

## Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَنَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ وَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

**All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may the blessings of Allah be upon our Master and Prophet, Muhammad, and his pure progeny, and may the curse of Allah be upon all their enemies.**

Today, it is imperative to explain the teachings of Islam in the areas of “beliefs” (*‘aqa’id*), “laws” (*ahkam*) and “morality” (*akhlaq*) in simple language based on Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions to meet the needs of those who are interested.

Through divine succor (*tawfiq*), the televised presentation of the discussions on “Lessons from the Qur’an,” was welcomed by our religious community for some years, and some of these discussions were published. The discussions on the basic principles of religion (*usul ad-din*) and the Day of Resurrection (*ma’ad*) (in particular) are among them.

After these, discourses pertaining to the branches of religion (*furu’ad-din*) were also meant to follow. However, on account of urgent need, “*Hajj*” was presented to you earlier. Now, prayer (*salah*) is at your disposal, thanks to the blessings of the blood of martyrs.

Although useful and valuable books and brochures about prayer and other branches of Islam have already been published, it is still hoped that owing to its novelty of approach, simplicity of discussion, suitable organization of the subjects, and reliance on ample Qur’anic verses and *hadiths*,<sup>1</sup> this volume would be useful to all readers, particularly teachers, who are presenting the truths of religion in class sessions. The main references used in organizing these discussions are the Qur’an, and the *hadith*, for which both Sunni and Shi’ah books have been utilized.

The principal sources being consulted (apart from the Qur'an and *Nahj al-Balaghah*)<sup>2</sup> are *Bihar al-Anwar*, *Wasa'il ash-Shi'ah*, *Mustadrak al-Hakim*, *Usul al-Kafi*, *Man La Yahdhuruh al-Faqih*, *Ghurur al-Hikam*, *Kanz al-'Ummal*, and others whose particular references are indicated in the footnotes.

In preparing the contents of this treatise, valuable ideas and supplementary suggestions offered have also been utilized, which are hereby acknowledged with profound gratitude. The positive aspects of this book are related to the luminous statements of God, the Prophet (S)<sup>3</sup> and the infallible *Ahl al-Bayt*<sup>4</sup> (as)<sup>5</sup> and written with their blessings. Any weaknesses, however, are mine.

The translations of Qur'anic verses and *hadiths* are relatively free translations and sometimes accompanied by explanations and addenda. It should not remain unsaid that the content of this volume has been shown earlier in the state television of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It has been put into writing with some corrections and modifications.

I beseech God, the Exalted, for sincerity of intention (*ikhlas*), dedication to purpose (*tawfiq*) and eloquence in speech and writing. I hope that this trivial attempt at inclining people toward the great obligatory act of prayer is fruitful and plays a vital role in the dissemination of Islamic culture throughout the world—an obligation which is incumbent upon each of us. It is also hoped that by clinging to its religious identity and rich Islamic culture, our great Islamic nation can serve as a formidable stronghold of truth and a strong refuge for the deprived ones of the world.

Verily, He is the Bestower of Success (*innahu wali at-tawfiq*).

**Muhsin Qara'ati**

***Ramadhan 1410 AH***

***Farvardin 1369 AHS***

***(Circa March–April 1990)***

<sup>1</sup>. Hadith (pl. ahadith): tradition or report, specifically the traditions of the Prophet (S) and the infallible Imams (as), i.e. their sayings, actions and tacit approvals of others' actions, or the narrations of these. (Trans.)

<sup>2</sup>. *Nahj al-Balaghah* (Peak of Eloquence) is a collection of speeches, sayings and letters of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) compiled by Sharif ar-Radi Muhammad ibn al-Husayn (d. 406 AH/1016). Contents of the book concern the three essential topics of God, man and the universe, and include comments on scientific, literary, social, ethical, and political issues.

Except the words of the Glorious Qur'an and of the Holy Prophet (S), no words of man can equate it in eloquence. So far, more than 101 exegeses have been written on the *Nahj al-Balaghah*, indicating the importance of this treatise to scholars and learned men of research and investigation. For more information, visit: <http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul> [1] (Trans.)

<sup>3</sup>. The abbreviation, "S", stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, *sallallahu 'alayhi wa alihi wa sallam* (may God's salutation and peace be upon him and his progeny), which is used after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S). (Trans.)

<sup>4</sup>. *Ahl al-Bayt*: according to authentic hadiths recorded in both Sunni and Shi'ah sources, the term *Ahl al-Bayt*, and interchangeably *'Itrah* and *Al*, is a blessed Qur'anic appellation that belongs exclusively to the Prophet, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn (as).

The members of this Family of five, with the Prophet Muhammad (S) at its head, were the ones present at the time the Qur'anic verses regarding their virtues were being revealed to the Prophet (S). However, nine other Imams from the descendants of Imam al-Husayn (as) are also in this chosen Family, the final one being Imam al-Mahdi (as). For further information, visit: <http://www.al-islam.org/faq> [2]. (Trans.)

5. The abbreviation, “a” stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, ‘alayhi’s-salam, ‘alayhim’us-salam, or ‘alayha’s-salam (may peace be upon him/them/her), which is used after the names of the prophets, angels, Imams from the Prophet’s progeny, and saints (as). (Trans.)

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[1] <http://www.al-islam.org/nahjul>

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