance in the lives of people, education raised itself from an inferior position to a completely independent branch of science, now there are numerous valuable books and resources written on it."

Since Imam ‘Ali (as) in his erudite letter has emphasized numerous issues in education and has provided us with great samples of the advantages and favors of ethics we have called his article "the first treatise of Ethics and Islamic Education".

## The Wrong-Doer Wisdom Needs An Infallible Instructor:

As we saw above, wisdom of man does the functions of instincts of animals. However these two are different in many respects:

a) An instinct, works without the consent of its holder. It does not go astray. Bees have always built their hives hexagonal and ants have always halved the wheat seeds in two halves in order to stop their growth in their under-ground shelters. But being equipped with free-will, man does not have to function in accordance with wisdom's guidelines. Animals have recognized their development through the guidelines of genesis and have to go forward without their approval.

"ما مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ"

***“There is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock; surely my Lord is on the right path.”***[32](#)

"إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا"

***“Surely we have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful.”***[33](#)

b) An instinct performs an action without any error, but the wisdom makes mistakes when arriving at conclusions from the premises. The environment, lack of sufficient knowledge, wrong education, out-of-place prejudice, lust and anger, and the like, all have their fatal consequences on our wisdom. In this way man is prone to commit mistakes. Thus, he will need an infallible instructor. It is for this reason that God has sent Messengers and Imams to guide people. Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (as) in his famous treatise tells Hisham.

"إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجَّتَيْنِ حُجَّةً ظَاهِرَةً وَحُجَّةً بَاطِنَةً فَمَا الظَّاهِرَةُ فَالرُّسُلُ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالْإِمَّةُ وَمَا الْبَاطِنَةُ فَالْعُقُولُ"

***“Allah has provided man with two proofs: the overt proof and the covert proof. The overt proofs are the Messengers and Imams and the covert proofs are the intellects.”***[34](#)

Messengers and Imams are superb human beings who directly receive religious facts from God who knows all facts in depth. They are infallible beings. Therefore, an education which is based on such a resource will completely rely on truthfulness.

But this does not imply that we will not believe in rational good and bad, and like al-Asha'irah only believe in religious good and bad. Definitely this is not the case. Our wisdom determines the goodness and badness of some acts independent of religion and other factors such as the observation that justice is considered as good and injustice is deemed unfair.[35](#) However if Messengers and Imams did not rise to lead and guide our rational judgments and did not try to evaluate our acts, man could not personally perceive the good and bad nature of such acts. This is because, on the one hand, his knowledge is limited, and on the other hand, factors such as environment, faulty education, unfounded prejudice and the like may influence his judgments.[36](#)

We will find this out in the discussion of the philosophy of ethics.

## **Education Or Training, Which One Should Precede?**

As we have already seen, man is born at birth with a tabula rasa i.e. a blank tablet or a mind not influenced by outside experiences. Our overt senses are canals through which we come in contact with nature and acquire our knowledge. Regarding this, Aristotle has said:

"مَنْ فَقَدَ حِسًّا فَقَدَ عِلْمًا"

*"He who is deprived of one of the faculties of sense will suffer the deprivation of the related knowledge."*

In this way, we notice that those born deaf are deprived of speech. This is because they have not received the speech signals from others to be able to use them. Concerning this Mawlawi has said, "One born deaf is definitely dumb.

A speaker is the one who heard the words from his mother."

Elsewhere Mawlawi says, "Man is made more capable through his ears". This is why those born blind can not perceive colors.

Thus, the first things which relate a man to his environment are his senses, or in the terminology employed in the Qur'an, they are the ears, eyes and hearts.<sup>37</sup> Then comes the growth of our capabilities and the purification of our self (soul).

But the thing to remember is that science is a means for the control of nature and for the unveiling of the secrets of the creation; whereas purification is a means for the control of our vicious, unyielding self (soul) and for shaping our personalities.

No doubt, if our souls are not controlled, then science will be used for the destruction of the world. It would be better to leave a drunkard with a sword than let an ill-intentioned person have science at his disposal. There is a maxim which says:

"إِذَا فَسَدَ الْعَالِمُ فَسَدَ الْعَالَمُ"

"When a scholar becomes corrupt, the whole world becomes corrupt."

As we saw in the three verses of the Holy Qur'an which dealt with purification and education, purification was stated prior to the term "education".

Only in one verse is the term "education" used prior to the word purification and that is because of the natural priority which the mechanism of education has for us.

## The Four Qur'anic Verses

كما أرسلنا فيكم رسولا منكم ينزلوا عليكم آياتنا ويذكركم ويُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ" (1)

"وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ"

***“Even as we have sent among you an Apostle from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know”.***[38](#)

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ (2)

"وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

***“Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves, reciting to them His communications and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the wisdom, although before that they were surely in manifest error.”***[39](#)

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ (3)

"الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

***“He it is who raised among the illiterate an Apostle from among themselves who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, a though they were before certainly in clear error”.***[40](#)

(4) One verse mentions Ibrahim's prayers in which he asks God:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

***“Our Lord! And raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise”.***[41](#)

As you notice, in the first three verses purifying precedes educating, but in the last verse the order has changed. As we see purifying precedes educating and this is shown in the first three verses. But naturally education precedes purification and this is shown in the last verse.[42](#)

But some have assumed that since the fourth verse is among Ibrahim's prayers and the Qur'an is just narrating it, therefore, it is man's talk and for this reason may not be a criterion. They continue to assume that because the other three verses are truly God's speech and since purification has preceded education, therefore, it is true. Thus, training and purification should precede education.

But this statement is improper in that a Messenger like Ibrahim would not perform a prayer without considering the right method used by other Messengers. He would not act immaturely. He is one of the prominent Messengers whose statements are verified by God. Leveling such accusations against them would be an insult to them. This is especially true when we observe that the narrated words are in the Qur'an. Therefore, what is said does not include any contradiction.

The arrangement of words therefore, is definitely based on some philosophical considerations. Thus, in answer to the question: which one should precede: training (purification) or education? We should answer "education" naturally precedes training, but education is higher than training in rank. That is why the above-mentioned verses have used one prior to the other.

## **The Bases And Philosophy Of Ethics.**

Why are some deeds such as sacrifice, forgiveness and chastity considered proper and others such as injustice, lying, megalomania, and treason condemned? What are the criteria behind these judgments? Scholars have differing concepts toward these issues. Each one has a specific view on these questions depending on their world-views. Some of these conceptualizations follow:

### **1-The School Of Personal Sensuality:**

Both in the past and at the present there have been philosophers who believe in nothing except pleasures of life. They say, "The future is uncertain; death might arrive at any moment and may destroy our life. Therefore, we should make best out of our time."

The forerunner of this school was Socrates' student named Aristocles.

According to this school, any action which satisfies man's temporary pleasures is considered an ethical action albeit in its satisfaction some other people get hurt.

But this approach to life degenerates man to the status of an animal and disregards the Hereafter. Too much involvement in the mundane enjoyments does away with security in life and the poor will suffer the most.

Since material pleasures can not satisfy man's spirit, and their satisfaction is neither possible nor beneficial, therefore to found ethical deeds over transitory desires is one step toward nihilism and avoidance of ethics.

### **2- Epicurism Or Personal Expedience**

Epicure, the Greek philosopher (270-341 BC), too, put personal interests as the foundation of ethics. He did not mean temporary or transitory pleasures, however. He is after a pleasure which either lacks later suffering or involves little amount of suffering. He believes man should shun a suffering which does not contain pleasure either now or later.

Epicure has divided pleasures into three groups:

- a) Natural and necessary pleasures, such as eating, drinking and sleep;
- b) Unnatural but unnecessary pleasures, such as sexual drive;
- c) Natural but unnecessary pleasures, such as desire for fame and money.

Epicure, then, goes on to say that the first type of pleasures should be fulfilled to a rational degree. The means to these ends should also be employed.

But, according to Epicure, the second type of pleasures should also be satisfied normally. Going to extremes in this regard will lead to troubles.

But, the third type of pleasures which are neither natural nor necessary should be avoided altogether. As you will see, the last hypothesis is more moderate, well-founded and wise than the previous one. However, it suffers from the following defects:

a) In this notion all aims are directed toward personal worldly interests. Whereas, according to the premises of the notion of the abstractness of self, the avoidance of the integument into material desires in this world may lend a better and flowery chance in the other world. This fact is not included in this notion, however.

b) This notion, like the previous one, reduces man's status to that of animal's in that it is concerned only with personal interests and not with collective interests and has shunned man's heavenly status altogether and has emphasized beastly stomach – filling, anger and lusts. Man, on the other hand, could, through training his skills, soar into the heavens and make the impossible seem attainable.

c) In this notion, the ethical goodness is defined only in the fulfillment of personal interests ignoring common interests as a whole.

The unnaturalness of this view is clear when we observe that others have a right to live like ourselves, too. How is it feasible to enjoy one's interests by destroying other people's rights?

d) A person's interests vary greatly according to one's status. They vary as well with individuals. Therefore, man's interests could not get regularized. On the contrary, ethical orders are highly systematic and well – organized, or else they would bring out chaos.[43](#)

### **3- The Powermonger School Of Nietzsche**

Aristocles and Epicure both believed an ethical act to be in the direction of the attaining of one's instincts and worldly desires. Nietzsche, the German philosopher (1844–1900 AD) had the same view believing that the lust for power is the law of life and should be followed by everybody, even if this might lead to tyranny or deceit. Any thing contrary to this view is doomed from the outset however pious and rightful it might be.

Nietzsche contends that the thought about God and life for human beings should be thrown away altogether, and forgiveness and the like all stem from weakness. He believed the nature is based on the

survival of the rich and on the annihilation of the poor. This is, in his view, a sample of ethical act.

This school suffers from a series of serious defects, among which are the following:

**a)** If the notion of God and the world Hereafter is put aside, then what does ethical act mean? Then who would guarantee the fulfillment of moral and individual obligations?

**b)** We should accept that the principle of power-loving, like other sensations such as care for humanity and generosity and sacrifice, also has its root in the human nature. Therefore, the same way that we make use of the instincts of self – interest, sexuality, possession and the like to an acceptable degree, we should use the instinct of power-loving wisely.

**c)** The acceptance of such a view is to consider one dimension of man and to ignore man's other heavenly dimensions. Such an acceptance entails man's fall into the world of beasts. In such a world there is no trace of man's finer feelings. They say even Nietzsche was not inconsiderate towards humanity to such a degree because he is said to have lost his life in order to save a horse's life.

Thus, critics believe Nietzsche has stated such extremist views out of his anger towards some people whom he hated. In a letter to his sister towards the end of his life, he writes, "The older I become, the harder life becomes to me. In the previous years when I suffered a lot I did not feel as depressed as I do now, What has happened? I have lost my confidence in people. But now we see that we have made a mistake. O my God! How lonely I feel now. There is nobody with whom I could laugh or by whose side I could drink a cup of tea. There is no body who can show me affection."<sup>44</sup>

#### **4- Affection Towards Others**

In contrast to the previous views and what we will see later, the affection view is based on the premise that an ethical act relies heavily on doing good to other people.

This view, which is known as the Indian-Eastern school, considers an act as ethical only when it is employed to do affection towards others. If, however, we perform our duties daily, such actions are not termed ethical. Thus, we will consider an act as ethical if it is rooted in feelings more sublime than individual feelings. The end of an ethical act is to make others benefit from it, and not just the individual.

This view, however, is significant and is contained in most religions. Two points should not be neglected, however.

**a)** Not every ethical act is in the interest of everybody. There exist many ethical principles which provide for the individual's exultation. They do not of necessity lead to the interests of others. Examples are patience, stamina, self-control and the acceptance of death instead of the acceptance of injustice.

**b)** There should be a limit to the advancement of affection towards others. Some are peace lovers and consider it an honor to direct their kindness to men such as Chengiz, Hajjaj, Yazid, Atilla, and Nero, whereas kindness to such people is like showing mercy towards a leopard. In Islam the criterion is: **الْحُبُّ**

في الله والبُغْضُ في الله"<sup>45</sup>

“Love for God’s sake and hate for God's sake”.

## 5- The Provision Of Prosperity From The View-Point Of Wisdom

Most philosophers, both ancient and contemporary, from Socrates and Aristotle to Spinoza believe some acts of human beings are at variance with man's prosperity; whereas some other acts are the signs of his magnanimity, prosperity, and his perfection in soul. For instance, man is intolerant with treason, injustice, humiliation, fear and ignorance. But he considers truth worthiness, sacrifice, chastity, bravery, perseverance, wisdom, justice and the like among the signs of his spiritual perfection.

The significant notion in this school is that the criterion for the ethical acts is our wisdom, which is an asset for man and distinguishes man from the beasts. Wisdom functions for man in the same way as instincts do for the beasts.<sup>46</sup> Those who believe that it is our wisdom which recognizes ethical acts are of the opinion that an ethical act should be defined in the following manner: An ethical act is a balance between excess and dissipation in our affairs, which both provide for man's prosperity and enjoy an eternal beauty. Examples are wisdom, which stands halfway between ignorance and fallacious reasoning, bravery, which stands between fear and imagination, chastity, which stands between voluptuousness and lack of interest, and family justice, which stands between performing oppression and accepting it.<sup>47</sup>

Although most philosophers and Islamic scholars like Avicenna, Khaje Nasir, al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, al-Naraqı and others have accepted this school when they defined the ethical acts, this school, however, suffers from the following defects:

- a) Not in every ethical act can we distinguish a medial point. If such a point existed, it would not mean that it could alone lead to prosperity and not the extreme point, such as science.
- b) As we have repeatedly observed the domain of wisdom is extremely limited. Wisdom lacks the power to distinguish all ethical acts. This is for two reasons: on the one hand, wisdom is limited by nature:

"قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا"

***“Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little”.***<sup>48</sup>

And on the other hand, wisdom might lose its impartiality due to wrong education, the explosion of instincts and unfounded prejudices and might not be trusted in finding out the medial point. Thus, wisdom needs the Shari’ah for its protection.

- c) Most of the perfection aspects which are the result of being obedient to God and His commands are accounted for in this calculation.<sup>49</sup>

## 6- Ethical Conscience:

Some scholars from the East or West, including Kant, contend that man is created in such a way as to come across with good ethical acts or bad ones through the guidance of his innate powers; and in practice he finds himself in a position as to either carry them out or stop doing them altogether. The criterion for judgments of this sort is referred to as "ethical conscience."

Kant, the German philosopher, who died in 1804, accounts for this in the following way: Speculative intelligence, i.e., the agent inside the mechanism is not of high value; but the practical intelligence, i.e., the agent for carrying out the practical affairs, which is also referred to as "ethical conscience" has a definite practicality and its commands are binding.

Kant believes that man, in accordance with ethical conscience, recognizes the nature of good and evil deeds and finds himself responsible to carry out the commands issued by it. An act is considered to be ethical when it has the following characteristics:

- a) It is voluntary. An act which is carried out compulsorily can not be ethical.
- b) The carrying out of the act should only be for the sake of duty and nothing else. For instance, a person's act is not considered ethical if he carries it out for a friend, for social acceptance, for material benefits, or for the world hereafter. He has to carry it out only for its own sake. An act may be good but unethical;
- c) It should be all-inclusive so that it may include the acts of all of those who want to carry out such acts;
- d) The ultimate goal for that act should be man himself, not other minor objectives;
- e) It should include man's prosperity although not for his delight.

Of course, this hypothesis has the following positive aspects:

- a) There exists in man an agent which, with the help of heavenly inspiration, can distinguish good deeds;

"فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورُهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا"

***"Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it".*** [50](#)

And when man opposes it, he is tortured by the scourge of rebuke, driving him crazy:

"لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللّوَامَةِ"

***"Nay! I swear by the day of resurrection, nay! I swear by the self-accusing soul".*** [51](#)

- b) Man knows, through his conscience, that he is not forced to do an act.

Mawlawi says:

When you say should I do this or that;

My friend, this shows you are free.

c) The best sort of prayers is to carry out a task as thanks to God.

d) Man's status and his magnanimity are higher than for him to fall prey to other desires. Every thing is created for his use. Nothing equals him.

"مَنْ كَرُمَتْ عَلَيْهِ نَفْسُهُ هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ الدُّنْيَا"

***"The world is of little importance to one who regards his soul to be noble."***[52](#)

e) All human beings are equal and are therefore, equal in front of human rights.

"أَحِبِّ لِغَيْرِكَ مَا تُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِكَ وَاكْرَهُ لَهُ مَا تَكْرَهُ لَهَا"

***"Love for others what you love for yourself, and dislike for others what you dislike for yourself."***[53](#)

Kant's hypothesis suffers from the following defects, however:

a) Our conscience is not strong enough for its recognition to be flawless.

As the speculative intelligence needs guidance and protection, practical intelligence too should be guided and protected. The latter, too, might be unable to distinguish facts, or due to practice and repetition of wrong deeds, might lose its sensitivity.

As we know, the nomadic Arabs used to bury their daughters alive and the people of Fiji Island had a ceremony of burying their parents alive and this gave them a lot of delight.[54](#) Sometimes the professional murderers enjoy carrying out murders; For instance, Nero made a song when he set Rome on fire and the murderers of Karbala, upon the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (as) and his followers, in the presence of 'Ubaydullah bin Ziyad, boasted with honor. They even shamelessly asked for prizes for their wicked deeds

b) It is true that in some cases, the conscience orders us to do good and commands us to stop doing evil, but its commands are not always absolute, nor are they universal. Rather, conscience orders differ in accordance with the degree of the perfection status of people. Some do good things in order to do their duties. Some others do this to enjoy benefits and to avoid losses.

An example will make the point clear: suppose a ill-intentioned person, having a knife in his hand, asks a person for another person's location. If the former tells the truth, then the latter's life will be in definite danger, Is the command of conscience absolute here as Kant puts it, or is it better to tell an expedient lie?[55](#)

c) If the carrying out of one's duties equals man's perfection in spirit, then this will lead to his prosperity as well. Separating these two is not right unless we translate prosperity as sensual pleasure.[56](#)

d) Kant considers goodness subordinate to duty.

But the reverse is true when we see that Allah orders the doing of justice and the doing of good and forbids evil:

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ"

***Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion.***[57](#)

In other cases Allah commands people to do good things:

"وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ"

***“We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of the alms.”***[58](#)

As Allama Tabataba'i in his Tafsir al-Mizan and Allama Mutahhari have said the prior to duty justice, sacrifice and evil and the nasty nature of being evil and the good aspect of doing good have been revealed by God.[59](#)

For further defects of Kant's view we refer you to other works in the literature.

## **7- Keeping One's interests with regards to keeping others' interests**

Most materialists such as Russell are of the view that man has cunningly discovered that if he behaves kindly towards others, he will be treated in the same way by others. If he steals the neighbor's cow, for instance, his cows might get stolen later; and if he tells lies, he will hear lies ten times over. Thus, in order to protect himself, man decided to do good to others and to avoid doing harmful deeds. That is why man learned to obey rules.[60](#) Thus, the criterion for ethical acts, according to this view, is the keeping of one's interests besides the keeping of others' interests. In other words, it means to bring man's selfish desires under the control of education.[61](#)

This notion, however, entails many defects among which are the following:

a) It takes away the ethics from its innate sacredness and surrounds it with individual's interests. But as we have seen before, the spiritual characteristics are beyond this kind of considerations.

b) According to this view, if a person had such a power as to be safe from the ethical harm of wrong-doers, there would not exist any agent to control his bad-temper and his far-reaching wisdom

would not create any impediment to his bad-temper. Only when the two sides have equal power can the wisdom entice them to do good. Regarding this, Mutahhari writes, "If Nixon is sitting in front of Brezhenev, both of whom have equal powers, they could be considered ethical individuals.

One thinks why he should throw bomb on the other when the latter has got the same power. But if Nixon is confronted with Viet Kongs, who are weak and vulnerable, there will be no force to stop him from attacking them.[62](#)

c) In the present hypothesis, the eternal nature of self (soul) and the life hereafter is not included.

d) What is the criterion for the ethical act which satisfies the interests of both individual and the community? Neither is wisdom to recognize the ethical act, nor conscience can do this job.

In this view, then, the ethical act does not have any reliable criterion.

## **8- The philosophy of Ethics in the viewpoint of Freud:**

Contrary to the belief of the Islamic and non-Islamic scholars who contend that man is born with innate capacity to evaluate good from bad and in this process the innate inspiration helps him out of hardships, Freud rejects these innate capacities believing that social environment alone is responsible for the establishments of these sensations, perceptions and human character. He writes, "The child imitates the parents' ethical criteria, such as the dichotomy of bad/ good and piety/ wrong-doing.

The superego[63](#) is the result of this absorption.

It represents values, tribal beliefs and social ideals which the child has received from its parents. Other social factors which influence the superego include teachers, priests, police or whoever stands above the child in the society. These factors, however, influence the child much less than the parents.[64](#)

In many people, ethics might manifest itself in the form of the superego. That is to say, it might severely control the individual. But this is not the result of innate-ethical conscience.

Rather, it is the result of educational-ethical conscience, which reflects the prohibitive reactions of our great-grand fathers. This superego is greatly under the influence of one factor, which is the child's need for parental love. The child assumes that if it disobeys the parents, it will be deprived of this badly-needed affection."[65](#)

In this regard, Freud firmly states: "The ethical conscience is nothing else than a social spur. Ethical conscience does not represent an innate act of man's inner - being; rather, it is a simple introspection of social prohibition."[66](#)

In Freud's view, neither in man's history nor in the individual's history has there been the primitive concept of good or bad. These concepts stem solely from outside of man, i.e., in his social context."

The important criticism, which can be leveled at Freud's ideas, is that the good actions and noble moral

traits are not based on a reliable and sacred principle. How is a child expected to do right when it is offered unfounded and improper education?

If the good and bad acts did not stem from man's spirit, how could we persuade people in the right direction and inhibit them from doing wrong?

Freud believes that this is done by man's wisdom. Since the Divine Shari'ah, in Freud's ideas, does not protect man's wisdom and since education is different in individuals and since "the superego" results from this differing education, how can man attain the supreme moral conducts and shun nasty behaviors?

## 9- The communist View on the Philosophy of Ethics.

In the eyes of communists, ethics as well as sciences, philosophy, arts and law and other influential social factors depend heavily on economics and production means.

The slavery, feudalism and capitalism each had its specific characteristics which were doomed to failure in subsequent periods. At the rule of communists, there is a special ethics dominating the society. For instance, extortion, hegemony, theft, confiscation and hurting people all belong to the era of agriculture, feudalism and capitalism. All these are done away with at the time of proletariat and communism, Then it is claimed that these are substituted for by justice, equality and freedom.

However, in the communist system, an act is considered ethical if it can boost the development of the society and can advance the society from the agricultural, feudalistic and capitalistic stage towards the communist state.

Thus, if providing the hungry people with food and supplying the naked men with clothing and the curing of the sick all cause the communist revolution to halt, then these acts are unethical. On the other hand, if not stopping tyranny and not bridging the gaps between people make the revolution successful, then these acts are considered ethical and appropriate!

The communists believe that

"الغايات تُبرر المباديء"

"The objective justifies the means"

Since communism relies on principles such as the following:

- a) The principles of dialectic materialism.
- b) Historical materialism.
- c) Historical determinism.
- d) Economics as the underlying structure.

- e) The notion that all revolutions are heading toward socialism.
- f) The idea that the society is the base and everything should be sacrificed.
- g) The notion that everything is dependant upon the production means even beliefs and moral affairs.

And since each one of the above principles has been found wrong, there is no room left for an act to be ethical, especially if it is of compulsory nature.<sup>67</sup> The disintegration of the communistic society and the misery that such a system has forced on millions of people are clear clues to the unfounded nature of the communist system.

Thus, the claim that the criterion for an ethical act should be its impetus to make the process of communism smooth and easy is completely unfounded and ridiculous. This is clearly shown by the disintegration of the communist states of our time.<sup>68</sup>

### 10.1- The Relativity of Ethics in Hegel's view

Hegel, like communists, is of the opinion that society is always in progress and evolving. He assigns some features to each epoch and believes these features are revealed through the spirit of time.

However, some features and temperaments, such as chastity and restricted relations of men and women could be considered good at a specific era of time, such as at the agricultural age, but may be considered improper at another age, such as the age of automation.

Of course, this notion suffers from other drawbacks as well:

- a) Is every society heading towards perfection? Societies, like vegetation, sometimes progress and at times deteriorate.
- b) What is meant by "the spirit of time"? Who has discovered it? How do we know that these changing features are caused by the spirit of time?
- c) Who has said that chastity was good at one time but bad now?
- d) Who can consider some human traits such as justice, sacrifice and generosity good at one time but bad at other time?<sup>69</sup>

Thus, how is it feasible that, on the basis of an imaginary item called "the spirit of time", we should consider ethics a relative thing when we are aware that it has a deep root in man's innate – being?

### 10.2- Sartre's View

Sartre, who evaluates everything on the basis of personal option, says: there is no criterion for the ethical nature of an act outside man's existence. He, as well, believes in the relativity of ethics. He states: anybody who chooses an act assumes that his choice is good. And if another person chooses another act as good, then he has the right choice, Thus, an ethical act differs in the opinion of different people. Therefore, in this view, the criterion for an ethical act is the one who chooses and nothing else.

This view is wrong, however, since the one who chooses has selected an act because he has preferred it over other acts. But do other people also believe that his choice was the best? A murderer, a thief and a tormenter have, in fact, some rationale for their actions. But having these preferences will not justify their wrong-doings.[70](#)

## **A Summary of the 10 views: A conclusion:**

Each one of the views on the philosophy of ethics mentioned above, dealt with some facts, but ignored others. A survey of these views shows that if ethics were not based on the guidance of Prophets and Imams, it would definitely lead to people's misery instead of their prosperity. How could schools whose criteria for ethical acts are "instant pleasure", "personal interests", "the spirit of time", "personal selection" and "economics and social evolution" lead man towards prosperity, sacrifice, honesty, philosophy and chastity?

Nowadays we witness an increase in wrong-doings, homicides, suicides and corruption in the world, especially in the west; sexual assault to children by close relatives is increasing and 95 percent of people are suffering from tensions.

The statesmen in these communities complain about the situation. Man has been placed in this plight because of the lack of right criteria of ethics.

Some time ago Reagan, the previous president of the United States, in a conference, talked about the horrible increase in murders in the United States: he said the number of victims of murder is beyond 23,000 a year.

Reagan added crimes hurt one third of the families in the United States and the loss in money is about eight billion and eight million dollars.

Reagan confessed that in the United States one person is killed every 30 minutes and nine women are sexually assaulted.

In the same amount of time 67 persons fall prey to theft, 97 persons are subject to assault and 389 houses are prone to the armed robbery.

He said: syndicated crimes done by corrupt statesmen are scandalous for the United States.[71](#)

More recently, the newspaper France ce soir in Paris has reported the number of crimes in France during the year 1989 as four million, 297 thousand and 123, which shows an increase of 7 percent over the previous year (1988).

The same newspaper reports the number of crimes during the first quarter of 1989 has been more than 580,000.

Now more than one billion of the world populations suffer from poverty and malnutrition and shortage of medicines. There are, however, billions of dollars spent for military purposes.

These are just small samples of disorders which are inflicted upon those layers of the world population

who are exposed to corrupt schools of thought either in ethics, or in education, or in politics, or in economics or in other social affairs. For a complete picture of the disasters we should refer to relevant books and sources.[72](#)

## The Bases and Principles of Ethics and Education In Islam

Against the different schools which have dealt with the philosophy of ethics and education, Islam, too, has offered specific principles and bases. To study these principles one is referred to the Qur'an, tradition, and books on ethics and Hadith. However, a summary of these principles will suffice here:

Man possesses a specific ability for material and spiritual growth. The flourishing of this growth in all phases is possible only in the worshipping God and asking for His help.

However, the Islamic ethics and education are based on monotheism, resurrection, the existence of spirit and its ever-lasting status after death and a preference for spiritual pleasures over material ones. The Islamic ethics and education will emphasize on any action which will help man attain his exultance (which is to have sacred beliefs and proper behavior) and manifest all his spiritual and material abilities and all his personal and social capabilities. In contrast, any act which hinders his growth is prohibited by the Islamic ethical education.

One of the characteristics of the Islamic ethics and education is that they have root in human innate nature. Islam invites people to monotheism, to resurrection, to justice, to piety and to worship. This is because all of these traits stem from his nature. And Ibn al-Athir in al-Nihayah defines "*fitrah*" or nature as:

إِنَّهُ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى نَوْعٍ مِنَ الْجِبِلَّةِ وَالطَّبَعِ الْمُتَهَيِّئِ لِقَبُولِ الدِّينِ فَلَوْ تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا لَاسْتَمَرَ عَلَى لُزُومِهَا وَلَمْ يُفَارِقْهَا إِلَى غَيْرِهَا  
"وَأِنَّمَا يَعْدِلُ عَنْهُ مَنْ يَعْدِلُ لَأَقْفَةٍ مِنْ آفَاتِ الْبَشَرِ وَالتَّقْلِيدِ"

"Man is created according to a natural disposition and nature that is inclined to accept religion. If he is left on it, he will continue in accordance with its requirements, and will not separate from it to other than it. One who turns away from it only does so because of an evil in mankind and blind imitation."[73](#)

The famous hadith which Ibn al-Athir delves on is the following:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ حَتَّى يَكُونَ أَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ"[74](#)

*"Every child is born according to the original nature until his parents make him a Jew or a Christian."*

The following sacred verse, too, emphasizes the same thing:

"فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَائِمُ"

***"Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion."*** [74](#)

One of the characteristics of Islamic ethics and education is that they are based on science, wisdom and logic and not on ignorance, superstition and following by imitation.

The objective of the Islamic ethics and education is to purify man's soul and spirit so that he can make use of all the means that he has at his disposal and in this way could reach the title "God's vicegerent on the earth" and "To meet God".

And since the justification of these principles, traits and aims is only possible in the light of Qur'an, Tradition and all-pervasive researches in the life-giving school of Islam, therefore the details can only be reached by referring to the above-mentioned sources. [75](#) I have selected the treatise of Imam 'Ali (as) which is written for his son as a good example.

## **A historic and life-giving letter from a unique father for his progressing son:**

Although many individuals have written historic letters to their children at specific times and for the education of their beloved ones, [76](#) so far as I can tell no letter ever has been so inclusive and so erudite as that written by Imam 'Ali (as) to his son Hasan (as) at a location called Hazirin and after giving up Siffin. [77](#) In this journey Hasan (as) was with Imam 'Ali(as).

This historic letter, which is reported by both Shi'ah and Sunni scholars, among whom is Sharif al-Radi who has reported it in letter 31 of Nahj al-Balaghah with a little change in details, is accepted with such a level of admiration that the famous Sunni scholar Abu Ahmad Hasan Ibn Abdullah Ibn Askari, Shaykh Saduq's teacher, has reported it in its entirety in his book called Al Zawajir wa al-Mawa'iz and says about it, "If you can find a piece of practical philosophy which should be written in gold, it is this erudite treatise written by Imam 'Ali(as) in which all chapters of this science and the ways to attain this science, and the ways to arrive at the benefits of ethics and the methods to attain prosperity and the ways to escape pitfalls and how to arrive at the highest degree of exultance are expressed by employing the best kinds of phrases and words." [78](#)

The interesting point is that Allama Sayyid Hasan al-Sadr in his erudite book called Ta'sis al-Shi'ah writes, "The first person who has written on Islamic ethics and education is Imam 'Ali (as), who wrote this treatise on the return from Siffin. He wrote it for his son Imam Hasan (as). Our scholars have narrated it through different media. Among these scholars are Kulayni, who has reported it in his book called Al-Rasa'il and Sharif al-Radi, who has reported it in his book Nahj al-Balaghah" [79](#)

For this reason we have called the present book "The first treatise on Islamic Ethics and Education" and have selected it as the best Islamic principle on education and the best source for Islamic ethics. As it is understood from the text and will be clear in the subsequent chapters, Imam 'Ali (as) does not only have his son in view, but he considers the parents' duties as a whole and a man's duties at different walks of life.[80](#)

Therefore, this treatise could be the best guide for ethical issues and a good guideline for life. For this reason, I have chosen it as the axis of my discussions. I will report the Islamic ethics and education as Imam 'Ali (as) has in mind.

## **The principles and issues of this treatise:**

Since this treatise includes the factors of man's progress and development, either from the moral aspect or from the viewpoints of politico-social phase, it cannot be studied only from one angle. The principles included in this treatise are:

- 1) Only man has the ability to acquire complete education; beasts have this ability to a limited degree.
- 2) The best time for education is the childhood.
- 3) The father's responsibility in educating the children is more than anybody else.
- 4) There are clear reasons which prove monotheism and God's power.
- 5) Life does not depend on this world alone; the hereafter exists and we should prepare provisions for that day.
- 6) Islam is based on the interests and losses of the society and is the most inclusive religion.
- 7) The best capital is piety and carrying on the ways of the pious ancestors, i.e., the Prophets and Imams.
- 8) The best shelter in the ups and downs of life is Allah.
- 9) Saying prayers and being penitent are significant.
- 10) Man is created free; he is not allowed to make a slave out of himself; he should keep his magnanimity at all times.
- 11) Not every wish can be granted; thus, we should engage ourselves with the noblest ones.
- 12) One of the factors which build up a man's personality is the study of good and bad fates of nations of the past.
- 13) A man should make his soul (self) a criterion between he himself and others; what he considers improper he should not consider proper for others.
- 14) The relation of man with his family, government, and his responsibilities and tasks bestowed upon him.
- 15) The ways of self-construction.
- 16) The principles of friendship and its limits.
- 17) In order to guide the society and to stop deviations, a man should make use of giving advice.
- 18) Women's rights and status, without going to extremes.

- 19) Accepting responsibilities and observing the principle of management.
- 20) This world is the home of pain and torment.
- 21) Thinking in religion and making use of useful knowledge.
- 22) Experiencing and making use of the good experiences.
- 23) Being kind to friends and tolerating foes.
- 24) More than one hundred other useful pieces of advice.

## Documents for this treatise

Many Islamic scholars, prior to Seyyid ar-Radi, have reported this treatise in their books.

Among these books are the following:

1. Muhammad Ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni in his book al-Rasa'il (died 328 AH).
2. Hasan Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sa'eed al-Askari, the teacher of Shaykh as-Saduq, in the book Al-Zawajir wa'l-Mawa'iz (died in 3rd century AH).
3. Ibn Abd Rabbih in the book al-'Iqd al-Farid, vol. 3, pp. 155-156 (d.328 AH).
4. Shaykh al-Saduq in the book called Man la yahdaruhu'l faqih, vol. 3, p.362, vol. 4, p.275 (d. 380 AH).
5. Ibn Shu'bah al-Harrani in the book called Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pp.52-96 (d. 380 AH).
6. Allama al-Barqi in the book al-Mahasin (d. 274 AH).
7. Ibn Maskawayh in the book Al-Hikmah al-Khalidah (d. 421 AH).
8. Shaykh al-Mufid in the book al-Amali and al-Irshad (d. 413 AH).

After Sayyid al-Radi, many scholars have reported either the treatise in its entirety or parts of it in their books.

Among these scholars are:

1. Sayyid Ibn Tawus, in the book Kashf al-Mahajjah (d. 664 AH).
2. Mada'ini in the book Majma' al-Amthal, Vol.1 (d. 518 AH).
3. Mohammad Ibn Yusuf az-Zarandi in the book Durar al-Simtayn (d.750 AH).
4. Qazi Qaza'i in the book Dastur Ma'alim al-Hikam (d.454 AH).
5. Mulla Muhsin Fayz in the book Wafi, vol..1 (d.1091 AH).
6. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in Kanz al-Ummal, vol. 8.
7. Shaykh Hurr al-Amili in al-Wasa'il, vol. 8, (d.1104 AH).
8. Sheikh Warram in Tanbih al-Khawatir (d.605 AH).
9. Al-Karajiki in Kanz al-Fawa'id (d.449 AH).
10. Al-Aamidi in Ghurar al-Hikam (d.588 AH).
11. Al-Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar vol.74 pp.1- [4.81](#)

## Translations and commentaries Used in this Book

As we know, scholars have reported a lot of translations and commentaries for Nahj al-Balaghah.

The number varies from 100 to 200 books which refer specifically to this letter. [82](#)

I have made the best use out of the following translations and commentaries:

1. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Ibn Maytham;
2. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Ibn Abi al-Hadid;
3. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Muhammad Abduh;
4. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by al-Rawandi.
5. Masadir Nahj al-Balaghah by Sayyid Abd al-Zahra Husayni.
6. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Mirza Muhammad Baqir Nawab Lahiji.
7. Nahj al-Balaghah by Dr. Subhi al-Salih.
8. The Translation and Commentary of Nahj al-Balaghah by Muhammad Ja'far Imami and Mohammad Rida Ashtyani, supervised by Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi.
9. The Translation and Commentary of Nahj al-Balaghah by Sayyid 'Ali Naqi, Fayz al-Islam.
10. The translation of Nahj al-Balaghah by Dr. Sayyid Ja'far Shahidi.
11. A Complementizer of Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Allama al-Khu'i, written by Allama Kama'ee.

## **How the Present Book was Published:**

As we know, the Islamic Revolution of Iran was based on the intelligence of our nation. Through the guidelines of Imam Khomeini, and the sessions on the exposition of Qur'an and Nahj al-Balaghah, and religious sermons, our nation had reached such a stage of knowledge that they cannot accept any type of government except the Islamic state based on Wilayat al-Faqeeh. In order to implement this government, our nation suffered a lot.

But after the revolution, our scholars became involved in the administrative activities and our revolutionary children were engaged in the struggle against our internal and external enemies and could not carry on their main tasks, which were cultural activities.

However, our enemies spread corruption and this led to the worries of our leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. He continuously warned people against these dormant dangers.

This writer, who has been busy carrying out cultural activities, such as the expository classes for Qur'an and Nahj al-Balaghah, once again felt that it was better for him to go back to the publication of religious books. I decided to lessen the amount of administrative activities. Thus, when the second Majlis term was ended, I did not want to be a representative for Majlis any more. I decided to let that place be occupied by those who want it – and they are many – and spend my time on cultural affairs in which there are not many experts.

On the one hand, I started writing book such as 'Ilm-e Hadith, which was published in 3 and a half years, and on the other hand I got involved in teaching position in the university. One of these latter activities was the teaching of Nahj al-Balaghah which is still going on. Up to now more than 170 lessons of it have been broadcast from Gilan province Radio (on Thursday nights) and has got many listeners, One of these listeners was a pilot who was a prisoner in an Iraqi prison, when he came back to Iran

together with a huge group of freed soldiers, he said, "there were 80 of us in a prisoner-of-war camp. We used to listen to your lessons on Nahj al-Balaghah. We enjoyed listening to those lessons. By reproducing them, we enriched the camp greatly."

Among those lessons, was the present historic letter by Imam 'Ali (as) to his son Imam Hasan (as), one portion of which was published in the magazine "The growth of the teaching of Islamic knowledge" and other publications. Then it was edited and became the present book.

I hope it will be satisfactory to Amir al-Mu'minin Imam 'Ali (as) and through his blessings it will be an asset for me in the Hereafter, Amen.

Farwardin 1371, Lahijan – Zeinolabedin Ghorbani

1. On the letters and treatises of the great Imams, peace be upon them, see the book Mada'in al-Hikmah fi Makatib al-A'immah, peace be upon them, by Muhammad Ibn al-Muhsin al-Kashani, son of Fayz al-Kashani, published by Vaziei publications in 2 volumes.
2. . In our future discussions we will see that the basics for ethics are different in the views of the western scholars. What we say here are the beliefs of the Islamic scholars.
3. Raghīb's al-Mufradat, under the term khulq p. 158.
4. .Ghurar wa Durar, vol. 7, p.95, vol.3, p,382.
5. .Taharat al-A'raq is juxtaposed to Mulla Sadra's Mabda' wa Ma'ad. p.385.
6. .But as we will later see some consider one's deeds and daings as ethics taking no account of the constant khulq. They think these constant traits are not among good deeds since they are done by habit.
7. . It is true that those temperaments which have taken habitual form usually act without thinking, But it is not the case that they cannot exercise their choice. A man can stop performing such deeds when he decides to. Thus Amir al-Mu'minin (as) has emphasized on the one hand the abandonment of bad habits saying, "Control yourself by abandoning habits; struggle with your desires", and has considered this abandonment as a sort of prayer, on the other hand.
8. . The eleventh Imam, al-Askari (as) has said, "Training an ignorant person and making a person habituated to an act abandon his habit, is like a miracle." (Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p 489).
9. . Refer to Determinism and Free will written by the present author, and Haj Mulla Hadi Sabzvari's Manzumah, p. 174.
10. . Napoleon entered the conference at Paris earlier than the others to be saluted by them. The king of Russia did not salute him. This action led to the destruction of Russia. The French army died of cold there, too. Later Napoleon was banished to the Island of Saint Helena. He had to stay there for six years, dying there because of stomach ulcer and for his longing for his family (Qible Islam).
11. . Qur'an 91:9.
12. . Qur'an 68:4.
13. . Reflections on life, pp. 6-7.
14. . Bihar. vol.71, p.383.
15. . Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p.224.
16. . Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p.253.
17. . Bihar, vol. 64, p.368.
18. .Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah, supplication no.20, Makarim al-Akhlaq., trans. W. Chittick.
19. . Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 56.
20. . Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, vol. 4, p. 121.
21. . Dastur al-Akhlaq fi al-Qur'an, p.566, taken from the erudite book called "Philosophical discourse- ethics from the viewpoints of co-existence and human values" this issue is important and we have made best of it.
22. . Bihar, vol. 78, p 69.
23. .Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p.56.
24. . Qur'an 16: 68.

- [25.](#) . Qur'an 20:49–50.
- [26.](#) . Qur'an, 3: 164.
- [27.](#) . Qur'an 8:24.
- [28.](#) . In this regard, refer to the following sources: The religious sense or the fourth dimension of the human soul; Farhangname, vol.8, p.738; Ayatollah Mutahhari's "Book on Education and Innateness."
- [29.](#) . Qur'an, 30:30.
- [30.](#) . Qur'an 16:78.
- [31.](#) . The principles and methods of Education in Islam, p.30.
- [32.](#) .Qur'an 11:56.
- [33.](#) . Qur'an 76:3.
- [34.](#) . Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p.386.
- [35.](#) . Regarding the rational or religious nature of some acts, refer to The basis of faith by Mulla Abd al-Razzaq Lahiji, pp.59–62 and the book Husn wa Qubh 'Aqli (Rational soundness and unsoundness), lectures given by Ja'far Subhani.
- [36.](#) . Regarding this refer to Islam and human Rights, pp. 13–35.
- [37.](#) .Qur'an 16:78, And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers – you did not know anything – and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks.
- [38.](#) . Qur'an 2: 151.
- [39.](#) .Qur'an 3: 164.
- [40.](#) . Qur'an 62:2.
- [41.](#) . Qur'an 2: 128.
- [42.](#) . Tafsir Namunah, vol. 1, p.334.
- [43.](#) The Bases of philosophy (Mabani-e Falsafe) p 374.  
The philosophy of ethics, pp 62–68.  
Husn wa Qubh 'Aqli (Rational soundness and unsoundness) p 125.
- [44.](#) Sayr-e-Hikmah dar Urubba, vol. 3, p. 131.
- [45.](#) . Philosophy of Ethics, pp.40–46. Lessons of the Philosophy of Ethics, pp.70–73; The Bases of philosophy, pp.380–382.
- [46.](#) . The Bases of philosophy, p.385.
- [47.](#) . Refer to al-Naraq'i's Jami' al-Sa'adat, vol. 1, p.66; Akhlaq Naseri chapters 3–8; Sayr Hikmah dar Urubba, vol. 1.
- [48.](#) . Qur'an 17:85.
- [49.](#) .Lectures in Ethical philosophy, p. 116.
- [50.](#) . Qur'an, 91:8.
- [51.](#) . Qur'an, 75:2.
- [52.](#) . Tuhaf al-'Uqul, p.278.
- [53.](#) . Nahj al-Balaghah, letter 31.
- [54.](#) . Refer to the book called Islam and Human Rights written by me, p.20.
- [55.](#) . Ustad Mutahhari, The philosophy of ethics, p.82. Lectures on the philosophy of ethics, p.92.
- [56.](#) . The philosophy of Ethics, pp.45–52. Education in Islam, pp.3–72.
- [57.](#) . Qur'an, 16:90.
- [58.](#) .Qur'an, 21:73.
- [59.](#) . Tafsir Al-Mizan, vol.4, p.305; The philosophy of Ethics, p.55.
- [60.](#) . Education in Islam, p.74.
- [61.](#) . The Bases of philosophy, p.377, Lectures of the philosophy of Ethics, pp.8–70.
- [62.](#) . Education in Islam, p.76.
- [63.](#) . Freud assigns three characteristics to man: "Id" which is related to organic pleasures; "Ego" which controls "Id"; and the "superego", which is a person's ethical chastity.
- [64.](#) . Freud's psychology, p.46.
- [65.](#) . Freud's psychology, p.46.
- [66.](#) . Freud's Ideas.

- [67.](#) . In this regard refer to the Philosophy of Ethics; Lectures on the philosophy of Ethics; The pseudo-philosophers; The Marxist dialectic methods; Lessons on Marxism; The government of justice after communism; Communism and Democracy; An Evaluation of marxism; Going Astray; An Analysis on marx; society and History from the viewpoint of Qur'an; A critic on Marxism; History and society; The Gorbachev USSR.
- [68.](#) . Return to p. 16
- [69.](#) . Education in Islam, pp.96-97.
- [70.](#) . Regarding this refer to Ustadh Mutahhari's Existentialism and the philosophy of Ethics, pp.99-100.
- [71.](#) . Jomhuri Islami, Newspaper 8/7/1360.
- [72.](#) . See The biggest disease of the twentieth century; Social calamities of our time; The time of Automation; The phase of western civilization.
- [73.](#) . Al-Nihayah, vol.3, p.475.
- [74.](#) . Qur'an 30:30.
- [75.](#) . Refer to the following: Al-Mahajjah al-Bayda, Ihya' al-'ulum, Jami' al-Sa'adat, Bihar, Wasa'il, Wafi, The Educational principles in Islam, The principles and philosophy of education, Islamic Education, Ethics from the view of human values and co-existence, A second glimpse at the Islamic Education.
- [76.](#) . Among them is Sayyid Ibn Tawus' Kashf al-Mahajjah li Thamarat il-Muhjah. He wrote it to his son. Also Allama Hilli wrote a will to his son Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin; this will is at the end of volume 4 of Idah al-Fawa'id. Also there are other examples in the tenth chapter of Sayyid Ibn Tawus's book. In our time, one such example is Imam Khomeini's political and religious will written to his beloved son.
- [77.](#) . Siffin is located to the west of Euphrates. In Safar 37 AH there was a battle here between Imam 'Ali's army and the army of Mu'awiya. Seventy thousand men were killed from both sides. Among them were Ammar b. Yasir and Uways (Mu'jam al-Buldan, vol. 4, p.414).
- [78.](#) . Kashf al-Mahajjah li Thamarat al-Muhjah, p. 157; Ta'sis al-Shi'ah, p.404.
- [79.](#) . Loc Cit.
- [80.](#) . Some think he has written it for his son Ibn Hanifiyah, but most scholars do not accept this.
- [81.](#) . On the documents of this treatise refer to Masadir Nahj al-Balaghah by Sayyid Abduzzahra, vol. 3, pp.307-312; Research methods in the documents of Nahj al-Balaghah by Muhammad Dashti, vol. 4, pp.218-320.
- [82.](#) . Refer to Al-Ghadir, vol. 4; Alzory'a vol. 14, Masadir Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 1; Recognition of Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2.

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