

[Home](#) > [Imam 'Ali Sunshine of Civilized Islam](#) > [The Humane Qualities Of Imam 'Ali \(as\)](#) > Freedom In Imam 'Ali's Thought

The Humane Qualities Of Imam 'Ali (as)

Quraysh was the strongest tribe throughout Arabia and it was divided into some branches, of which the Hashemites and the Umayyads were. These two families were well-known of having courage, generosity, bravery and eloquence. But the Hashemites were preferred with virtue and purity because Muhammad (S), the Prophet of God, related to the Hashemites.

All above mentioned qualities were gathered in the personality of Imam 'Ali (as) because both of his parent's descended from Hashim. [1](#)

The historians mentioned that 'Ali (as) was put under the guardianship of the Prophet (S) since his childhood. He was a gifted child. His natural capabilities began to grow by the Prophet's teachings.

His mental faculties and comprehension was so sharp that he believed in Muhammad at the age of nine, at which it was not easy for one to be able to distinguish belief from unbelief. No one else had got such a chance like what 'Ali had got at that time.

The main purpose of the Prophet's teachings was to worship God, the One and only and the source of endless mercies.

There is no distinction between two persons except for virtue and knowledge. The people, whether white or black, are all equal before God. They all have been created from mud and eventually they return into earth.

Hereon, man is to worship God only and believing in other than Him is away from reason. No one has the right to control the others because of one's noble birth, descendance or lineage. Nobody is to bow to the rich for their riches.

Imam 'Ali was educated in the Prophet's school with teachings that governed all his actions since then. One of his high qualities was self-reliance.

It seemed that as if it was fated for him to succeed the Prophet in order to continue his Prophetic mission

but regrettably he, who was the only one who could carry out this divine duty, became confined to home and the Muslims were kept away from his teaching.

Of course self-reliance is inclusive of all admirable qualities like courage, bravery, fearlessness, generous disposition, remission etc. Imam 'Ali, when he was ten years old, said to the Prophet: "I believe in you and try my best to support you."

He said so while the great men of Quraysh became angry to the full when they heard of the new religion. History confirmed that Imam 'Ali did all what he had said.

Many signs of courage and bravery had been realized throughout his life, whether through his deeds or speeches. He slept in the Prophet's bed in the night of emigration to save the prophet's life when the polytheists decided to assassinate him. In spite of that he might face great dangers; he did it at risk of losing his life.

Since the first war between the Muslims and the idolaters until his last fight against the Kharijites in Nahrawan, all the combatants, who fought him, were killed or ran away for saving their lives.

He attacked his enemy so fearlessly that it seemed as if he went to meet death or that death fled away fearing his greatness.

The story of 'Ali's man-to-man combat with Amr ibn Abd Widd when 'Ali was just a very young man and Amr was a very brave experienced warrior was not fiction. When 'Ali knocked Amr down and sat on his chest to cut his head, Amr spat at him.

Imam 'Ali suppressed his anger, got up and began to walk some steps about the field before killing Amr. When he was asked about what made him do so, he replied: "I got angry from his immodest act and if I had killed him at that moment, I would have avenged myself on him, but I quenched my anger so that my killing him would be purely for the sake of God."

It was suggestive of his immaculate feelings towards God. He always suggested making peace before beginning the war, but when he became despaired of peace, he started out to fight, because in his opinion that one, who started the fight would be really an oppressor and standing up to him would be lawful.

For this purpose he came forward unarmed in the battle of al-Jamal and called for Talhah and Al-Zubayr, who were armed, to negotiate with them.

In this battle he overcame his most obstinate enemies and then he remitted their offences and let them go wherever they wished. They had attacked the *wali* of Basra at night and had put him to torture and they also had killed many innocent people.

When Imam 'Ali (as) went to comfort A'ishah, at the end of the battle, the housekeeper, named

Saffiyyah, came and abused Imam 'Ali because she was bereaved of her husband in the battle. Some of his men wanted to punish her, but Imam 'Ali prevented them and said: "She abused me and it is up to me whether to punish her or to forgive her."

Instead of blaming A'ishah for what she had committed against him, Imam 'Ali sent her back to Medina respectfully.

When Mu'awiyah controlled the watering places in Siffeen, he prevented Imam 'Ali's army from getting water to cause them to thirst in order to surrender.

When Imam 'Ali's army controlled the watering places by force later on, they wanted to do the same as Mu'awiyah and his army did. Imam 'Ali (as) said to them: "Do not require evil for evil. This is far away from humanity."

His enemies (the Kharijites) could come and go through Kufa freely where they frequently caused many troubles for him and in spite of this, they were paid their salaries from the treasury (Bayt al-Mal).

One day Imam 'Ali was passing by the streets of Kufa when he came across a woman carrying a pot of water on her shoulder and she was out of breath. He asked if he could help her.

When he knew that her husband had been killed in the battle and that she and her four children had been left without a breadwinner, he went to help her in doing some of her domestic affairs although he was the caliph.

It was mentioned that he had seen an old Christian carrying a heavy load on his back and he was troubled with it. It seemed that he was obliged to work so hard in this age for making his living. Imam 'Ali ordered that this old Christian would receive his monthly expense from the treasury of the Muslims. In this way he had founded the social insurance of today.

One day Imam 'Ali was on a trip about Kufa. On his way back, a Jew man joined him. They discussed some various subjects. When the Jew wanted to leave, Imam 'Ali (as) escorted him to some distance.

He asked why Imam 'Ali (as) had done so. Imam 'Ali said: "We enjoyed our companionship and friendship requires me to escort you to some distance to see you off." Consequently the man resigned himself to Islam after seeing so much humility and politeness from Imam 'Ali (as) .

Have you ever heard of somebody recommending his successors to treat his murderer well? Certainly not but 'Ali! He said to his son Imam Hasan: "Look at him (ibn Muljim, Imam 'Ali's murderer) how upset he is!

Give him from the same milk that I used to drink and feed him from what you eat. If I restore to health, I myself know better how to deal with him and if not, forgive him if you can endure to see him, otherwise kill him with only one stroke of sword.

Be careful not to mutilate him because I heard the Prophet saying: “Avoid mutilation even with a rabid dog.” He made a little pause and then said: “My dear sons, be careful not to punish anyone else and not to make any bloodshed in avenging the caliph's murder.”

Recently we heard that many people were imprisoned, tortured or killed on the charge of being accomplices in the murder of Anwar as-Sadat (the ex-president of Egypt).

When the southern part of Iran was conquered by the Muslims during the reign of the second caliph ‘Umar, Hormozan with his young slave Abu Lu’lu’ were sent to Medina as captives. This young slave was given to al-Mugheerah, who was of influence and was well-known as politician throughout Arabia.

Abu Lu’lu’ had a grievance against his master. He complained against his master to the caliph ‘Umar. ‘Umar did not pay attention to his petition. At last he killed ‘Umar by a dagger. Ubaydullah, ‘Umar’s son, killed Hormozan on the charge of having a hand in his father's murder without hearing his protestations.

Imam ‘Ali (as) got angry and insisted on Uthman, the caliph at that time, to avenge the murder of Hormozan on the murderer but Uthman pretended that ‘Umar's family was bereaved of their father and it was unbearable for them to be bereaved again.

But Imam ‘Ali (as) declared himself against the son of ‘Umar and said: “I cannot such injustice. If I have control over him, he will be duly punished according to the law.”

Uthman thought that Islam was the supremacy of the Arabs over the non-Arabs especially the Persians. On the contrary, Imam ‘Ali (as) believed that Islam was an ideal religion for all the human beings and it was a herald of equity.

Usually the fearless commanders are pitiless. We have seen that when a commander conquers a city, he sets fire to it and flattens it without having any regard for the old people and the infants. But Imam ‘Ali (as), whose bravery was to that extent that no combatant dared to stand up to him, had pity on a woman carrying a heavy load on her shoulder or on an old man laboring to earn his livelihood.

Imam Hasan and some of his companions were passing by a ruined place about Kufa when they heard a whimper. They went into the ruins. They saw an old paralytic man. He was starving. He told them that a good-humored man used to come here every day to feed him but for the last three days he did not come. Imam Hasan said: “That good-humored man was my father Imam ‘Ali. He was martyred three days ago.”

Yes, besides that he was so intrepid, he was too kind and pitiful to the poor. This fact was confirmed even by his enemies and on several occasions.

Imam ‘Ali (as) had contradictory qualities like greatness with humility, courage with precaution, bravery with remission, generosity with moderation, forgiveness with ability and intrepidity with wisdom. And above all he would not say anything, unless he himself had done it.

He said: "Whatever I ask you to do; I do it before you and whatever I forbid you from; I leave it before forbidding you from it."

The Holy Qur'an says:

"O you who believe! why do you say that which you do not do? It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do" (61:2–3).

Yes, he practiced whatever he said. He said in one of his sermons: "I dressed you in the cloths of safety with my justice and spread for you the carpet of virtue with my sayings and deeds."

There was a true tradition about his high qualities that deserved a high praise by God. Imam Hasan and Imam Hussein were attacked by fever during their childhood. Their parents; Imam 'Ali (s) and Fatima (s) and their maid Fiddha made a vow to God to fast for three days hoping that the children might restore to health.

At the first night when they wanted to break their fast in time, a poor man knocked at the door and asked for alms. They gave him the slight food, which they themselves were greatly in need of. In the second night an Orphan came asking for alms and in the third night a captive came asking for alms and they were given the food that 'Ali's family had to break their fast with.

Hence some Qur'anic verses were revealed to the Prophet (S):

"They fulfill vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide. And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness; and reward them, because they were patient, with garden and silk" (76:7–8, 11–12).

It is to be noted that all the Islamic commentators; the Sunni and the Shia, have mentioned that these verses concerned 'Ali and his family.

'Ali always ordered his men neither to pursue the runaway soldiers nor to kill the wounded.

One day he was enthusiastically exhorting people in high eloquence. Suddenly one of his enemies said in wonder: "Alas! How wise is this infidel!" Some of Imam 'Ali's followers wanted to punish him but Imam 'Ali prevented them and said: "He abused me. I am to punish him or to forgive him."

Abstinence And Piety Of Imam 'Ali (as)

'Umar ibn Abd-al-Aziz, the Umayyad caliph, had said: "No one at all throughout the world will be like Imam 'Ali in piety and devotedness." All of the Islamic researchers confirmed Imam 'Ali's asceticism in food and dress.

One of his companions said: "Once I went to visit Imam 'Ali (as) in his house when he was the caliph. He was eating a piece of dried bread with a little milk. I said: O Ameer-al-Mu'mineen, how do you live with this scanty food? He replied: The Prophet ate staler bread than this and his dress was coarser than mine."

It is beyond bravery when one can afford to better his livelihood but he denies himself and becomes content with a simple subsistence.

Those, who disagreed with Imam 'Ali and were intolerant of his justice, were searching for ease and luxury. They oppressed people to deprive them of their rights for the sake of their own pleasures in this worldly life.

Imam 'Ali was far above all these bad conducts. Once he wrote to the *wali* of Basra: "Remember that every follower usually follows his leader and imitates him. You know that your imam is contented with two pieces of bread as his victual and two rags as his cloths. Certainly you cannot do so but at least try to help me with piety and uprightness. By Allah, I have neither treasured gold nor collected money out of this world ..."

He often said: "How can I be satisfied to be called Ameer-al-Mu'mineen (the commander of the believers) by people and do not share in their hardships or I do not become an example for them in the difficulties. Shall I be comfortable with a full stomach and there are hungry stomachs around me? I must live in the lowest level so that the poor may be able to endure poverty easily."

Imam 'Ali (as) went to visit his companion Ala' ibn Ziyad, when he saw his large house, he said to him: "You are in need of such house in the afterworld more than in this world. But if you want so, you are to receive guests in it, to take care of your relatives and to pay poor-rate and alms."

Then Ala' said to him: "O Ameer-al-Mu'mineen, I complain about my brother Aassim, who has left his family to worship God." Imam 'Ali (as) sent for him.

When he came, Imam 'Ali said to him: "O enemy of yourself, surely Satan has misled you. Do not you feel pity for your wife and children? Do you think that if you practice what Allah has made lawful for you, He will dislike you? You will be unthankful to Allah in doing so."

He said: "O Ameer-al-Mu'mineen, you yourself put on coarse dress and eat single food."

Imam 'Ali (as) replied: "Woe unto you! You are not like me. Certainly God has made it obligatory for the just leaders to live like the poor people so that the poor grouch their poverty and indigence." Therefore he himself repaired his shoes with his hand and he himself patched his clothes.

Imam 'Ali used to sell the yields of his garden of date-palms to spend its money for charity. The poor of Medina often surrounded him in the mosque. He divided the whole money among them to go home empty-handed while his family was in need badly.

The excellences of Imam 'Ali (as) and his upright policy realized through his words and deeds was the very civilized Islam we tried to research on.

The Vastness Of Imam 'Ali's Knowledge

The Shia, think that the knowledge of the prophets is covert and that God has revealed it to him by inspiration and then they vest it in their successors at the last gasp.

Imam 'Ali (as) said: "The Prophet, in his deathbed, whispered to me and taught me one thousand chapters of knowledge; each one of them contained one thousand chapters."

Of course Imam 'Ali's scientific theories about monotheism, the creation of man, heavens, earth, stars, suns, mountains, clouds thunder, plants, philosophy of history, phylogeny and even the creation of the peacock and the bat. The interpretation of the Qur'an confirmed what he had said about the mentioned above items.

His speeches, his letters to his officers and his scientific sayings (except jurisprudential traditions) had been compiled in a book named Nahj al-Balaghah, which was really next to the Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an is the words of God. The great part of it deals with many branches of knowledge like theology, sociology, economy and others. This holy book needed to be interpreted by a pious and learned man. Nahj al-Balaghah was the great work of Imam 'Ali (as) in this concern.

It was below the speech of God and higher than man's speech. Imam 'Ali was the father of gnosis and many Islamic mystics have based their principles on his teachings.

His religious decrees and judgments were followed and obeyed by the previous caliphs as the second caliph 'Umar often said: "I would have gone astray if 'Ali (as) had been not here."[2](#)

Once he was asked what number was to be divided by 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 without fraction. He answered quickly: "Multiply the number of the days of a year by the number of the days of a week to get the result."

$360 \times 7 = 2520$.

Once again three persons came to him and said: "There are 17 camels that must be divided among us in this manner; half of them for one of us, a third of them for the other and a ninth of them for the last one. How can we divide live camels among us?"

Imam 'Ali (as) added to them one of his own camels and then he said: "Now the half of the camels is 9 heads, the third is 6 and the ninth is 2 heads."

$9+6+2=17$. He answered their problem and then he took back his own camel.

In fact this was really a scientific masterpiece but the most important thing was his deep knowledge of monotheism, which had given him much importance. Certainly monotheistic knowledge is connected with morality and it is affected by the call of conscience.

It consequently brings peace and comfort. It is neither destructive nor ruinous because it is not based on material concerns. Of course Islam provides such liberal education. At first, a person is purified from evilness and then is taught science and wisdom to do good for mankind.

Recently some news came from America saying that some 14 or 15 years old students attacked their fellow students by gun and consequently a number of them were killed. Thereupon the public prosecutor asked the local clergyman to think of a remedy and to restrain the present situation because men of authority could not do anything.

Although it is a bit late to stem the tide of prostitution, drunkenness and licentiousness among the people, it is much better doing nothing at all.

In order to put down such wicked acts among the youngsters, firstly, the educationists should gradually insert the religious teachings in school's programs and, secondly, papers and film editors should reconsider making erotic films and writing deviational stories, because T. V and magazines are the real educators of people. They play an important role in teaching them.

Just as Europe had obtained many benefits from the civilization of Islam during the Crusades, the west, at the present time, needs to be in contact with the spiritual centers in the Islamic Republic of Iran to seek remedy for its shortcomings.

Now it is the outset of exchanging views among the civilizations and it can audaciously be said that the words and deeds of Imam 'Ali (as) are good guides to find the way of establishing peace and securing the human rights all over the world.

Here I quote some of Imam 'Ali's scientific and sententious words to shed more light upon his personality. Imam 'Ali said:

1-Everyone, who is in charge of the Muslim's affairs, neglects his charge, God will neglect him.

2-The worst men of all are the treacherous businessmen.

3-Destitution is the greater death. Having few children is relief. Practicing moderate economy is half of the living. One, who controls his economy, will not face poverty.

4-Avoid gluttony for it causes diseases and illnesses.

5-Weakness and listlessness are the calamity of the nations. Being patient with sufferings and struggling against hardships are courage.

6–Purify yourselves of dirty passions to reach high ranks before God.

7–Keep equality among the all and do not add fuel to the fire of discord because the hearts are always ready to differ from each other.

8–Receive people willingly, deal with them cheerfully and trustfully and be humble before them.

9–The ignorant is known by six characteristics: being angry without having virtue, talking idle talk, generosity out of its suitable place, unable to distinguish the friend from the enemy, disclosing the secrets and trusting in every body.

10– Pay the worker his due wages before his sweat is dried.

11– The greatest sin is aggression and violation.

12– The highest virtue of man is to avoid persecuting people and to be kind to them.

13– The one who believes in resurrection won't be greedy for the worldly wealth.

14– Everything can be changed except habits.

15– The one, who becomes idle, will miss his personal and social rights.

16– Religion does not agree with caprice. Caprice is foe prevailing over reason.

17– He was asked: "What is good?" He said: "Good is not muchness of money and children but muchness of knowledge."

18– Injustice of judges is the most disgraced act.

19– The highest compassion is to share the brothers in sorrow and in joy.

20– Where are the tyrants and the sons of the tyrants? (He meant that they had perished without taking anything from this world with them).

21– Wealth is the fountain of the sins.

22– Whoever warns you of fault is like one who gives you good tidings.

23– The one, who becomes a leader of the people, has to educate himself before educating the others. His educating must be by his doings before his sayings. The one, who educates and instructs himself, is more estimable than those, who teach and instruct the others.

24– No wealth is more profitable than wisdom.

25– No loneliness is sadder than haughtiness.

- 26– No intellect is better than tact.
- 27– No greatness is like abstinence. No courage is like avoiding sins.
- 28– No compassion is like good humor.
- 29– No inheritance is like politeness.
- 30– No guide is like God's favor to grant prosperity.
- 31– No trade is like beneficence.
- 32– No profit is like divine reward.
- 33– No virtuousness is like reluctance to do doubtful things.
- 34– No knowledge is like meditation.
- 35– No worship is like performing religious decrees.
- 36– No belief is like modesty and fortitude.
- 37– No greatness is like humility.
- 38– No honor is like knowledge and no aid is like consulting with wise friends.
- 39– The value of every man is due to his goodness.
- 40– Take knowledge from everywhere as possible as you can.
- 41– Every material thing passes away and every expected thing is to come at last.
- 42– Woman is as a scorpion but her sting is honey.
- 43– Wealth is the basis of every sin.
- 44– Being loose-tongued is like being a beast.
- 45– Death is near and the company of the friends is short.
- 46– Avoiding sins is easier than repenting afterward.
- 47– He, who looks for riches, denies everything else and he, who acts according to his mind only, will be ruined. He, who consults the others, participates with them in their minds.
- 48– For me the thinking of an experienced (old)

man is more admirable than of a dexterous young man.

49– I knew Allah by the changing of decisions, the breaking of wills and the resolving of problems by themselves. (There is a metaphysical power above us that controls our affairs).

50– Be careful not to waste the blessings of Allah because everything you waste, does not come back again.

51– It is a surprise to me how a miser hurries to poverty, from which he runs away and he misses the wealth, which he looks for. He lives like the poor in this and he will be punished like the rich in the afterworld. I wonder about the selfish and haughty man, who was a sperm yesterday and will be a rotten carcass tomorrow (why he is so proud). I wonder at one, who doubt about the existence of God while he sees His creation. It is also surprising when one sees that people die before him but he forgets that he himself will die. I wonder at one, who denies the afterworld whereas he has seen the first world and I wonder at one, who is busy heaping wealth in this transient world but is ignorant of the everlasting world.

52– Protect yourself against cold when it comes (at its beginning) and receive it without worry when it is about to go because its effect on bodies is like its effect on trees. In the beginning it ruins and in the end it refreshes.

53– I explain Islam in a way that no one else has explained it before. Islam is submission; submission is steadfastness in religion; steadfastness in religion is spreading one's belief; spreading one's belief is acknowledging doing the obligations of God and doing the obligations means action.

54– Missing an opportunity causes grief.

55– He, who follows a moderate course in life, will never become poor.

56– When Allah wants to degrade someone, He deprives him of knowledge.

57– People are enemies of that which they do not know.

58– He, who receives several opinions (in consulting the others), understands the incorrect situations.

59– Displease the evil doer by doing good to the good doer.

60– Obstinacy destroys counsel.

61– The result of carelessness is regret and the result of prudence is safety.

62– If there are two different invitations; one of them is to mislead.

63– I did not doubt about rightness since I had been shown it.

64– Whoever turned away from rightness got ruined.

65– If patience does not relieve a man, impatience will kill him.

66– O son of Adam, whatever you earn more than your necessary need, you will only guard it for the heirs.

67– Every container narrows with what is put in it except the container of knowledge; it expands continuously.

68– The tree, whose trunk is soft, has thick branches.

69– Envying a friend is because of untrue love.

70– It is no justice to judge through probabilities.

71– The worst provision for the Day of Judgment is oppressing people.

72– The best act of a generous person is to overlook what he knows (to cover the defect of people).

73– Long Silence leads to dignity. Justice increases connections and communications. Generosity raises esteem. Humility brings blessings. Tolerating hardship leads to supremacy. Good behavior defeats the enemy. Forbearance towards a fool increases supporters against him.

74– Kumayl ibn Ziyad was one of the closest companions of Imam ‘Ali(S). He said: “One day Imam ‘Ali took me out of the city. After taking a deep breath, he said: “O Kumayl, hearts are the containers of knowledge. The best of them is that which preserves its contents well. Take care of what I say to you. People are of three types;

One is the divine scholar, who has set himself free from carnalities. The other is that, who seeks knowledge and he is also on the way of salvation. The third is the common people, who run after every caller and follow every sound. They do not seek the light of knowledge and do not provide any reliable support.

O Kumayl, know that knowledge is surely preferred to wealth. You are guarded by knowledge but you have to guard wealth. Wealth will decrease by expending but knowledge will increase by spending. One, who grows up in a rich family, cannot endure hardships when the wealth disappears.

O Kumayl, acquiring knowledge is one of the bases of religion and religion turns round the circuit of knowledge. A learned man steps in the way of religion with knowledge, with which he wins fame during his lifetime and after his death. Knowledge commands but wealth is commanded.

O Kumayl, men of property will die even though they live for a long time but learned men remain as long as there is a life on the earth. Their bodies turn to dust but their images are placed in the hearts forever.

Then he pointed to his chest and said: “This is full of knowledge and I wish I could find someone to bear

its burden. Even if I can find someone, I cannot confide in him because he may misuse it in the way of his worldly desires and he may use God's favor against His servants or he hereby dominates over people, or he may seek rightness and truthfulness but there may be no any insight in his heart. Consequently doubts will be instilled into his mind and he will follow the doubts. He will be affected by passions and will be greedy for wealth. Thus knowledge dies away by the death of its bearers.

Yes, but the earth will never be void of those, who guard God's evidences and laws; either they are well-known and famous or they are unknown and hideaways in order that the Sharia of Allah not to be cancelled or vanished.

How many persons are they or where are they? Although they are few in number but they are highly esteemed by Allah. Allah guards His evidences and reasons by them and they entrust these evidences to others like themselves to sow the seeds of knowledge in their hearts. Knowledge has taken them to the real understanding and hereupon they will be the guide of the compact faith in God.

They deem easy what the unbelievers think as difficult and they become familiar with what the ignorant consider as strange. They live with their bodies in this world but their souls live high with the Beneficent Creator. They represent Allah on the earth and they invite people to His religion.

How I am fond of seeing them. Now go wherever you want, Kumayl.

75– He, who glorifies a rich man for his wealth, loses one third of his religion. (One, who worships God sincerely, ought not to bend before other than Him for the sake of wealth or any other thing because all people are free and equal). If a man reads the Holy Qur'an and is to be put into Hell after death, he is of those, who treat the verses of Qur'an with mockery. If a man's heart gets attached to this world, he will be afflicted with three things; continuous worry that will never let him be comfortable, an unending greed and an unachievable desire.

76– Contentment is as good as wealth and good humor is as good as blessing of God.

77– Imam 'Ali was asked about the meaning of Allah's saying after praising a virtuous man or woman: (And we will most certainly make him live a happy life). He answered: "It means those who are content."

78– Participate with one, who has abundant livelihood because he is luckier for getting more riches and he is expected to increase your share therein.

79– About the meaning of the Qur'anic verse:

"Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and benevolence" he said: "Do not oppress the others (be kind to the people)."

80– He said to his son Imam Hasan (S): "Do not be the first to declare a war, but if you are called for it, give a contentful answer; because the caller for a war is a rebellious and the rebellious is to be ruined."

81- Imam 'Ali (as) was asked to define the wise man and he said: "A wise man is he, who puts things in their proper positions." Then he was asked to describe the ignorant. He said: "I have already done so." (The ignorant is one, who does not put things in their proper positions).

82- Imam 'Ali (as) said: "By Allah, your world (in which you quarrel with one another like vultures and dogs), in my point of view, is meaner than a piece of a hog's bone in a leper's hand."

83- "Woman is evil; from which man cannot escape

(He is in need of her)."

84- "One, who acts carelessly, loses his rights and one, who believes the storytellers, misses his friends."

85- "An extorted piece of stone in a house (to be within its structure) is a cause of its ruination."

86- "The day of the oppressed over the oppressor will be severer than the day of the oppressor over the oppressed." (Bearing oppression in this world is easier than bearing it in the next world.)

87- "When responses are numerous the truth remains unknown."

88- "When the possibilities increase, desires decrease."

89- "Try to make one's good idea about you remain as it is."

90- "The most preferable doings are those that you are obliged to do them (God's obligations)."

91- "I knew Allah through the breaking of determinations, change of intentions and when problems are resolved by themselves."

92- "The affliction of this world leads to the cheer of the afterworld and the cheer of this world leads to the affliction of the afterworld."

93- "Anger is a kind of madness because when a mad one returns to his senses, he does repent. If he does not repent, his madness is certified."

94- "Good health comes from lack of envy (an envious person melts away in the heat of envy)."

95- "If the wise man's word is reasonable, it will be as cure but if it is not, it will be as illness."

96- "A little job continued carefully is better than a big job done carelessly."

97- "Between you and the advice there is a curtain of pride and haughtiness."

98- "When the learned becomes lazy, the ignorant exceeds the limits."

99– “Knowledge closes the way of those, who claim baseless excuses.”

100– Imam ‘Ali (as) was asked about destiny and he replied: “It is a dark path; do not tread upon it. It is a deep ocean; do not dive in it and it is the secret of Allah; do not trouble yourselves for knowing it.”

101– “I had a close friend, whom I respected him very much because he did not pay any attention to this worldly life. He was not gluttonous and he did not wish what he couldn’t find. He did not ask for more than what he would get. He kept quiet most of his time. If he spoke, he would quiet the other speakers. He often quenched the questioners. He was modest but he was like the lion in the war. He would not adduce any argument unless the judge was present. He would not blame anyone for an excusable matter until he heard his excuse. He would not complain of any trouble except after abatement of nuisance. He would say what he would do and he would not say what he would not do. Even if he was dominant in speaking, he could not be defeated in silence. He would like to keep quiet more than to speak. If he would face two things, he would reject the one that was nearer to fancy. You have to acquire these good qualities but if you cannot acquire them, you know that acquiring a part is better than to leave the whole.”

102– Imam ‘Ali (as) was asked about the distance between the east and the west. He said: “One day's traveling of the sun.”

103– “Do not keep company with a fool because he approves his doings before you and likes you to be like him.”

104– “Your friends are of three kinds and your enemies are of three kinds too. Your friends are; your friend, your friend's friend and your enemy’s enemy. And your enemies are; your enemy, your friend's enemy and your enemy’s friend.”

105– Imam ‘Ali (as) saw a man busy striving against his enemy but he would harm himself. He said to him:

“You are like that who thrusts a spear through his chest to kill the person sitting behind him (on the horse).”

106– “How many examples there are but how few are those, who learn from them.”

107– “He, who insists on quarrelling, falls in sin. If he falls in sin, he will be under the effect of that sin. It is difficult for a quarreler to abstain from sin.

108– “Your messenger is the translator of your mind and your letter is the most eloquent thing that expresses your thoughts.”

109– “The indigent is the messenger of God to you. Whoever denies him, denies God and whoever grants him, grants God.”

110- "A self-respecting man will never commit adultery."

111- "A man can fall asleep when he loses his child, but he cannot when he loses his property."

112- "The kings are the watchmen of Allah on the earth."

113- "The least right of Allah on you is that you are not to make use of His blessings in committing sins."

114- "Not being in need of asking pardon is better than putting forth true excuse."

115- "The greatest wealth is not look forward to what the others have in their possession."

116- "A time will come when nothing will remain of the Qur'an except its writing and nothing of Islam except its name. The mosques will be flourishing with building but empty of guidance. Their builders and inhabitants will be the worst of the all on the earth. Seditions will appear from them and all sins will turn towards them. If anyone keeps himself aloof from sins, they would bring him back to them and if any one falls behind, they push him towards them. Allah, the Glorified, says: ***"I swear by myself that I shall send upon them an evil wherein the wise will be puzzled over it (how he can save himself from the perdition) and He will do so. We ask Him to forgive our mistakes during negligence."***

117- "O people, fear Allah (avoid sins) because man has not been created in vain to busy himself with amusement nor he has been set free to do nonsense."

118- "Words are under your control as long as you do not utter them yet, but when you utter them you will be under their control. Therefore take care of your tongue as you take care of your gold and money, because sometimes a saying may take a blessing away and put you to trouble."

119- "Do not say what you do not know and do not say all what you know."

120- "He, who engages himself in various affairs, will be obliged to seek remedies how to get out of them."

121- "Take from this worldly life whatever comes to you and keep away from whatever refrained from you. If you do not do so, be moderate in your quest."

122- "A statement may be more effective than an attack."

123- "He, who opposes rightness, will be knocked down by it."

124- Imam 'Ali (as) wrote to his officer, Ziyad ibn Abeeh: "Be just with the people and avoid violence and injustice because violence leads them to wander and injustice leads them to insurge."

Of course, those who accustom themselves to a simple life, leave without getting anything and oppose their fancies, God pours the light of knowledge into their hearts, especially if the simplicity was linked

with avoiding sins. To prove this statement, I point out the manner of the ascetics' lives, who deny themselves for a time and consequently they can foretell the happenings of nature which are going to occur.

Imam 'Ali was a paragon of simplicity and virtue and the things mentioned above were quite applicable to him. (Those who accustom themselves to simplicity, God pours knowledge into them.) There are enough sayings to be said but let me point out some of the Prophet's sayings about the scientific position of Imam 'Ali (as) to end this matter.

The Prophet said: "I am the city of knowledge and 'Ali (as) is its gate. Anyone, who likes to enter the city, has to come in through its gate."³ He also said: "'Ali is the wisest of all of you."⁴

The Justice Of Imam 'Ali (as)

Imam 'Ali's life and justice are closely bound up with the history of Islam. This appeared especially during his caliphate. Whenever his name is mentioned the word of justice comes to mind.

At the beginning of his life he fought against injustice and oppression of Quraysh to spread justice of Islam. In the last days of his life he confronted terrible difficulties in order to realize justice among people and at last he was martyred for it.

He regarded people with reverence, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. He did his best to distribute wealth and spoils among them justly. Some great Arab men stated their grievance openly because that their share from Bayt al-Mal was equal to that of the poor.

At the beginning of his rule Imam 'Ali said: "I will summon those who have deprived people of their rights to the court and I will apply the law to them even though it doesn't please them."

Those, who enjoyed from the public treasury during the reign of Uthman, expected that Imam 'Ali (as) would never refuse to employ them in the state affairs, but he in the first day of his caliphate said: "I will get back all the wealth gifted to this and that even if they have paid them to their wives as dowry."

He was too strict about the public money to the extent that he displeased his older brother Aqil, who was blind and troubled with having a large family, when he had requested more than his share from the treasury.

Once when his daughter had borrowed a necklace from Bayt al-Mal for a short time, Imam 'Ali (as) got angry when he knew about it and he threatened the treasurer to be punished for his carelessness. He said to his daughter: "I would have punished you if you had not guaranteed it against risk."

He was very adequate in distributing the wealth and the grains among the people so that the all, far or near, could enjoy their shares equally.

Nowadays the world's population is divided into two classes; a group living in extreme poverty that a bit of food is not possible for them and another group surrounded with affluence and riches living at ease and luxury.

The Islamic civilization does not allow such distinction of classes; therefore Imam 'Ali (as) in his famous epistle to the governor of Egypt wrote: "There are many indigents among people, who do not request for more than their share when they are badly in need of more.

For God's sake, safeguard their rights because the responsibility lays on you before God. Assign a portion from the treasury for their living and education wherever they are, whether near at hand or far from you. The rights of the all ought to be protected by you."

He often said: "Wherever there are palaces and affluences there are surely many lost rights beside them."

This is really the civilized Islam, which calls for argument among the civilizations.

It is clear that social justice is based on righteous judgments of the judges. Therefore Imam 'Ali (as) had instructed the judges with many legal instructions in order to spread justice everywhere.

According to Imam 'Ali's instructions, every judge ought to treat the litigants equally in looking at them, talking with them and in seating them so that the judge's relative would not exploit the opportunity to gain illegal benefits and that the judge's enemies would not despair of justice.

Once he said to the second caliph 'Umar: "There are three things that if you put in practice, you won't be in need of other thing;

1-Enforcement of the religious law upon the stranger and acquaintance equally.

2-Judging according to the book of Allah (Qur'an) in state of anger or consent.

3- Just division of the spoils between the lowly people and the nobles and between the black and the white."

Nowadays, in some civilized countries of the world a black-skinned boy or girl is not admitted in whites' schools. Regretfully in the hospitals of the U.S.A., even in the northern part where people used to fight against slavery, the wards and surgeries of the whites differ from those of the blacks.

Young and inexperienced doctors have no right to visit the white persons, whereas the various tests are performed in the blacks' section.

Now we go back to dry and sandy Arabia of fourteen centuries ago where ignorance and party spirits were spread. The noble privilege and grandness were too much hateful and the ordinary people could never look forward to the positions that were held by the nobles. Imam 'Ali (as) proclaimed freedom and

equality and those, who were entitled to virtue, became high– ranking officials during his government. He urged people to behave fairly towards each other without letting differences trouble their life.

Although such privileges were cancelled by the charter of the Human Rights organization under the name of freedom and equality, it took a long time until the west got rid of the gloom of the ignorance of the middle Ages.

In spite of this declaration of the Human Rights, we regretfully see the racial feelings and supremacy over other nations and bloody wars throughout the world.

The shameful act of killing the Palestinians in Sabra and Shatilla camp and the felony of the Sorbs in Kosovo and Herzegovina are not just stories. These ugly and hateful events are written down in the pages of history like a stain on man's forehead.

Imam ‘Ali (as) used to keep the Muslims away from clinging to party–spirit and vanity. He says in his sermon al–Qasi’ah: “Praise be to Allah, Who puts on the dress of exaltedness and dignity and has allocated them to Himself. He has made them for Himself and has forbidden His creatures from them.”

Then after reciting a few Qur’anic verses he said:

“When your Lord said to the angels: surely I am going to create a mortal from dust: So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down making obeisance to him. And the angels did obeisance, all of them. But not Iblis: he was proud and he was of the unbelievers. He said: O Iblis, what prevented you from doing obeisance to him whom I created with My two hands? Are you proud or are you of the exalted ones? He said: I am better than he; Thou hast created me of fire, and him Thou didst create of dust. He said: Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away. And surely My curse is on you to the Day of Judgment” (38:71–78).

Then Imam ‘Ali (as) kept on his speech and saying: “The vanity of Iblis (Satan) and his feeling proud of his being created of fire made him be cursed by Allah. And so he arrives at a good conclusion that this enemy of God (Satan) is the leader of those who boast and feel proud towards others by virtue of their origin and descent and they, consequently, are subject to disfavor and curse of Allah.”

There were many Jews and Christians living under Imam ‘Ali's domination. They were free to practice their rituals and their rights were secured by the government.

One day when Imam ‘Ali was exhorting people to jihad, he said: “It is reported that the enemy has taken ornaments off the legs and the ears of two Christian women, who were under the Islamic rule. And then he said: “One, who hears this startling news and dies, is not to be blamed.”

But regretfully today, in the twentieth century, the Muslims are treated inhumanely in many countries and more terribly in places where the people were ruled previously by colonial policy like India, Somalia, Guinea and others under the pretense of reforming the civil organizations and sometime, under the

pretense of administering justice or settling discipline and peace.

Whenever the unlawful interests of the colonial powers were encroached upon, they did not keep to their promises about the social justice and tolerance and they would tread upon the Muslims' rights.

For example, Ethiopia was formerly ruled by the church of Egypt, which was under the British authority. Its inhabitants were 35% Muslims and 65% Christians and others. There was not any government school for the Muslim youths. Whenever the Muslims instituted a school on their own expense, it was closed because of the heavy taxes enacted by the high authorities. This hostile behavior continued so severely that no one else could build a school.

If a Muslim was indebted to a Christian and was not able to pay his debt, he would become automatically a slave for the creditor without hearing his petition. Such debtor became the object of buying and selling before the eyes of people and no one said: "Oh, he is a human being too."

No Muslim was employed by the government departments in spite of that the Muslims formed one third of the population of this country.

On the other hand, if the *wali* wanted to make an effort in the interest of the Muslims, he would not have the authority to do it because the church had the control over all the state affairs and Ethiopia had to obey the commands issued by the church.

Have the Christians ever faced such annoyance from the Muslims along the history? Are they ready to be treated like their own treatment? Certainly not!

Therefore, it indicates a ruinous party-spirit that the Christians (colonial countries) accept it satisfactorily.

Imam 'Ali (as) said: "It is sufficient for you to educate yourself that you avoid what you dislike from the others."

History mentioned that the independence of the local Churches was respected by the Muslims when they occupied Spain. The Muslims associated with the Christians in a friendly manner, but after a time when the Spaniards got their country back, they established many courts to inquire about the people's beliefs.

The main duty of those courts was to inquire about the Muslims in order to accuse them of a bad precedent to be used later as a cause of condemnation. They used the most shameful acts of torture to suppress the Muslims in a way that history had not mentioned it's like at all.

In a word, many hardships were imposed upon the Muslims to force them to turn Christians.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of

(your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly, surely Allah loves the doers of justice” (60:8).

And: “This day (all) the good things are allowed to you, and the food of those who have been given the Book (the Jews and the Christians) is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you) when you have given them dowries ...” (5:5).

It is clear by these Qur’anic verses that Islam has given a chance to the followers of the other religions to associate with the Muslims freely and that the Muslims should deal with them peacefully.

Imam ‘Ali (as) said: “When you overcome your foe, forgive him as a way of thanking God that He enables you to overcome him.”

Considering this truth, Imam ‘Ali (as) recommended people, especially his officers, to be just to everyone, whether acquainted or not, and to fulfill their promise when they are in treaty with foreigners.

Many of his men insisted on him to break his promise concerning the agreement of the arbitration. Although he was obliged to accept it, he did not pay attention to them and said: “It is not of justice to break my promise.”

A Christian woman was attacked by the enemy in a frontier locality and they had snatched her ornaments from her ears and hands. When Imam ‘Ali knew about it, he exclaimed from on the pulpit and said angrily: “If one hears this and dies with grief, he won’t be blamed.”

Islam is the only religion that calls for human beings to associate with each other peacefully and with mutual respect.

The Value Of Man In Imam ‘Ali’s Thought

Imam ‘Ali (as) wanted to revive all the human values that were granted to people by the Prophet of Islam and they were declined during the reign of the third caliph Uthman.

Once, Imam ‘Ali set out to Syria. The people of Anbar (a place between Syria and Iraq) met him. They had come out from the city to welcome him. When they saw Imam ‘Ali, they began to prostrate themselves on the ground and then they ran in front of him. When he asked why they did so, they replied that they respected their chiefs in this manner.

Imam ‘Ali said: “By Allah, this action does not benefit your chiefs but it makes them be proud and haughty. We all are the servants of God. I do not have any preference to you, except that my responsibility is more than you since I have accepted the tenure of the caliphate. By doing this you trouble yourselves in this world and you will get misery in the afterworld.”

Once, Imam 'Ali (as) was going back to Kufa. He met one of his followers, who was of nobility in his town. He began to walk with him while Imam 'Ali was on the horseback. Imam 'Ali (s) said to him: "Get back! Going on foot by a man like you with one like me is misfortune for the ruler and insult for the believer."

Imam 'Ali (as) said: "The worth of a man is as much as his courage. His valor is due to his self-respect ..."

As it was said earlier that courage consisted of virtue, self-reliance, patience before terrible difficulties and such qualities of magnanimity.

In Imam 'Ali's thought, the value of a man was according to his humanity and kindness to people. He pointed it out in his letters to his officers. The most famous of them was his epistle to the *wali* of Egypt.

He said in his letter: "Fill up your heart with affection and kindness towards people. Do not treat them fiercely like the greedy beasts, which feel satisfied by devouring each other. Be careful not to appropriate what belongs to the others. Remember that people are of two kinds; they are either your brothers in religion or your brothers in mankind. They are usually subject to mistakes but you have to forgive their inadvertent slips, if you would like to be forgiven by God. You are their chief as I am your chief and God watches both of us. He wants you to manage their affairs..."

He wrote to the tax collectors: "Deal with people justly and do your best regarding their needs, because you are treasurers of the people, delegates of the community and the envoys of the Imam. Do not prevent anyone from getting his needs. Try your best to secure the people's requirements. Do not force them to sell their winter or summer clothes or their cattle in order to pay the taxes. Be careful not to whip anyone for tax collecting. Do not touch any property of anyone, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, who are under the protection of Islam."

At any rate, he honored people without making a difference between familiars and strangers.

Imam 'Ali (as) was grieved with all his heart for the poor, because he thought that poverty and destitution would never give people a chance to better themselves. He said: "God has not chastened his servants with harder than poverty."

He, in order to compensate this deficiency, tried to do two things; first to improve the production in large quantities and then to distribute it justly among the people all in all. On the other hand, he thought that a starving man was usually angry that his income would not be enough to earn his livelihood and he had to struggle to feed his family.

Surely, such a man, who struggled against poverty, would not be able to withstand difficulties and would not show any reaction when his rights were trodden upon.

Therefore Imam 'Ali sent a decree to everywhere saying: "Try the best to develop and improve the

farms. Prepare the agricultural implements for the farmers and be careful not to ruin the countryside or the countrymen because development and consistency of a state is due to the unneedy farmers. This duty is to precede all the others.”

Although ownership was allowed for everyone in Islam, but there was such a limit that it would never lead to capitalism. It prevented the appearance and growth of capital and capitalism by prohibiting usury, monopoly, extortion, overcharging prices and using gold and silver dishes.

On the other hand it stopped the rising of poverty by taking zakat and alms from the rich and giving them to the poor and spending them for the commonweal.

Freedom In Imam ‘Ali’s Thought

All the politicians and the cruel powerful men usually created an atmosphere of distress among people to frighten them in order to submit. For this purpose, they built many houses of detention and prisons to put the opponents in them and if someone made a protest against such an action, he would be put to torture on a charge of rebellion. Hence no one dared to defend someone's right.

But the Prophet of Islam charged the Muslims with a duty to advise the *walis* and to show them the right way to realize justice if they behaved unjustly. He said: “The best kind of jihad is saying a word of rightness before an unjust ruler.”

How great it was that the Prophet of Islam had granted such free will to the people fourteen centuries ago, so that they could debate with the rulers.

Abu-Bakr, the first caliph, said: “If I disobey Allah and His apostle, I have no right to govern on you and you do not have to obey me.”

One day ‘Umar the second caliph, said: “You, people, should guide me to the right way if you saw me going in a wrong way.”

An ordinary man stood up and said: “If you follow the curved way, we will bring you back to the straightway by this curved sword.”

Once more ‘Umar said: “I am the Prophet's caliph and a man of authority. You have to obey me to spread the goals of Islam.”

One of present people said: “If you told us wherefrom you have got your shirt, of course we would obey you.”

During ‘Umar’s reign no one dared to misappropriate anything of Bayt al-Mal (the treasury) because of his severity in practicing justice.

Imam 'Ali (as) always enlightened the Muslims to defend their rights and to interfere in the state affairs. Therefore, in order to grant some privileges to people, Imam 'Ali (as) ordered his officers to read the items of the constitution of his rule before the people in the mosque to make them know their duties and the *wali's* duties.

Consequently the *walis* would not dare to rule out of the law and the people, if the *walis* did something wrong, were not to obey them and were to report about their offences to Imam 'Ali.

During Imam 'Ali's reign no one had the right to exploit any other by force. He wrote to the *walis*: "Although excavating canals and cleaning out rivers are necessary a progressive state but you have no right to force anyone to do it unwillingly."

Imam 'Ali himself never forced any one to join his army even at the critical situations in his various battles in spite of that they had paid homage to him and obeying him was obligatory for them.

When the *wali* of Medina tried to seek for some men, who fled from Medina to join Mu'awiyah in Sham,⁵ Imam 'Ali wrote to him: "Do not worry if some people did not like to remain under my just rule. Let them go wherever they like."

At the first days of Imam 'Ali's caliphate, some of his close friends were angry because of that two (Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqass and Abdullah ibn 'Umar) had not paid homage to Imam 'Ali. Imam 'Ali said: "Those, who do not like to co-operate with me, are free as long as they do not excite sedition against people."

He believed that a human being was free and independent in thinking, deciding and in practicing.

He had expressed himself in his will to his son Imam Hasan by saying: "You have to investigate and think over what has descended to you from your ancestors and then to beg God's help in order not to fall into doubts."

There is a general rule in Islam that the believers have to fight against oppression and injustice. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them." (22:39).

Imam 'Ali encouraged people to get back their rights by force as possible as they could.

He thought that nobody should tolerate injustice; therefore he had said: "Be against the oppressor and support the oppressed." The oppressors always rule according to their minds instead of the law. They always cause misfortunes and distresses by spreading injustice with its undue influences.

Nowadays the colonial countries exert pressure inhumanely upon the backward nations and, in order to keep their illegal interests, they keep them pauper by spoiling their natural resources and preventing

them from the scientific development.

Regretfully they pretend themselves the champions of freedom and the defenders of the human rights.

Imam 'Ali (as) would never give an opportunity to his officers to abuse their power to violate people's rights, because he esteemed man in all respects.

He had instructed the tax collectors by saying: "Do not walk through the people's farms because it destroys their efforts and it makes them feel unhappy. Do not take from them more than the legal share. When you arrive at a village, you are to go to their watering places and not to go in front of their houses. First of all, you are to greet them and to talk with them kindly.

You say: "O servants of God, the caliph of God has sent us to you to collect the zakat and the alms from you." If the answer was no, you are not to be sever with them and then you are not to repeat your demand. But if they respond and wanted to apportion their yields, let them take the share that they have set aside for themselves. Be careful not to enter their cattle-pens without their permission and take care not to browbeat or frighten any Muslim."

He said in another letter: "This is my instructions to you; fear Allah (avoid sins) in your secret matters and hidden actions, where no one is present except Allah and no one watches except Him. You have to obey Allah in the same way when openly or secretly. You are not to harm people. You are not to be rough to them and you are not to turn your faces away from them proudly because of your positions. They are your brethren in faith and you are in need of their help in achieving your job. Of course you have certain shares and rights in this poor-rate and the poor, the weak and the indigents have other shares. We shall pay you your rights and you too have to care for their demands."

He always asserted people's rights, small or big, secretly or openly.

He wrote to one of his officers saying: "Do not say to the people that you are their master or a man of authority and that they have to obey you. This will spoil your heart and weaken your faith in religion and furthermore it creates anarchy in the state."

He himself controlled everything of the state affairs so that no one could infringe on others' rights at his time.

It was reported to him that the *wali* of the districts had misappropriated the treasury. He wrote to him: "The goodness of your father cheated me to think that you will follow his right manner and you will imitate him, but according to what was reported to me, you have followed your own passions. You leave the religion and morality behind by doing your relatives favors. You better your life by spoiling your afterlife. (His saying was in compliance with the Holy Qur'an when saying:

"Then as for him who is inordinate, and prefers the life of this world, then surely the hell, that is the abode" (79:37-39).

A man like you is good for nothing. You are not able to drive the harm away nor worthy of being given a promotion, nor trustworthy against misappropriation..... Come to me as soon as this letter reaches you inshallah.”

Imam ‘Ali, in one of his sermons, said: “By Allah, if I sleep on the Sa’dan⁶ wakefully or I will be pulled bound in chains, is better to me than to meet Allah and His apostle on the Day of Judgment wronging some people or extorting something of the vanities of the world.”

Imam ‘Ali (as) had given a right to the government to punish the offenders to be as a warning for the others.

A man was heard crying for help about Hamadan (a city in the west of Iran). It appeared that someone had bought a shirt and paid the seller some spotted coins and slapped him on the face. They were disputing with each other when Imam ‘Ali (as) got there.

At last the buyer was forced to change the forged money. It was decided that the seller avenge himself on buyer by slapping him on the face. Although the buyer was forgiven by the seller but Imam ‘Ali (as) slapped the buyer on the face and said: “This is the right of the government too.”⁷

Imam ‘Ali wrote in his will for his son Imam Hasan: “O my son, make yourself the judge between you and the others. Like for the others what you like for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself. Do not oppress anyone as long as you do not want to be oppressed. Whatever you think as being bad for the others to do, think of it as being bad for you too to do. Deal with people in a way as you like them to deal with you. Do not talk about what you do not know well. Do not say to the others what you do not like to be said to you.”

Nowadays the eighth Islamic summit meeting will be held in Tehran to find reasonable solutions for the difficult problems and tangled affairs of the Muslims all over the world.

The presidents and the prime-ministers will attend the meeting, which will be presided by President Muhammad Khatami. Among the main problems, which will be discussed in the meeting, is the Zionist aggression against Palestine and the civil war in Afghanistan. Some other problems concerning the Islamic countries will be discussed too.

Imam ‘Ali (as) had instructed the Muslims with many advices in the field of governing and dealing with different classes of society such as the army, the merchants, the industrial community, the agricultural sect and the poor.

He fixed the basic sides of the Islamic government; administration, public services, judiciary, the financial affairs and the clerical affairs. It was useful not only for the officials of the government but also when dealing with the various problems and situations. Some of his instructions were pointed out earlier but his most famous epistle to Malik al-Ashtar, the *wali* of Egypt, included all the mention instructions and a

large number of highly regard able rules.

The letter is as the following: “In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This is what the servant of Allah, ‘Ali, Ameer–al–Mu’mineen, has ordered Malik al–Ashtar, who is appointed as *wali* of Egypt, ordering him to collect its revenue, to fight its enemies, to manage its people’s affairs and to improve the country.

He is ordered to fear Allah and to obey Him and to follow what Allah has ordered in His book of obligations and norms, which no one will be prosperous unless by following and no one will be wretched unless by denying and missing, to support Allah (by supporting the rightness) with his heart, hand and tongue, because Allah has promised to support whomever support Him and to glorify whomever glorifies Him.

He is ordered to control his soul’s fancies and to subdue his soul if it wants to recalcitrant, because the soul often incites towards evil except for those, whom Allah has mercy upon.

O Malik, know that I have sent you to a country that had experienced just and unjust rules before you. The people will think of your deeds as you thought of the deeds of the *walis*, who preceded you, and they will talk about you as you talked about the *walis* ruled before you.

The virtuous men will be known by what is said about them by the people (by the favor of Allah). Let the loveliest provision to you be the benevolent doing. Control your fancy and prevent yourself from what is not legal to you because controlling one’s self is the very fairness whether he likes or dislikes it.

Fill your heart with mercy, love and kindness towards your people and do not be with them like the beast waiting for the opportunity to eat them, because people are of two kinds; either your brothers in religion or your brothers in humanity.

They fall into mistakes and may be incited by the slips. They may commit sins on purpose or unknowingly. So you are to forgive them as you like Allah to forgive you. You rule over them and the responsible guardian rules over you and Allah is upon the one, who installed you.

Allah tries you by managing your people’s affairs so do not be in a war against Allah (by trespassing His Sharia and by wronging His people) because you are unable to put up with His wrath and you cannot do without his forgiveness and mercy.

Do not regret when you forgive someone and do not boast when you punish someone. Do not be angry about something that you may find an excuse for it. Do not say: “I am the superior. I order and I must be obeyed” for it corrupts the heart and destroys the religion and approaches to the others (the opponents).

If your high position gives a sense of splendor or pride, you are to think of the supreme power of Allah above you and His ability to act upon you what you can never put up with. This will lessen your vanity, prevent your sharpness and restore what is missed of your reason to you.

Beware not to compare yourself with Allah in His greatness or to imitate Him in His supreme power because Allah degrades every arrogant and demeans every haughty one.

Be fair before Allah and do not prefer yourself or your relatives and close companions to the people. If you do not follow this, you will wrong; and whoever wrongs the people, Allah will be his opponent and when Allah becomes the opponent of someone, He refutes his excuses and that he will be in a state of war against Allah until he desists from oppression or he repents.

Nothing leads to change the blessings of Allah and to hasten His wrath more than to persist in oppression, because Allah hears the prayer of the oppressed and He always waylays the oppressors.

Let the loveliest thing to yourself be that which is moderate in rightness, more general in justice and widely accepted by the people. Know that the discontent of the public removes the content of the upper class and that the discontent of the upper class will be excused by the content of the public.

No one is more dependent upon the *wali* during the ease, less helpful during the distress, more reluctant of justice, more insistent on gifts, less grateful when gifted, less indulgent when prevented and less patient during misfortunes than the upper class.

Whereas the pillar of the religion and the entire of the Muslims, who are always ready to stand against the enemy, are the public of the ummah, so let your tendency be with them and let your attention be to them.

Let him, who looks for the defects of people, be the farthest one from you and the most odious to you because people have defects that the *wali* is the first one, who has to cover them. Do not try to disclose what is hidden of those defects but you have to purify what is appeared of them to you and Allah decides upon what is unknown for you.

Cover the defects (of people) as possible as you can and Allah will cover of your defects as what you like to cover of your people's defects.

Remove every grudge from the people's hearts by behaving fairly with them and get rid of every enmity. Ignore whatever is not clear to you and do not hasten to believe any slanderer because a slanderer is deceitful even if he imitates the sincere people.

Let neither a miser participate in your consultation because he makes you be away from virtue and frighten you of poverty if you want to spend, nor a coward because he disheartens you nor a greedy one because he graces greed for you with wrongfulness.

Miserliness, cowardliness and greed are different instincts but they participate in one common thing, which is distrusting Allah.

The worst of your viziers are they, who were viziers of the wicked rulers before you and who participated

in their sins; so do not let them be of your retinue because they were the supporters of the sinners and the brothers of the unjust.

You will find better than them, who have the same experience but without sins and guilts and who haven't helped the unjust with their injustice nor the sinners with their sins. They will be less burdensome on you, more helpful for you, more kind-hearted to you and less intimate with other than you (the opponents). So you depend on such people as your retinue and then let the most preferable one to you that, who is the most truthful in saying the bitter truth to you and the least helpful when you do what Allah hates for His guardians to do whether it agrees with your fancy or not.

Stick to the pious and truthful people and inure them not to praise you or make you feel proud about something that you haven't done because much praise leads to vanity and arrogance.

Do not consider the benevolent and the evil as equal because you will discourage the benevolent to do benevolence and encourage the offensive to commit more offenses. You have to reward every one according to his doing.

Know that nothing makes the ruler think much of his people better than to be kind to them and to lessen their burden and not to force them to do what they are not able to do.

Let you, by doing that, cause a mutual trust between you and your people because confidence will keep you away from many troubles. As long as you do good to them they will confide in you and as long as you do evil to them they will distrust in you.

Do not break a good tradition followed by the leaders of this ummah, upon which the ummah agreed unanimously and was a cause of the people's virtuousness. Do not create a tradition, which will oppose some of those previous traditions, so that the merit will be for those, who enacted those traditions, and the sin will be upon you because you oppose them.

Always discuss with the ulema and the wise men to firm what improves the affairs of your state and to revive what have rectified the people before you.

Remember that the people are composed of different classes. The progress of one is dependent on the progress of the other; and none can afford to be independent of the other. We have the army formed of the soldiers of God; we have our civil officers and their establishments, our judiciary, our revenue collectors and our public relations officers. The general public itself consists of Muslims and Thimmis⁸ and among them are merchants and craftsmen, the unemployed and the indigent.

Allah has prescribed for them their several rights, duties and obligations. They are all defined and preserved in the Book of Allah and in the traditions of His Prophet.

The soldiers, by the grace of Allah, are like a fortress to the people and they lend dignity to the state. They uphold the prestige of the faith and maintain the peace of the country. Without them, the state

cannot stand and also they cannot stand without the support of the state. Our soldiers have proved strong before the enemy because of the privilege Allah has given them to

fight for Him; but they have their material needs to be fulfilled and have therefore to depend upon the income provided for them from the state revenue.

The military and the civil population, who pay revenue, both need the cooperation of the others; the judiciary, the civil officers and the clerks, who run the transactions and dealings among people, and the all cannot do without the tradesmen, the merchants and the craftsmen, who run the market and offer their services to the others who may not be able to do by themselves.

And then, there is the class of the poor and the needy, whose maintenance is an obligation on the other classes. Allah has given an appropriate opportunity of living to the all; and then the rights of all of these classes are to be under the charge of the *wali* and nothing will acquit the *wali* of his charge except by carrying out his charge fairly with full carefulness after praying Allah to support him.

Indeed, it is obligatory for him to undertake this duty and to bear with patience the inconvenience and difficulties of the task.

Be particularly mindful of the welfare of those in the army, who, in your opinion, are staunchly faithful to their God and His Apostle and loyal to your imam, who, in the hour of passion, can restrain themselves and listen coolly to the sensible remonstrance, and who can succor the weak and smite the strong, who will not be incited by the violent provocation and who will not falter at any stage.

Keep to those of good reputation, integrity and glorious past. Depend upon those of courage and bravery and of magnanimity and generosity because they are the base of liberality and the sources of benevolence.

Care for them as parents care for their children and do not exaggerate what you have done to them. Do not leave any little kindness to them you think it may be worthless because any kindness towards them will lead them to confide in you and to offer you the sincere advice. Attend to every bit of their wants.

Do not be content with general help that you may have given to them, for sometimes, timely attention to a little want of theirs brings them immense relief.

Let your commander in chief be the one, who helps his men and gives them from his wealth what suffices them and suffices their families left behind so that their intention will be the same in their jihad against the enemy. Your being kind to them will turn their hearts towards you.

The best delight of the *wali*'s eye is by spreading justice in the country and by the expression of the people's cordiality.

They do not express their goodwill except when their hearts are contented and they will not be sincere

unless they are willing to safeguard their *walis* and are contented with their rule and are hopeful of their aims so try to achieve their hopes and keep on praising them and mentioning their good deeds because praising the good deeds provokes the brave and incites the laggard inshallah.

Keep every one's right and do not ascribe someone's excellence to another. Do not belittle one's great deed. Do not let someone's nobility lead you to glorify his slight deed and do not let the meanness of someone's lead you to belittle his great deed.

Turn to Allah and to His Prophet for guidance whenever you feel uncertain about what you have to do. Allah had said to some people, whom He wished to guide:

“O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle”.

Referring to Allah is to obey His Book and referring to the Prophet is to follow his Sunnah, which calls for unity and warns of separation.

Choose, for judging among people, the best of them to you, who is not obsessed by distresses, doesn't become importunate before the opponents, doesn't keep on mistakes, doesn't miss reason, doesn't hesitate to follow the truth when he finds it, doesn't think of greed, doesn't satisfy with the least perception without looking for the farthest, the most pondering on the confused matters, the most dependent upon evidences, the least bored in inspecting the opponents, the most determined when the truth appears, who isn't affected by praise, who isn't incited by any temptation and these are very few.

Observe his (the judge) judgments always and be openhanded to him to satisfy his needs so that he won't be in need of the people. Give him a position in your court so high that none can even dream of coveting it and so high that neither backbiting nor intrigue can touch him.

Think of this so much for this religion was captive under the control of the evildoers. They used it according to their fancies and as a means to obtain the vain pleasures of this worldly life.

Then think about your officials. Employ them after trying. Do not appoint them favoringly or autocratically because they are full of injustice and treason. Seek after the experienced and coy men of the benevolent families and the previous in Islam because they are more honest, less greedy and more prudent.

Then supply them with sufficient living for it helps them to purify themselves and prevent them from seizing what is there under their control and it will be an evidence against them if they break your order or betray the trust.

Then check their jobs and send truthful and sincere inspectors to watch them. Watching them secretly leads them to be honest and loyal in doing their jobs and to be kind to the people. If one of them betrays the trust, you will be informed of that by your spies and this will be enough witness to let you punish him, disgrace him, defame him and girt him with the shame of the guilt according to what he commits.

Take much care for the revenue so as to prosper the producers because their prosperity leads to prosper the others. There is no prosperity without them because all the people are dependent upon them.

Let you think of reclaiming the lands more than to think of getting the revenue. Whoever seeks after revenue without reforming, will ruin the country and destroy the people and his rule won't last long. If they (the farmers) complain of deficiency or lack of water (of the rivers or the rains) or that their farms are damaged by floods, you have to aid them with what may lessen their sufferings.

Do not be vexed about what you give them to relieve their distress because they will, in return, recompense in prospering your country and strengthening your rule besides getting their goodwill and being delighted by spreading justice among them. They will join their power to yours and will confide in you after doing them favors and being fair with them.

One day if something happens, you may charge them with a heavy burden and you find that they undertake it willingly. Prosperity bears whatever you burden it with.

The desolation of the land comes out of the indigence of its people and the indigence of the people comes out of the eagerness of the *walis* for heaping up monies for themselves, their distrust about remaining in their positions and that they do not learn from the previous examples.

Then think about you clerks. Trust your affairs to the best of the people. Trust your special books, in which you put your plans and secrets, to the one, who is honest, who doesn't pride upon his position so that he may dare to stand against you in front of the people when there is a disagreement between you and him, who doesn't ignore to inform you of the correspondences of your officials in the different countries or to reply the received books correctly instead of you, who doesn't weaken a contract he concludes for you and won't be unable to cancel an ineffective contract, who isn't ignorant of his ability in dealing with the affairs because he, who ignores his own ability, is more ignorant of the others' abilities.

Let your choosing them not be according to physiognomy and confidence because people feign before the *walis* so that they may think well of them but in fact there is nothing of truthfulness and fidelity behind that.

You have to try them with what they did to the just *walis*, who ruled before you and then choose the best in serving the public and the most loyal among them. This will show your sincerity to Allah and to him, who entrusted you with the position you hold.

Appoint for each of your affairs one, who won't be defeated before the great difficulties nor will be lost among the many problems when facing him. If you ignore any defect available in your clerks you will be responsible for it.

Take much care for the merchants and the craftsmen; the residents and the ones roving through the

countries and take much care for the laborers because they are the source of the welfare and the means that brings devices and utensils from here and there, on the land and in the sea, from the plain and the mountain where people cannot reach. They (merchants and craftsmen) are peaceful people, who do not cause troubles or calamities.

Care for their affairs in your country and about it. And know—nevertheless— that many of them are cruel in dealing, with bad stinginess, monopolizing the utilities and controlling the deals. This is a disadvantage for the public and a defect for the *walis*.

Prevent monopoly, because the Prophet had prohibited it. Let dealing be lenient and fair and with fair prices for the two parties; the seller and the buyer. If someone monopolizes something after being forbidden, then you have to punish him severely but without exceeding the limit of justice.

For the sake of Allah, take much care for the lower class; the poor, the needy, the destitute and the handicapped who have no way to get their living. Among this class there are the beggars and those, who are in serious need but without begging.

Obey Allah with what He have entrusted you of their rights. Assign for them something from the treasury and something from the yields of the Muslims' plundered lands in each country. The far and the near of them have equal right and you are responsible for the right of every one of them.

Do not be careless about them because you won't be forgiven when wasting the slight thing for the sake of achieving the great thing. Do not be ignorant about their affairs and do not be proud before them. Seek for those, whose news do not reach you because that people scorn them and hate to look at them.

Order some of benevolent and humble people to seek for those destitute ones and to inform you of their affairs and then you are to do to them what Allah may forgive you for when you meet Him because this sect of people is in need of fairness more than the others. Anyhow you have to give everyone his right.

Attend to the orphans and the old people, who are helpless and do not demean themselves by begging people. This is too heavy for the *walis* and the whole rightness is heavy but Allah may make it easy for those, who hope for the good end by being patient and believe in what Allah has promised them of.

Assign some of your time to the plaintiffs. You sit humbly with them in a public meeting and keep your guards and soldiers away from them in order that they may talk frankly without any fear.

I had heard the Prophet (S) saying more than a time: "A nation will not be sanctified if the right of the weak is not taken back from the powerful without threat or fear." Tolerate their severity and ineloquence. Do not show them intolerance and disdain so that Allah spreads upon you his mercy and rewards you for your obeying Him. If you give, give willingly and if you deny, deny kindly and apologizing.

There are certain things that you have to do yourself; you have to answer your governors when your clerks are unable to, you have to answer the people's wants as soon as they reach you as your

assistants may delay them. Achieve every day's duty in time because each day has its own duties.

Choose for yourself the best time to be with Allah. Know that the greatest of your doings, although that they all are to be for the sake of Allah, are those that you do with good will and those you do for the sake of your people.

Let the best thing, with which you worship Allah sincerely, be the offering of his obligations, which are for Allah alone. Tire your body for your God during your day and night. Approach to Allah sincerely with all what you do for the sake of Him without any shortage or hypocrisy whatever you become tired.

When you lead the people in offering the prayer, try neither to lengthen it nor to lose anything of it because among the people there are some, who are ill, and some, who have things to do.

Once I asked the Prophet (s), when he had ordered me to go to Yemen, about how to lead people in offering the prayer and he said: "Offer it like the prayer of the weakest of them and be kind to the believers."

Do not hide too long from your people because the hiding of the *wali*s from the people is a kind of distress and ignorance of their affairs. Hiding from the people prevents them from knowing why they are kept away and so the great thing will be insignificant for them and the insignificant thing will be great, the good things will be bad and the bad will be good and the truth will be confused with falsehood.

The *wali* is but a human being. He doesn't know what is hidden of the people's affairs and the rightness has no signs that one can distinguish between the truthfulness and the falsehood. You (the *wali*) are but one of two; either you are a man with a liberal character following rightness so why do you hide from a right duty that you are to do or a deed of munificence you are to offer?

Or a man of stinginess and then you will find that how soon the people will despair of asking you for anything in spite of that the most of people's wants are of complaining of wrongfulness or asking for fairness of a conduct, which do not cost you anything.

The *wali* has a retinue and close companions, among whom there are some selfish, impudent and unfair persons when dealing with people. Cut off this thing by cutting off the reason that encourages them to be so.

Do not donate to anyone of your retinue or relatives a donation. Let them not expect from you to possess any property, which will harm other peoples of their watering or a shared act. They (the *wali*'s retinue or relatives) enjoy it at the expense of the others and hence the benefit will be for them whereas the blame will be upon you in this life and in the afterlife.

Make every one submit to the rightness whoever he is whether your retinue and relatives or not. Be patient and tolerant in applying that whatever effect it has upon your relatives and close companions. Care for its result whatever heavy it is to you because the result of that will be good.

If the people suspect you of doing injustice, come out to them with your evidence to refute their suspicion, because by this you will accustom yourself to justice.

Be kind to your people when showing your evidences to achieve your aim in rectifying them according to the rightness.

Do not refuse the peace your enemy invites you for if it pleases Allah because peace will bring your soldiers comfort, make you safe from your troubles and bring security for your country. But be extremely careful of your enemy after the peace because the enemy may approach to you under the pretense of peace in order to attack you unexpectedly. So be resolute and doubt your enemy's good will.

When you conclude an agreement with your enemy or you promise of something, you have to keep your agreement with fidelity and to keep your promise with loyalty. Make yourself as the safeguard of what you have promised because nothing of Allah's obligations that people agree upon, in spite of their different thoughts and fancies, is better than to glorify fulfilling the promises.

The polytheists, rather than the Muslims, kept to their promises among them when they saw the bad results of perfidy. So do not betray your agreement, do not break your promise and do not cheat your enemy for no one dares to disobey Allah but the miserable ignorant. Allah made His promise as safety that He spread between His people with His mercy and made it as sanctum, to whose power people resorted and to whose protection they hurried. So never let thwarting, cheating or forging be with your promises.

Do not conclude an agreement that you may use confused statements in order to find a way that you can cheat with it and do not depend upon a solecism as an excuse after certifying your promise. Let no distress lead you to annul your promise unfairly because tolerating a distress that you expect its relief and good result is better than cheating that you fear its bad consequence besides that Allah will ask you about His right of fidelity you break and then He will bless neither your life nor your afterlife.

Avoid and avoid shedding blood unjustly and without any right cause leading you to. Nothing leads hurriedly to wrath, to evil consequence, to transience of blessings and cessation of life worse than shedding bloods unrightfully. Allah the Almighty will judge among His people, first of all, about shedding bloods on the Day of Resurrection.

Do not try to firm your rule by shedding haram blood because this will weaken and enfeeble your rule or indeed it will remove your rule and transfer it to others. Neither Allah nor I will forgive you for an intended killing because it must have a penalty.

If you face a wrong doing, let your whip, sword or hand not exceed in punishment because a blow may cause a killing. Let your rule not make you proud that you do not give the guardians of the killed one their right.

Avoid self-conceit; do not confide in what you like of yourself and do not wish to be praised because this is the best opportunity for the Satan to crush the benevolence from inside the benevolent.

Do not mention the favors you do to your people.

Do not exaggerate your deeds and do not promise your people and then you break your promise, because mentioning the favors done by you void benevolence, exaggeration puts out the light of rightness and breaking the promise brings detestation of Allah and the people. Allah said:

“It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do”.

Do not give your judgment about the matters before their time and do not be indifferent when they occur.

Do not insist upon dispute when the matters are not clear and do not be indifferent when they become clear.

Put everything in its place and every order in its concernment.

Do not distinguish yourself with what the people are equal in and do not ignore your duties when they become clear for the people because what you take unrightfully, will be taken from you to the others and how soon your affairs will be uncovered and then the rights of the wronged ones will be extracted from you.

Control your passion, intensity, power and sharpness of your tongue. Be away of all that by preventing your tongue from setting about and by delaying your power until your rage calms down and then you have the option to decide.

You won't control yourself until you worry yourself with recalling that you will meet your God in the afterworld.

You have to remember what preceded you of a just government, a virtuous norm, a tradition of our Prophet (S) or an obligation in the Book of Allah and then you have to imitate what we have done according to that and to try your best to follow what I have entrusted you with in this charter.

I have quitted myself from anything you may protest with later on and lest you find any excuse when you hasten after your fancy.

I pray Allah, with His infinite mercy and great power of granting every wish, to grant me and you success to do what pleases Him and His people with the rightful conduct and to make us worthy of people's good will and to offer beneficial achievements to the country.

I pray Allah to grant us blessing, dignity and to conclude my life and yours with happiness and martyrdom. To Allah we will return. Peace be upon the messenger of Allah and Allah may bless him and his pure progeny with great peace and blessing. With salaam.”

This letter, which really represented the charter of the Islamic government, had been written by Imam 'Ali (as), who was a prodigy of science.

He applied whatever he had said in it. The letter showed that his aim was only to execute the divine law and to improve the social conditions without disturbing the public peace and no to give any chance to the plunderers to misappropriate the public funds.

It comprised all the Islamic principles calling for spreading justice, protecting the human rights without differentiating between the blacks and the whites or Muslims and non – Muslims. It was really a good guide to civilized Islam.

He had declared the duties of the *wali* and the people, the duty of the rich towards the poor and the fulfillment of the obligations of Allah. Furthermore he pointed out the particulars of an Islamic government and he had paved the way for the Islamic organizations and administrations to follow the best bases.

In order to spread justice and to fight against oppression, he used to rouse the feeling of freewill and freedom among the people by exhorting them to seek their rights and to stand up to the aggressors.

In this concern he said: "By Allah, I will take the right of the oppressed from the oppressor and I will guide the oppressor with his nose to the way of rightness even if he is unwilling." He also said: "Be an enemy of the oppressor and a helper to the oppressed."

He said: "Allah may have mercy upon him, who supports rightfulness when he sees it and rejects wrongfulness when he sees it and who supports the oppressed against the oppressor."

But the worldly governments try to change the law for the benefit of them and hence they cause harms to their peoples because they are cruel and merciless and they have no faith in the merciful God; consequently they violate the principles of the law and then they run after the pleasures of their short life.

Hence the private and individual interests come forth and the rule of struggle for getting benefits and avoiding losses start to run and the human beings are involved in quarrels and competitions.

Then the human affection and the sense of friendship and brotherhood disappear and man falls into laziness and carnality at last whereas the faith in God and believing in the afterworld gives man the security and peace of mind; that peacefulness which causes man to be attentive to God, to undertake the responsibility of his own doings, to fight against evils for the sake of God and does his best to build and make the world habitable and consequently he will be expectant of good rewards in the future life.

Such faith in God with the aim of being friend and brother with the others and fighting against oppression for the sake of spreading justice and defending goodness to honor of goodness itself is the very faith that takes man to welfare and peacefulness.

Therefore the Jews and the Christians are highly recommended to resign themselves to the Mosaic Law and the gospel and to adopt them as a belief to be saved from worries and anxieties.

But Islam is different from the other religions. It directs man to the Most High and the One and Only God, Who has the control over all the circumstances, and to believe that He has created the whole creatures and all people are His servants.

He deserves the real sovereignty and no human being can secure his benefit or avoid harm without His will. Consequently a freehearted Muslim doesn't worry about the quarrels of the world and doesn't deem it necessary to injure the others.

From a study of Imam 'Ali's words through Nahj al-Balaghah we conclude that Islam, in the first step, purifies people from bad qualities and in this way it makes them free from all passions and fancies. Such people will never submit to abjection and will never leave the field of fighting against cruelty and oppression because they are not captured by passions.

And for this reason Islam looks kindly to those people, who are free of passions, and ranks them with the mujahidin and not with the wretched and hypocrites.

The Holy Qur'an says:

“Say: If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your mates and your kinsfolk and property, which you have acquired, and the slackness of trade which you fear and dwellings which you like, are dearer to you than Allah and His Apostle and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command; and Allah does not guide the transgressing people”(9:24).

What a worthy proclamation it is! All the worldly passions have been put in a scale-pan of the balance and loving God and His Apostle and striving in the way of Him in the other scale-pan. Of course the pan of godliness is heavier because of the moral distinction of the faith in God.

Islam, in its first steps, tried to free man from superstitions and false imaginations, because the world was immersed in superstitions and delusions before the advent of Islam.

Some of those superstitions were innovated by people and some others were attributed to God by some distinguished religious men and all of those superstitions arose from ignorance that people were afflicted with from old times.

It was mentioned in Nahj al-Balaghah that when Imam 'Ali (as) determined on setting out to Siffeen, one of his companions said to him: “According to astrology, you will not be successful in your aim if you set out at this moment.”

Imam 'Ali (as) exclaimed with anger and said: “Do you think that you can tell which moment one may go out without facing any evil or can you bring good news of which moment one may go to obtain good?”

Then he turned towards his men and said: “O people, avoid learning astrology⁹ except that by which you are to be guided on the land or in the sea, because it leads you to divining. An astrologer is a diviner and the diviner is like the sorcerer, the sorcerer is like the unbeliever and the unbeliever would be in hell.”

Anyhow Islam came to release the nations from the false imaginations that were engraved in the figures of the idols. Islam invited people to worship the One and Only God, who is free from false delusions, and called them to use their mental faculties as a guide towards the truths of life and to depend upon the scientific facts to be certain about the truth of the existence of Allah

It is undeniable to say that when Islam appeared, the world was immersed in corruption and oppression and people had submitted themselves to debauchery and carnality.

The two empires of Rome and Iran were involved awkwardly in immoral habits, the people were treated inhumanely and unjustly and the rulers used to encroach upon the other's rights. Then Islam came and reformed the corrupted conditions and changed that disgraceful situation into a peaceful life full of delight and motion and it prepared people to live morals and virtues.

Hence the world of Islam became the source of learning and instruction for a long time, so the Muslims were known as an obvious example of humanity, but as a result of the undue influence of the colonial policy of the West and because of the ignorance of the Islamic statesmen the Islamic morals and ideals began to disappear gradually throughout this nation.

Consequently the Muslims were captured by passions and laziness and they fell into the actual misfortune at last. The colonial policy of the West, in the last two centuries, was based on creating discords and splitting among the people of the backward countries. Those political conspiracies led those people to live in poverty.

The new rising, which is going to be powerful throughout the Islamic countries and to be active again, is really a great rising especially in Iran. It is inspired from the past experience. All the material and ideal powers are prepared for its advancement. Therefore it is clear that this lively rising can easily perform the same miracles that Islam did at its first days to uproot the corruptions of today.

Islam can order the individual and social requirements of people that no one may violate the others' and no race may oppress another race or a nation may overcome other nations. Islam can prevent quarrels and disputes. Islam invites everyone to compromise and mutual assistance for the sake of man's welfare.

Many demonstrations formed in some of the Islamic countries in favor of the mentioned rising. It indicated that the people really wanted an Islamic government but unfortunately they were suppressed by their rulers cruelly. Certainly the colonial countries had a hand in these problems.

Now there is a fanatic war against Islam and its philosophy all over the world. Some rulers of the Islamic

countries, who commit treasons against their countries, are really more dangerous than the foreigners and they support the colonial policies knowingly or unknowingly.

- [1.](#) Hashim was the great grandfather of the Hashimites.
- [2.](#) Refer to the judge Fadhlullah ibn Roozbahan in his book Ibtal al-Battil, ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in his at-Tahtheeb p.p.337, ibn Hajar in his al-Issaba, vol.2 p.p.509, Hajji Ahmad Afandi in his Hidayatul Mutab p.p.146, 152, Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his Musnad and Abu Na'eem al-Isfahani in his Hilyatul Awliya'.
- [3.](#) It was mentioned by al-Hakim an-Nayshaboori, at-Tha'labi, Muhammad aj-Jazayiri, Muhammad ibn Yousuf al-Ganji, al-Khwarizmi and many other Sunni scholars.
- [4.](#) Refer to Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by ibn Abul Hadeed, vol.3 p.p.40, Mawaddatul Qurba by Meer sayyid 'Ali al-Hamadani and many others.
- [5.](#) Sham is the old name of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.
- [6.](#) A kind of thorny plants of Arabia.
- [7.](#) It was mentioned by at-Tabari in his Tareekh.
- [8.](#) The free non-Muslims, who live under the Islamic rule by paying jizya (tribute).
- [9.](#) Here I am 'Ali meant fortune-telling or divination and not astronomy.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/imam-ali-sunshine-civilized-islam-muhammad-husayn-tahmasebi/humane-qualities-imam-ali#comment-0>