

Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.)'s Hadith Regarding Legislation

There have been many *ahadith* reported about Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) dealing in various aspects of *fiqh* which are used as final arguments in determining obligation when they meet all necessary conditions such as the authenticity of the avenue of its reporting and its lack of ignorance or weakness and the absence of ambiguity in its indication and connotation.

His Hadith Regarding Causations

There is also a great deal of *'ilal* (causes or foundations) for the legislation of many *ahkam* (legislative rules) in his answers to questions raised by Muhammad ibn Sinan, and also in his answers to Ibn Shathan at the end of which the narrator mentioned that he learned them one after the other from Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.).

Our View Regarding Causes

But we cannot determine that they are the actual bases for the derivation of the legislative rules; rather, they are other facets of the wisdom of which the legislative system is full, and it is quite possible that the Imam may mention one cause and adds saying that it is one cause among others.

Questioning the Causes is Human Nature

The human nature by instinct is eager to know the underlying motives which lie behind the existence of things, ascertaining such motives, looking for the reasons behind what necessitated the causes, be it in the area of their genesis, i.e., the process of their creation, or their legislation, out of the principle that there is a motive for everything in existence especially when the creation is that of the Wise One Who does not do thing for self-amusement. This is why we find those who asked Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) about the causes behind the legislation of some rules (*ahkam*) in accordance with man's questioning nature.

Imam's Answers are Harmonious With the Nature of Legislation

The Imam's answers were all in harmony with the environment of the occasion surrounding their legislation. Causes may be to achieve a social benefit, when the social aspect of legislation is more apparent than any other, or for a health, spiritual or psychological benefit, each according to whatever the nature of legislation inspires.

For example, when he explains the causes for the prohibition of adultery, the Imam (a.s.) says: "Adultery is prohibited due to the corruption it causes such as murders, loss of lineage, child desertion, chaos regarding inheritance, and other such aspects of corruption." Here he determines the social causes behind the prohibition of adultery since the social aspect is more apparent in this case of legislation than any other.

From the same standpoint, the Imam (a.s.) explains to us why usury (*riba*) is prohibited by saying: "The reason for prohibiting usury is because it eliminates favors, ruins funds, causes greed for profit, causes people to abandon their dealing with loans to each other or in paying cash, or do each other favors, and due to all the bad consequences of corruption and oppression and the exhaustion of funds."

As regarding the prohibition of eating the meat of pigs, rabbits, dead animals, spleens, the Imam (a.s.) says: "As regarding pigs, their creation was distorted by God in order to provide a moral lesson to man and in order to remind man to fear God and as an evidence of God's might to distort what He creates at will, and because the food they eat is the filthiest of filth, in addition to many other reasons. As regarding the rabbits, they are like cats: their claws are like those of the cats and like wild animals, so their behavior is equally wild, in addition to their own inner dirtiness and due to their bleeding which is similar to the bleeding of women during their menstrual period because they are miscreants. As regarding dead animals, the prohibition of eating their meat is due to the damage such meat will cause to the body, and due to the fact that God has made lawful the meat of animals slaughtered in His name so that that would be a distinction between what is lawful and what is not. As regarding the spleen, it is prohibited because of the bad blood it contains, and the cause of its prohibition is similar to that of dead animals because it is equally bad in its consequences."

These causes, as a whole, justify for us the health aspect necessitated by the legislative interest, its wisdom in safeguarding man against falling a victim to disease and as a preventive measure against ailments.

The Imam (a.s.) has said the following regarding the legislation of the pilgrimage (*hajj*): "The reason for the *hajj* is to seek to be the guest of God, to request more blessings, to abandon past sins, to feel repentant about the past, and look forward to the future. It is due to spending on the trip seeking nearness to God, tiring the body, abstaining from pleasures and desires, seeking nearness to God by worshipping Him, yielding and submitting to Him, looking up towards Him in cases of hot weather and chilling cold, during security and fear, incessantly doing so, and due to all the benefits in it of desiring the

rewards and fearing the wrath of God, the Dear One, the Exalted."

The causes here define for us the spiritual benefits of the legislation of the pilgrimage, for man needs in his life moments to leave materialistic ambition behind him in order to be in harmony with his Lord through his deep belief in God, his purely spiritual aspirations, so that the voice of belief may remain within his inner self strong and indefatigable. Thus, the legislation of the rite of *hajj* came as a destined obligation performed by man when he satisfies the legislative conditions of being able to perform it. When he achieves his materialistic needs, one may think of himself as being superior to others, and he becomes arrogant due to the transient wealth he has had; therefore, he has no choice except to expose himself to a situation which strips him of the artificiality which overwhelms him and brings him back to the pristine spiritual reality, hence the legislation of the *hajj* which causes man to feel humble before the greatness of God, and that he and the others are equal before God when they are all stripped of any materialistic distinctions.

As regarding marital relations between man and woman, the Imam (a.s.) justifies for us some legislative rules in this regard. For example, the reason why a man may marry up to four women, while a woman is prohibited from marrying more than one man, is that when a man marries four women, his children will all be related to him; had a woman married two husbands or more simultaneously, nobody would know for sure who fathered the sons she gave birth to, since they all were participating in cohabiting with her, and this causes a complete disorder for relating one to his father, and who should inherit who, and who is the kin of who.

The reason for repeating the divorce statement thrice is due to the time interval between each, and due to a possible desire for reconciliation or the calming of anger, if any, and to teach women to fear their husbands and deter them from disobeying them.

The reason why a husband can never remarry his wife whom he divorced thrice (articulating, in the process, the divorce statement nine times all in all), is that it is his right penalty so that men do not take divorce lightly or take advantage of women and think of them as weak, and so that the man would be considering his affairs, remaining awake and aware, so that he would lose all hope of a reunion after the ninth pronouncement of the divorce statement. The reason why a wife during her waiting period (*'iddat*) cannot remarry her previous husband who had divorced her twice before till she marries someone else, is due to the fact that God had permitted divorce twice, saying, "A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness,"¹ that is, after he had already divorced her for the third time, due to his committing something God Almighty hates for him to do; therefore, He prohibited him from marrying her again except after she marries someone else in order to prohibit people from taking divorce lightly and in order to protect women's rights.

These explanations which clarify the wisdom of some legislation related to the marriage relationship give us the impression regarding the great degree of concern Islam pays such relations, organizing them and safeguarding them and protecting their sanctity, emphasizing on giving them the dignified humane

attitude which safeguards the rights of both parties.

Regarding the monetary distribution of inheritance by allotting the male heir twice the share of the female, the Imam (a.s.) says the following in order to explain the wisdom in it: "The reason for giving women half what men get of inheritance is that when the woman marries, she receives, while the man gives; therefore, God decided to assist the males to be able to give."

He gives another reason why the man is given twice as much as the woman: The woman is considered dependent on the man when she needs, and he has to take care of her living expenses and to spend on her, while the woman is not required to take care of the expenses of the man, nor can she be required to pay his expenses if he was in need; therefore, God decreed to give the man more according to the Qur'anic verse, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because God has given the one more than the other, and because they support them from their means."²

Through these two causes, the Imam (a.s.) defines for us the principle of balance in the distribution of the inherited wealth according to the Islamic legislative system and the justice of such distribution. Having burdened the man with the responsibility of spending and giving and exempting the woman from it, Islam had to compensate the man for that in order to avoid any unfairness he might suffer; otherwise, to distribute the inheritance between them equally is an unfair legislation which contradicts the principle of justice of the Islamic Message.

Thus, Islam's precision in safeguarding justice in the legislative system becomes clear to us. At the same time, the superficiality of the thinking of those who call for equality between man and woman in the distribution of inheritance unveils itself to us, and that such a call is no more than a cheap noise without a scientific or realistic basis.

Having favored the man in the distribution of inheritance by giving him twice the woman's share, Islam on the other hand provides the woman with the right to be provided for by the man who must give her dower, in addition to the share of inheritance she has already received, without requiring her to shoulder any financial responsibility whatsoever...; so, how can anyone say that such a legislation is unfair?

Regarding the common custom of defining the value of the dower to be equivalent to the value of five hundred dirhams, the Imam (a.s.) says in a narrative: "God the Almighty and the Exalted has promised that if one believer pronounced *Allahu Akbar!* one hundred times, and *Subhana-Allah* one hundred times, and *Alhamdu-Lillah* one hundred times, and *La Ilaha Illa-Allah* one hundred more times, and send blessings unto His Prophet (S) yet a hundred more, then he pleads Him to marry him to the *hurin liin* (*huris* of Paradise with large lovely eyes), He would surely marry him to one, then He determined women's dowers to be five hundred dirhams. If any believer asks the hand of a woman from another Muslim brother, pays him the five hundred dirhams, and the brother does not marry him to that woman, he would have committed *'uqooq* towards him, and God will not marry him to a *huri*."

This is a beautiful way of explaining the reason for the custom which is meant to provide a solution for

the marriage problem of the needy who cannot afford to pay large sums of money as dowers and which may cause them to postpone getting married or cause them an unnecessary financial strain. The *hadith* has considered the requirement of *iman* (deep belief) as the most important reason to consider marriage in such situations.

This *hadith* defines for us the crime of one who does not marry a woman to one who has asked for her hand and paid the five hundred dirhams, calling it *'uqooq* which is the renunciation of the feeling of compassion and kindness towards another Muslim, and to look down upon him which are attributes above which a good Muslim must rise in his conduct and dealing with his Muslim brother. The lack of compassion, kindness and respect between two Muslim brothers is something God hates most of all things.

Thus does the Imam (a.s.) explain to us some injunctions of the legislative system wherein there is a great deal of wisdom and the safeguarding of vital interests in a very beautiful and interesting style perfectly harmonious with the spirit of the eternal Islamic message which came for the happiness and goodness of man.

Select Hadith of the Imam

It is not possible here to recount all the *ahadith* dealing with various fields of knowledge, the intellect, and history, that have reached us through Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.), but this does not stop us from quoting some *ahadith* which contain some objective wisdom in the areas of the creed, the legislative system, and history.

The *hadith* of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) contains precious jewels and invaluable treasures in which man senses the depth of the idea, the magnificence of *tafsir*, the beauty of performance, without an artificial manner of expression, nor the ambiguity of meaning nor stubbornness in instruction. When he is asked about the reasonable comprehension of some *ahadith* of the Prophet (S) in which a cloud of ambiguity hovers above their narration, he defines their actual objective with flexibility and ease, as if *hadith* has no other connotation except the one he provides.

Some asked him about the meaning of this tradition: "My companions are like the stars: If you follow any of them, you shall receive guidance," and another one saying, "Leave my companions to me." Both of these traditions are considered by Sunnis as the foundation of their generalization of their judgment regarding all companions of the Prophet (S), thus justifying even their acts which contradicted Islamic justice, calling what they could not justify as "an error in *ijtihad*." But the Imam (a.s.) provides us with the actual explanation of these and other such *ahadith* with honesty and integrity, outlining in an easy manner their exact meaning. In his answer regarding the first tradition, he said, "Yes; he did say this *hadith*, meaning thereby the companions who did not make any alteration after him or any change." He was asked, "How can you tell that they altered and changed?" He said, "This is due to what is reported about him (S) that he said, 'Certain individuals among my companions will be forcibly pushed away from

my Pool (of Kawthar) on the Day of Judgment just as strange camels are pushed away from the watering place, and I shall cry, 'O Lord! My companions! My companions!' and it shall be said to me, 'You do not know what innovations they invented after you,' so they will be pushed away towards the left side (where Hell is), and I shall say, 'Away with them; ruined they shall be.'" The Imam continued to say, "Such will be the penalty of those who alter and change (*hadith*)."

This *hadith* is narrated, with a minor variation in its wording, by al-Bukhari who quotes Abdullah ibn Mas'ood citing the Prophet (S) saying, "I shall be the first to reach the Pool, then the souls of some men among you will be raised and they shall be prohibited from coming near me, and I shall say, 'Lord! These are my companions!' And it shall be said to me, 'You do not know what they did after you...'"³ A number of *huffaz* and narrators of *hadith* reported this tradition in various wordings which maintained the same contextual meaning, proving thus that it is consecutive according to them.

The Imam (a.s.), through his frank and proven answer, saved us the effort to look for lame excuses for the flagrant transgressions in which a number of the *sahaba* fell, and from far-fetched artificialities to justify the errors of conduct which they deliberately committed with determination and which the same *huffaz* could not justify except by saying that they were cases of "mistaken *ijtihad*" which, according to them, did not contradict the justice expected of them, having been pressed by their attempt to attribute absolute justice to the *sahabi* no matter what he did.

A companion (*sahabi*) of the Prophet (S) who was distinguished with the honor of being so close to the Prophet (S) is one who is the custodian over the fruits of the Message and a protector of its structure through his faith and deeds. He is a man who ought to be taken as a model of conduct. He is a man, as the Imam (a.s.) used to say, who does not alter or change any of the statements of the Prophet (S). As regarding those who altered and changed, these cannot be awarded a unique distinction, just because they were companions of the Prophet (S), which raised them above other Muslims simply because they were not up to par with the level of responsibility of being honest, which is expected of them, to carry out after the demise of the Prophet (S) and the cessation of wahi from coming to this world.

The *hadith* which the Imam (a.s.) narrated about Ibn Mas'ood, and which is recorded by a number of those who learned the Holy Qur'an and *hadith* by heart in their books is considered as an explanation of this *hadith* and an explanation of its connotation. Moreover, it puts the *sahaba* on equal footing with the others in subjecting their behavior to criticism and discussion, and it shatters the self-immunity which was granted to them in accordance to Prophetic statements manufactured by a number of *huffaz* and traditionists without permitting themselves or others to discuss but take for granted.

In another *hadith*, the Imam (a.s.) proves to us, through a clear statement by the Prophet (S), that some individuals who were regarded as *sahaba* were not actually so, which shatters all the excuses used only to justify the mistakes and transgression committed by them. For example, Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Taliquani reported that a man in Khurasan swore by divorce that Mu'awiya was **not** among the true companions of the Messenger of God (S), and this happened when Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) was present

there.

The jurists there issued their verdict that the man had actually divorced his wife, and the Imam (a.s.) was asked to provide his own opinion in this regard. He decided that that man's wife was **not** divorced; therefore, those jurists wrote a statement and sent it to him. In it, they asked him, "How did you come to say, O son of the Messenger of God (S), that the woman was not to be divorced?" He wrote down on the same sheet saying, "It is so because of what you yourselves narrate from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri quoting the Messenger of God (S) saying about those who accepted Islam on the day of opening Mecca, when he was surrounded by a large number of people, 'You are good; my companions are good; and there shall be no migration after this Fath,' without including these (meaning Mu'awiya) among his companions." The jurists had to adopt the decision of the Imam (a.s.).

Thus did the Imam (a.s.) deny that Mu'awiya was a companion of the Prophet (S), which claim used to surround the man with a halo of sanctity of his personality and which used to be used to justify the very serious transgressions he committed which left their terrible marks on the structure of the Islamic government since then, and to justify such transgressions by saying that he was a *sahabi*, and that as such whatever he did or said could not possibly cast a doubt about his justice, adding, "If we see the good aspect of his action missing, we may say that he attempted *ijtihad*, and he erred," even if such error was at the expense of the Prophetic Message itself...

If we accept this argument, we would be justifying all the transgressions and erroneous behavior of some companions of the Prophet (S) regardless of their motives or horrible consequences. The transgressions of Mu'awiya and his norms of conduct, in which he departed from the line of the Islamic Message, and which agreed with the attitude of animosity towards Islam, and whose motives and impulses were reasons to cast doubts and suspicions, nobody is really obligated to defend and describe as within the Islamic Shari'a simply because they were the result of an erroneous *ijtihad* wherein the *mujtahid* is rewarded with one reward, due to his "immunity" which does not include Mu'awiya simply because the latter was not a companion of the Prophet (S) but was just like any other Muslim whose conduct was subject to accountability and criticism, and the verdict in his regard is based on the anticipated results of his deeds.

The directive the Imam (a.s.) intended by denying that those who accepted Islam, including Mu'awiya, were not companions of the Prophet on the day when Mecca was conquered is one of the strongest and deepest of his directives, for he drew a line between the Prophet (S) and his true companions on one side, and those who accepted Islam after the conquest of Mecca and under the pressure of a superior power and authority on the other hand. Had it not been for their feeling of their precarious situation versus the might of their opponent, realizing that they had no choice except to make asylum and submit to the word of Islam, they would have otherwise dealt with Islam in a quite different manner.

Al-Ma'mun once asked him why the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) is called the divider of Paradise and of Hell, and how that attribute came to be applied to him. The Imam (a.s.) in turn asked

him, "O commander of the faithful! Have you not narrated from your father from his forefathers quoting Abdullah ibn Abbas saying that he had heard the Messenger of God (S) saying, 'Loving Ali (a.s.) is *iman*, and hating him is *kufr*?' " Al-Ma'mun answered in the affirmative, so the Imam (a.s.) said, "If the distribution of Paradise and of Hell is done according to loving or hating him, then he is the distributor of Paradise and of Hell." Al-Ma'mun then said, "May God never permit me to live after your demise, O father of al-Hasan! I testify that you are the heir of the knowledge of the Messenger of God (S)."

Abul-Salt al-Harawi said, "After the Imam (a.s.) had gone back home, I came to visit him, and I said to him, 'O son of the Messenger of God! What an excellent answer you have given the commander of the faithful!' He said, 'O Abul-Salt! I spoke to him in the way he understood best, and I have heard my father telling *hadith* from his forefathers about Ali (a.s.) saying, 'The Messenger of God (S) said: 'O Ali! You are the distributor of Paradise and Hell on the Day of Judgment; you say to Hell: 'This is mine, and that is yours...'"

Al-Ma'mun was probably unable to absorb the idea that the Imam (a.s.) was a direct distributor of Paradise and Hell, as his question to the Imam (a.s.) suggested; this is why he asked him, "O Abul-Hasan! Tell me about your grandfather the Commander of the Faithful (a.s.); in which way and in which sense is he distributor of Paradise and Hell, for I have been contemplating a lot about that...?" The answer of the Imam (a.s.) was realistic on its own grounds, and it does not contradict the statement he made to Abul-Salt in which he indicated that his distribution is direct, not just in meaning, and the Imam (a.s.) did not openly tell al-Ma'mun that the distribution was not direct, but his wise statement was regarding the origin of being called as such.

In another narrative, he asked the Imam (a.s.) about the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) as to why he did not restore Fadak to its rightful owners after becoming the caliph. He answered saying, "We are members of a family who, upon becoming rulers, do not take their rights from those who confiscated them. Should we become in charge of the Muslims, we shall rule them and restore their confiscated rights to them, but we do not do so for our own selves."

It is possible that the Imam (a.s.) did not openly wish to tell the inquirer that it was not realistic that al-Zahra (a.s.) should demand Fadak and that Fadak by itself did not represent something that valuable for the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), and that they were not less generous than others in spending everything they had to look after the interests of the Muslims and safeguard their strength and unity in the face of the enemy from within or without. Demanding Fadak, then, was the starting point for proving that government rightfully belonged to the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) and it was the beginning of a reawakening campaign with an objective. Had it been successful, it would have caused very significant changes to the Islamic government and, accordingly, history would have been quite different.

When the role Fadak was expected to play in shaping the fate of the Islamic world, and there was no longer any further function for it, and the big motives for demanding it having ceased to exist, the stance of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) in its regard was now overturned after it became no more than the materialistic

value it represented. But Fadak remained the symbol of the lost justice according to the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.); for al-Zamakhshari says in his *Rabi' al-Abrar*,

"Harun al-Rashid kept pressing Musa ibn Ja'far (a.s.) to take Fadak back, and he kept refusing. When he insisted that he should, he said, 'I shall not take it back except in its boundaries.' He asked him, 'And what are its boundaries?' He said, 'The first is Aden;' al-Rashid's face changed color and he asked him, 'And what is the second boundary?' He said, 'Samarkand;' now his face started shaking in outrage. He asked him, 'And what is the third boundary?' He said, 'Africa;' and the caliph's face now turned black in anger, yet he asked him, 'And what is the fourth boundary?' He said, 'The ocean, and whatever is beyond the Caspian Sea and Armenia.' Harun al-Rashid then said, 'There is nothing left for us; so, come and take my throne as well!' The Imam (a.s.) said, 'I had told you before that if I defined its boundaries, you would refuse to give it back to me.'"

From this dialogue between Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a.s.) and Harun al-Rashid, we can comprehend the vast dimension of the significance of Fadak to Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), and that it did not represent simply a piece of land and a few palm trees but a big missionary objective whose significance was linked to the significance of the Message itself in its connotation and depth.

Another person asked him about the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) as to why people deserted him after knowing his distinction, his past feats, and the status he enjoyed in the eyes of the Messenger of God (S). He answered, "They deserted him and favored others to him after having come to know of his merits simply because he had killed a great number of their fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, and other relatives who defied God and His Messenger (S); therefore, they kept their grudge against him inside their hearts and they did not like it when he became their ruler. They did not have grudge against anyone else as much as they had against him, for nobody else was so forceful in making *jihad* in the defense of the Messenger of God (S) as much as he was; so, they deserted him for someone else."

In his answer, the Imam (a.s.) was making the point that the nation deep down was still suffering from deviations the causes of which rested in the period of the foolish days of ignorance; otherwise, the removal of Imam Ali (a.s.) from the responsibility of government, despite the qualifications and merits he enjoyed, which raised him above anyone else in the nation, was not a natural matter necessitated by an innocent political mistake. It was the result of a move which knew its direction and whose indications became apparent during the moments when Ali's sword was dripping with the blood of the enemies of God, so much so that there was hardly a house in Arabia where Ali's sword did not cause a mourning.

The Prophet (S) realized the seriousness of Ali's stance, the difficulty of the situation after his demise, and the dire consequences awaiting him due to his firm *jihad* in the Cause of God. The statements he (S) made regarding Ali (a.s.), therefore, were meant to deter those who were waiting for a chance to get even with him. Had they not been veiled by grudges, and by his own glorious past, they would have been described as the beginning of the tragedy of justice and righteousness.

We cannot find a better explanation for the change in public opinion regarding Ali's stance after the death of the Prophet (S) better than what Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) provided. If we set aside the clear *ahadith* which named the Imam (a.s.) as the caliph succeeding the Prophet (S) without any question, and we consulted the faculty of reason in all the criteria and logical orders it has to define for us the person who should succeed the Prophet (S) as the caliph, the unavoidable outcome would certainly be none other than Ali (a.s.). Besides, had the grudges and the past not been the cause of the removal of Ali from the post of ruler, the question would have remained unanswered by any honest and equitable person.

Another person asked him, "Tell me, O son of the Messenger of God! Why didn't Ali ibn Abu Talib (a.s.) fight his enemies during the twenty-five years after the demise of the Messenger of God (S) as he did during the days of his caliphate?" He answered, "It is due to his following the example of the Messenger of God (S) who did not fight the polytheists of Mecca during the thirteen years after his Prophethood, or the ones in Medina during the nineteen months period of his stay; it is due to the number of his supporters being too small.

Likewise, Ali (a.s.) did not engage himself in fighting his enemies because his own supporters were too few. Since the Prophethood of the Messenger of God (S) was not nullified by the fact that he did not make *jihad* during the period of thirteen years (in Mecca) and nineteen months (in Medina), the Imamate of Ali (a.s.) was not nullified because he did not perform *jihad* for twenty-five years, for the deterring factor in both examples was one and the same."

What the Imam (a.s.) has indicated here can be used as an answer to those who regarded the peaceful stance taken by the Imam (a.s.) towards his opponents for twenty-five years as an evidence to the Imam's satisfaction with the legitimacy of the then government, or to his relinquishing of his own right to be the caliph.

What is most beautiful in this narrative is the comparison between the peaceful stance of Imam Ali (a.s.) towards his opponents before assuming the caliphate and the stance of the Prophet (S) prior to the *hijra* (migration to Medina) and thereafter, giving the explanation that the reason in both instances is the small number of supporters and the scarcity of followers, and that had the Imam's reluctance to wage a holy war in order to achieve his objective been the reason for the invalidation of his Imamate, the reluctance of the Prophet (S), likewise, to wage a holy war during that period of time would have been a reason for the invalidation of his Prophethood, for the Prophet (S) had set the example, and the Imam (a.s.) and all other Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) followed suit.

Among the *ahadith* of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) is one narrated by Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Hamadani; he said, "I asked Abul-Hasan ar-Ridha' (a.s.), 'What is the reason for which the Almighty and Exalted God drowned Pharaoh even after Pharaoh had believed in Him and admitted His unity?' He answered, 'Because he believed only when he saw God's retribution, and belief to avoid danger is not accepted. This is God's judgment regarding past and future generations. The Exalted and the Almighty God has

said: 'When they saw Our Punishment, they said, 'We believe in God, the One God, and we reject the partners we used to join with Him,' but their professing the faith when they (actually) saw Our Punishment was not going to profit them.'⁴

The Exalted and Almighty has also said, 'The day that certain of the Signs of thy Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe in them then, if it believed not before nor earned righteousness through its faith.'⁵ So when Pharaoh was about to be drowned, he said, "I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the children of Israel believe in, and I am of those who submit (to God in Islam)." (It was then said to him), 'Ah now! But a little while before wast thou in rebellion! And thou didst mischief (and violence)! This day shall We save thee in thy body, that thou mayest be a Sign to those who come after thee!'"⁶

This narrative has a moral for those who wish to learn, for *iman* is not that one believes and returns to his Lord only when he sees no avenue of salvation before him and despair overcomes him; rather, *iman* is belief in God and going towards Him voluntarily in both cases of despair and of hope.

Another *hadith* Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) narrated stated, "Anyone who meets a poor Muslim and greets him in a greeting different from the one whereby he greets the rich, he would meet the Exalted and the Almighty God on the Day of Judgment and He is angry with him." In this tradition, the Imam (a.s.) provides us with a very beautiful example of humanity enjoined by genuine Islamic conduct governing the Muslim's conduct with his Muslim brother, for Islam united all members of the nation in its law of personal conduct; there is no distinction for the wealthy man over the deprived poor man, and all people are equal under the judgment of Islam.

Another *hadith* of the Imam (a.s.) is one in which he was asked by Ibn al-Sakit, "Why did the Almighty and Exalted God send Musa (Moses) ibn Imran (a.s.) with a miraculous cane and white hand and the tool of sorcery, Isa (Jesus, AS) with miraculous medicine, and Muhammad (a.s.) with miraculous speech and oratory?" The Imam (a.s.) said, "When the Almighty and the Exalted God sent Moses (a.s.), sorcery dominated the minds of people of his time, so he brought them from the Almighty and the Exalted something which they never had, nor could they bring about anything like it, thus rendering their sorcery void and proving his argument against them. When the Almighty and the Exalted God sent Jesus during a period when chronic diseases became widespread and people were in dire need of a cure. Jesus (a.s.) brought them from God the Almighty and the Exalted something they never had, bringing the dead back to life, curing those born blind and the lepers by the Will of God, proving his argument against them. And when the Almighty and Exalted God sent Muhammad (S) during the time when speeches and oratory (and I think he said with poetry, too), he brought them the Book of the Almighty and the Exalted God and with pieces of wisdom and counsel thereby he voided their arguments." Ibn al-Sakit said, "By God I have never seen anyone like you! What is the argument against people these days, then?" He answered, "Reason. Through it can you come to know who tells the truth about God and you believe in him, and who tells lies about God and you disbelieve in him." Ibn al-Sakit said, "This, by God, is the right answer..."

A miracle is a super-natural thing which the ordinary individual is unable to perform due to his limited energies and motivational powers. Miracles are different from sorcery. Sorcery is not an actual super-natural act but a swift movement which causes the viewer to see the realities turned upside down, or changes the visible picture into its contrary. This may take place by subjecting the viewer to obscure effects which veil from his sight a certain color or a certain picture. What leads us to that conclusion is the statement of the Almighty in the context of narrating how Moses (a.s.) fared with the wizards from the descendants of Israel, saying, "So their ropes and their canes seemed to him, because of their sorcery, as though they were crawling."[7](#)

Sorcery, then, is nothing more than stimulating the imagination, making things look different than they are, and causing one to fall under a magical spell. As regarding what a miracle is, it is an actual result of a super-natural deed intended to win the argument against people in the process of proving one's true prophethood and mission, and it is an act which God causes to happen. It is different from sorcery because it is not subjected to psychological effects, or complications in the movement, but a broadening of the energy which affects matters viewed by man due to the effect of the Might of God.

In narrating the story of Moses (a.s.), the Almighty stated, "And (appoint him) an apostle to the children of Israel, (with this message): 'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave; and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead back to life by God's leave.'"[8](#) And the Almighty has also said, "And it was never the part of an apostle to bring a Sign except as God permitted. For each period is a Book (revealed)."[9](#)

Every one of the Prophets had a miracle which distinguished him from other prophets and messengers and which was in harmony, in its own particular way, with the common phenomena which prevailed upon the social condition of the time so that the psychological effect caused by its miraculous effect would become a reality, as the Imam (a.s.) meant in the tradition above. The miracles of prophets, according to the contexts of the verses and narratives, were not the result of the effect of a natural human energy; rather, they were the results of a creative energy whereby God distinguished His Prophets for the purpose of establishing the superiority of their argument when such a miracle was necessitated by the mission.

As regarding the miracles of the Imams which are reported in order to testify to their Imamate and to their being the most rightful for the post of caliphate, this is not something unusual about them since they were selected by God to be His vicegerents on earth, entrusting them with the message after His Prophet (S), but what must be researched is that many such miracles were proven to have been performed by them and were attested to by an acceptable medium.

But the Imams never needed a miracle beyond the qualifications of knowledge and conduct which distinguished them in order to prove the authenticity of their Imamate, for the qualifications which characterized them were by themselves the miracles proving their right.

We have said that the miracle is the super-natural phenomenon which in its own particular way agrees with the general phenomena which dominated the social reality of its time, and the common phenomenon which enjoyed a clear priority during the time of the Imams was knowledge; therefore, it is mandatory that their miracles proving their Imamate should be super-natural knowledge whereby they rise above all other levels of their contemporary folks. Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) was asked about the phenomenon whereby an Imam could be identified as an Imam when his time comes as an accurate indication of his Imamate, and he answered by saying, "It is knowledge, and God's response to his plea."

In a tradition regarding the distinctions of an Imam, he said, "His indications are in two attributes: knowledge and God's answer to his plea, and all the events which he foretold before their occurrence, for that is according to a promise made to him by the Messenger of God (S) which he inherited from his forefathers, peace be upon them, which in turn would be among matters told to the Prophet (S) through Gabriel from God, the Knower of the Unseen and the Unknown, Glory be to Him."

This statement of the Imam (a.s.) leads us to realize that the miracle should be in harmony with the phenomenon of the time, thus proving the argument. Each of the two requirements mentioned by the Imam were actually satisfied in him and in all other Imams; through them, their super-natural miracle is completed, without the need to prove their Imamate, or to prove its authenticity by other miracles the truth about many of which we may not have a way to prove. It is also a clear answer to those who accused the Imams (a.s.) of claiming to know the unknown due to their foretelling of events which were yet to occur and which did take place after that. All this, according to the context of the statement of the Imam (a.s.), is the knowledge which they gained as a prerogative privilege they inherited from their grandfather the Messenger of God (S) according to the commandments of the Almighty and Exalted God so that their distinction might be evident to the public and they would be distinguished from all other segments of the nation.

Among the *ahadith* narrated by the Imam (a.s.) regarding al-Mahdi, may God hasten his reappearance, is one narrated by al-Husayn ibn Khalid who said, "I said to him, 'May my life be sacrificed for you, tell me about one *hadith* narrated by Abdullah ibn Bakkir from Ubayd ibn Zarara.' He asked, 'What is it?' I said, "Ubayd ibn Zarara said that he met Abu Abdullah (a.s.) during the year in which Ibrahim ibn Abdullah ibn al-Hasan came out for *jihad*, and he said to him, 'May my life be sacrificed for you! This person has caused people to talk, and people have rushed to his aid; so, what do you order us to do?' He said, 'Fear God, and stay calm as long as the heavens and the earth stay calm.' Then he added, 'Abdullah ibn Bakkir used to say, 'Had Ubayd ibn Zarara been truthful, nobody would have come out and no Qaaim (Mahdi) would there be.' Abul-Hasan ar-Ridha' (a.s.) said, 'The *hadith* according to the narration of Ubayd is accurate, but not according to the way Abdullah ibn Bakkir understood it. What Abu Abdullah meant was as long as the heavens echo the calls of your fellow, and as long as the earth is firm under the feet of his marching army.'" This *hadith* may be counted among the *mutashabih ahadith* to which the Imam (a.s.) made reference above. Abdullah ibn Bakkir used to refer to their clear traditions regarding al-Mahdi (a.s.) in order to avoid falling into dangerous confusion and misunderstandings.

Among the *ahadith* of the Imam (a.s.) which deal with the Islamic legislative system is one narrated by Abdullah ibn Taoos who said: "I told Abul-Hasan ar-Ridha' (a.s.) that I had a nephew whom I married to my daughter and who used to frequently pronounce the divorce statement. He said, 'If he is a descendant of one of your (Shi'a) brethren, there is nothing to worry about, but if he is from these (Sunni) brothers, then recall your daughter for they shall be separated.' I said, 'But, may my life be sacrificed for yours, did not Abu Abdullah (a.s.) use to say, 'Beware of those divorced thrice at one time, for they shall marry more than once?' He said, 'Yes, this is the case if the man is one of your brethren, not one of these; whoever follows the creed of certain people is bound to follow their [juristic] rules.'"

Jurists have relied on this and similar narratives to consider all the verdicts issued by followers of other schools of thought to be accurate in both areas of obligations and personal status except in the case of *zakat* about which they have decided that it will have to be taken out again if its believing recipients are not residents of the same area (where the payer resides) according to the beliefs of followers of the creed of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) who rely on certain texts in this matter which rule this issue in particular.

As regarding the issue of divorce, which is the subject-matter of this *hadith*, the school of thought of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) determines that if the divorce statement contains "thrice" in it, rather than being repeated twice again, is not considered binding but it would be if the statement were repeated twice provided it meets the other conditions such as the presence of two just witnesses, the absence of the use of force, and the woman being *tahir* (clean), that is, she has not cohabited with her husband prior to his pronouncement and has not taken her *ghusul* (ceremonial bathing) yet, in addition to other conditions which validate divorce. This is what is commonly accepted, while others have decided that it will be null as the apparent understanding of this *hadith* suggests. But if the husband repeats his statement, "She is divorced!" three times, it is, according to Imami (Shi'a) Muslims considered as one-time divorce with rendering the repetition null if such repetition is to be doubtful. The rest of Muslim sects regard divorce in both instances as binding and the husband cannot go back to her before she marries another husband.

Another *hadith* narrated by the Imam (a.s.) says, "The Almighty and Exalted God has decreed three rites each depends on yet another one: He decreed the prayers and the payment of *zakat*; so, He does not accept the prayers of anyone who says his prayers but does not pay *zakat*; He decreed that one must thank Him and thank his parents too; so, He does not accept the thanks of one who thanks Him but is not grateful to his parents; and He decreed that one should fear Him and remain in constant contact with his kin; so, anyone who does not remain in close touch with his relatives does not in turn fear God, the Exalted, the Almighty."

Another one says, "A believer (*mu'min*) cannot be truly so except after acquiring three attributes: from his Lord, from his Prophet (S), and from his fellow humans. From his Lord, he must learn how to keep a secret; the Almighty and the Exalted said, 'He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with his Mysteries, except an apostle whom He has chosen.'¹⁰ From his Prophet, he must learn patience while dealing with people; the Exalted and the Almighty God ordered His Prophet to be

patient with people, saying, 'Uphold forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant (folks).'

¹¹ From his fellows, he has to learn patience during periods of poverty and adversity, for the Dear and the Almighty One says, '... And to be firm and patient in pain and in adversity.'

¹²

Among his interesting and entertaining *hadith* is one narrated by Yasir who says, "I have heard Abul-Hasan ar-Ridha' (a.s.) saying, 'Young man! *Aatinal ghadaa* [which permits two meanings],' and I looked somehow astonished at his request. He noticed the puzzlement on my face whereupon he recited the verse, '... Moses said to his attendant, 'Bring us our early meal.'

¹³ So I said, 'The prince is the most knowledgeable of people and their very best.'"

The narrator of this incident interpreted the statement of the Imam (a.s.) to mean something like what the Almighty meant when He said, "... then produce a Sura like thereunto,"

¹⁴ whereas he intended his servant simply to bring them their food [which does not require a miracle like producing a Qur'anic verse!].

This is just a specimen of beautiful traditions narrated by or about Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) which we hope we have been successful in selecting among the ones that over-flow with goodness in various fields.

His Morals and Counsels

The value of wisdom and moral is when it sets out of its leading springs to make its way in life to plant goodness, beauty, and love, and to uproot evil, corruption, and hatred. The individual who wishes to spiritually build his inner self wholly has to search for the wisdom whereby he discovers his shortcomings which distance him from virtuous humanity, and he has to look for the moral which brings him closer to his Lord and which deepens the roots of *iman* within him. This is the value of wisdom and of moral, and this is their plentiful product. It is the dividing line between the man of righteousness, and the man of evil. Good wisdom is the one which sows within the depths of the individual the seed of light in order to grow there from a plant blossoming with goodness, love, and beauty.

So let us read the pure wisdom and the magnificent moral in the words of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.), then let us open up our souls in order to plant therein the seed of light. After that, let us look after that plant that will come out of that seed so that we may harvest from it the fruit of *iman*, the belief in God, the belief in the principles and morals which God has legislated for us in order to be able to build ourselves from within, and to be able to rise thereby above the level of wishes and desires to the level whereby the individual becomes a true human being in his pure link with his Lord, in his honest dealing with his brother man, and in his own emancipation from worshipping his own ego.

The first moral we meet as we read the words of the Imam (a.s.) is his statement: "It is not adoration to perform the fast or the prayers a great deal; adoration is to contemplate upon God a great deal." What the Imam (a.s.) meant from such a definition of what adoration in its deep context is all about is his correction of the general attitude towards a rite such as the fast or the daily prayers, saying that prayers

are not merely the prescribed movements accompanying quotations relevant particularly to prayers, nor is the fast merely the abstention from eating and drinking and such things. These particular movements and this performance are nothing more than the outer frame of the picture, while the adoration is the context which lies beyond the picture. What the Imam (a.s.) aims at by making this statement is making us aware of the reality from which we have to set out in performing the rite we are supposed to perform, and to distance us from the stagnation of the empty routine which causes us to lose the greatly spiritual meanings the rites we perform are intended to help us live. So, what is adoration, after all?

The Imam (a.s.) says that it is a great deal of contemplation upon the Almighty. It is not a great deal of fasting or prayers which do not go beyond the particular movements and timings as a routine action an individual has become accustomed to be doing during certain times away from the deep context of belief.

Such is not adoration, for how many are those who perform their prayers and uphold their fast and at the same time commit the greatest of sins and perform various kinds of immoralities, yielding to wishes and desires, without being able towards them to take control of themselves, without trying to give authority over them to the deterring power of *iman* in order to avoid slipping into the paths of misguidance? The prayers of such individuals and their fast are nothing more than movements and performances which have lost their sense of wisdom and spiritual integrity.

Abundant contemplation upon the Will of God is by itself a form of worship and, at the same time, a starting point of every adoration and ritual. When someone feels harmony while contemplating upon the cosmos and its Creator, and the particles of life and their secrets filling the general existence of the cosmos, he cannot avoid feeling how small he is before this great Power which created this system in such perfection, determined its rules with such precision and exactness; and when he, through his power of reason, feels that the Power of the Great Creator surrounds this cosmos, that everything in existence is overwhelmed by its Authority and Might, without any avenue through which one may escape from the center of the Power controlling it..., then he cannot help feeling a deep belief in the perfecting Creator, and a genuine awe before the manifestations of such Greatness.

When man considers the bounties God has bestowed upon him which can never be exhausted while satisfying his continuous needs, and His absolute ability to deprive him of them any moment He wishes, without the existence of any power that would forbid Him from doing so, he would surely then thank Him sincerely and be grateful to Him, distancing himself from the hated elements of disbelief.

When man realizes the wisdom behind his own creation and the end awaiting him that will take him to another life so that the doers of good will be rewarded for their good deeds and the doers of evil will be punished for their evil, he cannot help considering what secures his salvation while doing what he does, and feeling angry at whatever displeases God. The feeling one develops of all of this and the comprehension of all of this is by itself a form of adoration because this feeling is the conscientious path which takes man to knowledge, and knowledge is the foundation of belief. At the same time, such

comprehension gives adoration the vast spiritual meaning for which it was decreed.

A man asked him once about the meaning of the verse, "Whoever relies on God, He suffices him." He said: "Reliance on God is in various degrees one of which is that you rely on Him in everything related to you, and when He does something to you which you know will not bring you anything good, you rely on His wisdom in doing it, so you nevertheless put your trust in Him willingly. Another is to believe in the Unseen regarding God of which you have no knowledge, so you relied on Him and on His custodians, trusting in Him in their regard, and in others."

He was asked once about the extent of such reliance. He said, "It is that you fear none save God." What the Imam here means is that you submit to the Will of God and accept His decree. Ahmed ibn Najm asked him about the pride which spoils one's deeds. He said: "Pride is degrees; among them is that one sees his bad deed as good, so he likes it and feels proud of it; another is that one believes in God and feels he is doing Him a favor by believing in Him, whereas He is the One who enabled that person to believe in Him." He, peace be upon him, said once, "If one lacks five attributes, do not expect to gain anything good out of him for your life in this world or in the life to come: if his lineage is known to be untrustworthy, if his nature lacks generosity, if his temper lacks balance, if he lacks a noble conduct, and if he lacks fear of his Lord."

He was asked once who a lowly person is. He said, "Anyone who has something to distract him from God."

Among his wise sayings are the following:

"God abhors hearsay, the loss of one's funds (through foolishness), and excessive questioning."

"To be courteous to people is to cross half the way to achieving wisdom."

"The mind of a Muslim is not complete except after he acquires ten merits: God accepts his good deeds, he is trustworthy, he sees as plentiful what little good others do for him, while seeing his own abundant good as little; he does not fret from being asked for favors, nor does he feel tired of constantly seeking knowledge; poverty reached in order to please God is better for him than wealth accumulated otherwise; to be subjected to power while trying to serve God is better in his regard than achieving power over his foe, and obscurity he prefers over fame." Then he said, "And the third one..., do you know what the third one is?" It was said to him, "What is it?" He said, "Whenever he meets someone, he says, 'He is better than me and more pious.' People are two types: a person better than him and more pious, and one who is more evil than him and more lowly.

If he meets the one who is more evil than him and more lowly, he would say to himself 'Maybe the goodness of this (statement) is implied, and it is better that he hears such a compliment, while my own goodness is apparent and it is detrimental to me.' And when he sees someone better than him and more pious, he would humble himself before him trying to raise himself to his level. So if he does that, his glory will be higher, his reputation will be better, and he will become distinguished above his contemporaries."

"Silence is one of the gates of wisdom. Silence wins the love of others. It is an indication of everything good."

"Everyone's friend is his reason; his enemy is his ignorance."

"Among the habits of Prophets is cleanliness."

"One who is blessed with plenty must spend generously on his family."

"If you mention someone who is present, use a *kunya* (surname) for him, and if he is absent, mention his full name."

"Time will come when one's safety lies in ten things nine of which are in staying aloof from people, and the tenth in staying silent."

"Whoever scrutinizes his behavior wins; whoever does not loses. Whoever fears consequences will live safely. Whoever learns a moral from others achieves insight, and whoever achieves insight achieves wisdom, and whoever achieves wisdom achieves knowledge."

One who befriends the ignorant will be worn out.

The best of wealth is that which safeguards one's honor.

The best of reason is one's knowledge of his own self.

If a true believer becomes angry, his anger does not cause him to abandon righteousness; when he is pleased, his pleasure will not tempt him into wrong-doing, and when he achieves power, he does not take more than what rightfully is his."

"If one's attributes become plentiful, they will relieve him from having to win praise by mentioning them."

"Do not pay attention to the view of someone who does not follow your advice for his own good. Whoever seeks guidance from the appropriate source will never slip, and if he slips, he will find a way to correct himself."

"People's hearts are sometimes coming towards you, sometimes keeping away from you; sometimes they are active, sometimes they are relaxed. If they come along, they will achieve wisdom and understanding, and if they stay away, they will be exhausted and worn out; so, take them when they come to you and when they are active, and shun them when they stay away or are relaxed."

"Accompany with caution the person who has authority over you; be humble when in the company of a friend; stay alert when facing an enemy, and mingle with the public with a smile on your face."

"Postponement is detrimental to the fulfillment of desires. Fulfillment is the gain of the strict."

Wastefulness is the calamity of one who can afford it. Miserliness tears up honor. Passion invites trouble. The best and most honorable of virtues is to do others favors, to aid the one who calls for help, to bring the hope of the hopeful to reality, not to disappoint the optimist, to have an ever increase of the number of friends when you are alive, and the number of those who will cry when you die."

"The miser one is never restful. The envious is never pleased. The grumbling is never loyal. The liar has no conscience."

"One who struggles to satisfy the needs of his family shall have more rewards than those who make *jihad* in the Way of God."

He (a.s.) was asked once who the best of believers are; he said, "They are the ones who are excited with expectation when they do a good deed, who pray for God's forgiveness when they commit a bad one, who show gratitude when they are granted something, who are patient when they are tried, who forgive those who anger them."

He (a.s.) was asked once, "How did you start your day?" He answered, "With a shorter life-span, with our deeds being recorded, with death round our necks, with Fire behind our backs, and we do not know what will be done to us."

He (a.s.) said, "Wealth is not accumulated except by five means: extreme miserliness, a long-standing optimism, an overwhelming care, a boycott of the relatives, and a preference of this life over the life to come."

Ali ibn Shu'ayb said that he once visited Abul-Hasan Ali ar-Ridha' (a.s.) who asked him, "O Ali! Do you know whose subsistence is the best?" He answered, "You, master, know better than me." He said, "It is that of the one whose others' subsistence is improved through his own. Do you know who has the worst subsistence?" Ali answered, "You know better than me!" The Imam (a.s.) answered saying, "It is that of the one who does not include others in it." Then he added, "O Ali! Be thoughtful to the boons for they are wild: if they leave people, they never come back to them. O Ali! The worst of people is someone who stops his contributions to charity, eats by himself, and whips his slave."

He (a.s.) also said the following:

"Your assistance of the weak is better than your act of charity."

"No servant of God achieves true belief except when he acquires three attributes: He derives juristic deductions of the creed; he is wise regarding his livelihood, and he is patient when faced with calamities."

"Beware of one who wants to offer you advice by speaking behind others' backs; he does not realize how bad his own end shall be."

He (a.s.), upon the death of al-Hasan ibn Sahl, said, "To congratulate one for a reward in store for him is

better than to console him on a quick calamity."

This is a magnificent bouquet of shining statements of Imam a-Rida (a.s.) which emanate with wisdom, overflow with *iman*, and over brim with good fruits. In them, the Imam (a.s.) defines glorious ethical and educational manners, the upright conduct of true belief, offering some glimpses of humanity for social cooperation and coexistence a Muslim is supposed to implement if he wants to be in harmony with the principles of Islam which are the turning point of social change from an oppressive ignorant society to an advanced civilized society built upon virtue and love, justice and equity.

We have to translate these statements and their peers into actions in our daily life and be in harmony with their ethical and humane practical implications if we wish to direct our individual and social conduct to the right direction which safeguards its principles and precepts in order to create a nation based on virtues and humanity, and build it from within in a firm spiritual structure. Such a structure is reflects its practical reality and affects its intellectual and social objectives so that it would be "the best nation that ever was."[15](#)

Finally, this has been, we believe, an honest and clear picture of the biography of Imam ar-Ridha' (a.s.) in both its historical and intellectual aspects in which we tried to go beyond the style of narrating the facts as the books of history and biography have recorded for us, which are not always free from contradictions, and to employ the scholarly critical method with honesty and sincerity without having any objective in mind other than to arrive at the facts which are free of falsehood, and to define the realistic boundaries of the concept which lies behind the background of events.

We have also tried in it to provide a quick glimpse of the intellectual life of the Imam in its various aspects, and to provide the reader with a brief picture of the magnificent intellectual output presented by the Imam (a.s.) to mankind.

I do not claim that I have, in what I have written about the Imam (a.s.) here, covered all the aspects of the greatness of his personality; rather, it is a quick research necessitated by certain circumstances. The initial objective was to research his selection by al-Ma'mun, in response to transient political circumstances dictated by the nature of the then government, to be his heir to the throne. But the absence of an inclusive and independent study of this great Imam forced me to expand the scope of the research and present the various aspects of his personality in a research which I hope has proven to be a successful experience and a starting point for a more inclusive study and a more vast presentation.

I hope I have, with whatever effort and energy available to me, been faithful to this study in its presentation, research and style, and from God Alone do I derive aid and assistance; He suffices me, and what a Great Support He is!

Beirut, Jumada I 20, 1393

June 20, 1973

Muhammad Jawad Fadlallah

- [1. Al Baqarah:229](#)
- [2. Al Nissa':34](#)
- [3. Bukhari, Vol. 8, p. 119, Amiri edition](#)
- [4. Al Mumin \(or Ghafir\):84–85](#)
- [5. Al An'aam: 158](#)
- [6. Yunus:90–92](#)
- [7. Taha:66](#)
- [8. Aali 'Imran:49](#)
- [9. Al Ra'd:38](#)
- [10. Al Jinn:26–27](#)
- [11. Al A'raf: 199](#)
- [12. Al Baqara: 177](#)
- [13. Al Kahaf:62](#)
- [14. Al Baqara:23](#)
- [15. Aali 'Imran: 110](#)

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