

Translator's Preface

In the name of Allah, the all-Beneficent the all-Merciful

After praising Allah, without whose help and blessing no work would be possible and without whose grace and mercy no sinful creature would walk the face of this earth, and sending salutations on His most beloved Messenger (s), the greatest man to set foot on this earth and the best of role models for the entire humankind, this humble servant presents the following translation that is dedicated to the Master of the Believers, Commander of the Faithful and the Beloved of the Prophet (s) – ‘Ali ibn Abi ṭlib (‘a).

Ghurur al-ṭikam wa Durar al-Kalim is a late fifth or early sixth century work that comprises of the aphorisms and short sayings of Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi ṭlib(‘a). The sayings, which number more than eleven thousand, contain words of wisdom and advice that can benefit everyone in their daily lives. It is for this reason that we embarked on translating this work. We hope that, God-willing, it will be a source of inspiration to all those who read it.

There are many different extant copies of this book¹ and in one recent edition, the original alphabetical listing of sayings have been rearranged and categorized subject-wise. It is the translation of this version of the work that we present before you.

Translating a work such as this poses numerous challenges. Firstly, this work is comprised of traditions in the form of aphorisms and short sayings, many of which have been extracted from other longer traditions, sermons and letters.² As such, in many cases the context of the narration is missing and needs to be investigated.

Another challenge is that in many cases it is evident that there have been changes inadvertently made by the narrators or the scribes and hence other possible forms of the sayings are mentioned in brackets. Here we have translated the other possible forms in parenthesis and have included what we have inferred from the text in square brackets for the sake of clarification and fluidity. Alternative translations and explanatory notes have been included in the footnotes.

In addition, there are certain sayings that are difficult to comprehend and accept. An example of this can be seen in the section on the sayings about women. Here we would urge the readers to refer to what the scholars and commentators have said about such narrations and how they should be interpreted.

The seven volume commentary written by the respected scholar ‘Allāma Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwansārī has been helpful in understanding many of the seemingly ambiguous sayings. In cases where we were unable to gain a satisfactory understanding of the sayings, our respected teachers in the Ḥawza were more than willing to spare their time in order to assist. For this I thank them and pray that the Almighty reward them amply. Lastly, the classical dictionaries have, as always, been an invaluable resource during the translation.

Though all effort has been made to present an accurate translation of the sayings, we take full responsibility for any mistakes and errors in the translation and seek forgiveness from the Almighty for the same.

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation to Sayyid Muhammad Ridha Shushtari for facilitating this translation and Ansariyan Publications for arranging the typesetting (along with inclusion of the original Arabic text) and publication of this work.

Tahir Ridha Jaffer

Qum al-Muqaddasah

1433 A.H.

- [1.](#) Some of these different copies even have some differing narrations (Ref: Niḡhi be Kitābe Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Sayyid Muḥammad Raḥāwī, Safīne, no. 4, Autumn 1383 Hijri Solar).
- [2.](#) The most common source from which the author has taken sayings is the Nahj al-Balāgha.

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