Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)



# The Twelve Imams (as)

What has preceded are concise proofs on the issue of divine leadership in the righteous school of thought. The Shi'ahs believe that the divine leaders of the Muslims after the Prophet (S) are the Twelve Infallible Imams (as) and that the Prophet (S) specified them as:

First: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, Commander of the Faithful [*Amir al-Mu'minin*] (as)

Second: Al-Imam al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, the Oldest Grandson [*al-Sibt al-Akbar*] (as)

Third: Al-Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, Master of the Martyrs [*Sayyid al-Shuhada'*] (as)

Fourth: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Beauty of the Worshippers [*Zayn al-'Abidin*] (as)

Fifth: Al-Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali, the Splitter of Knowledge [*al-Baqir*] (as)

Sixth: Al-Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the Truthful [*al-Sadiq*] (as)

Seventh: Al-Imam Musa ibn Ja'far, the Controller of anger [*al-Kadhim*] (as)

Eighth: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn Musa, the Content [*al-Rida*] (as)

Ninth: Al-Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali, the Generous [al-Jawad] (as)

Tenth: Al-Imam 'Ali ibn Muhammad, the guide [al-Hadi] (as)

Eleventh: Al-Imam al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, the Soldier [al-'Askari] (as)

Twelfth: Al-Imam al-Hujjat ibn al-Hasan al-'Askari, the Rightly Guided, the Awaited [al-Mahdi al-Mawud] (as)

Previous proofs on the divine leadership of the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (as) are sufficient. However, a separate discussion on the proofs of the divine leadership of each one of the Imams (as) is necessary regarding his knowledge, acceptance of the prayer and the stipulation of the previous divine

leader [*Imam*].

The objective of this chapter is to state the glad tidings in the Prophetic traditions about the Twelve Imams (as) in Sunni sources, which have been transmitted with the title of 'Twelve Khalifas' and 'Twelve Amirs'. Below are some of them:

It has come in *Sahih al-Bukhari*: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: I heard the Prophet (S) saying: *There will be Twelve Commanders.* He says that he (S) then said something I did not hear, so my father told me that he said that they will all be from Quraysh.[1]

It has come in *Sahih Muslim*: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: I entered the presence of the Prophet (S) with my father. I heard him (S) saying: **Surely this command will not end until there will be Twelve Successors [Khalifah**]. He says that he then said something quietly, so I asked my father: What did he (S) say? He replied: They are all from Quraysh.[2]

It has come in both *Sahih Muslim* and *Musnad of Ahmad*: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: I heard the Prophet (S) saying: *The command of the people will not pass until twelve men command over them.* He says that the Prophet (S) then said something which I could not hear, so I asked my father: What did he (S) say? He replied: The Prophet (S) said: *They will all be from Quraysh.*[3]

It has come in *Sahih Ibn Habban*: I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) saying: *There will be twelve successors after me and all of them will be from Quraysh.*[4]

It has come in *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*: *There will be Twelve Commanders after me.* The reporter says: He then said something I did not understand. Therefore, I asked the one beside me, he said: *All of them will be from Quraysh.*[5]

It has come in *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*: *There will be Twelve Successors after me and all of them will be from Quraysh.*[6]

And it has also come: *There will be Twelve Commanders after me.* Then I don't know what he said so I asked all the people present, they all said: He (S) said: *They are all from Quraysh.*[7]

It has come in *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*: *There will be Twelve Commanders after me.* Then he said something I could not hear, so I asked someone beside me, and he said: *They are all from Quraysh.*[8]

It has in *Musnad Ahmad*: *There will be Twelve Commanders after me.* Then he said something quietly. The reporter says that I asked someone sitting next to me about what he (S) said? He replied: *They are all from Quraysh.*[9]

It has come in *Musnad by Ibn Ju'd*: *There will be Twelve Commanders afer me.* Husayn has reported in his narration that then he said something I did not understand. One reporter said that I asked my father.

Another said that I asked the people. The reply was: *They are all from Quraysh.* 10

It has come in *Musnad Abu Ya'la*: The Prophet (S) said: *This relgion will remain till the Day of Judgment and there will be Twelve Successors over you, all of whom will be from Quraysh.* 11

It has come in *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*: It is reported on the authority of Jabir ibn Samurah that he said: The Messenger of Allah (S) delivered a sermon to us in 'Arafat saying: *This matter will remain honourable, mighty and distinct against the opposition so long as the Twelve have the sovereignty, all of them.* Then he (S) said something that I did not understand, so I asked my father about what he said after that. Thus, he replied: *All of them are from Quraysh.* 12

It has come in *al-Mustadrak al-Hakim*: It is reported from Masruq that he said: One night we were sitting with 'Abd Allah. He was reading us the Qur'an. One man asked him, "O Abu 'Abd al-Rahman, did you all ask the Messenger of Allah (S), how many caliphs will rule this nation? 'Abd Allah replied, "No one before you have asked me this since I have come to Iraq. Yes, we did ask him and he (S) said: *Twelve, the number of the chieftains of the Children of Isra'il*." 13

The traditions regarding this topic are numerous. 14 Their transmissions are from the best of the companions, like Ibn 'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, Salman al-Farisi, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abu Dharr, Jabir ibn Samurah, Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah, Anas ibn Malik, Zayd ibn Thabit, Zayd ibn Arqam, Abu Thumamah, Wathilah ibn al-Asqa', Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Hudhayfah ibn Usayd, 'Imran ibn Husayn, Sa'd ibn Malik, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Abu Qutadah al-Ansari and others.

Here we number some significant points in these traditions:

The number of the successors (of the Prophet) is restricted to twelve.

These twelve successors will continue till the Day of Judgment.

The honour of Islam and the Muslims is dependent on their obedience.

The religion will be established both intellectually and practically through them, because the intellectual establishment of religion will take place through the commentator of the Qur'an and through the one who explains its realities and cognitions. The practical establishment will take place through the executor of its laws and just rules. These two important goals cannot be achieved except under special circumstances with these twelve divine leaders.

Choosing the example of the chieftains of the Children of Isra'il from all other examples is significant, because their succession was not chosen by people, rather it was specified by Allah. Thus, Allah, the Exalted, said about the chieftains:

***And We raised up among them twelve chieftains.*** 15

These divine leaders [*Imams*] are from Quraysh.

Are there any caliphs who have these specifications, except for those on the Right Path? Is it possible to define the Twelve Divine Leaders except with our divine leaders (as)? Has the honour of Islam and its aims been achieved during the caliphate of Yazid son of Mu'awiyyah and his likes?

Some of the learned researchers of the Sunnis have admitted that the glad tidings of the Prophet (S) cannot be implied onto any but the twelve divine leaders (as). Thus, it has come in *Yanabi' al-Mawaddah* of al-Qanduzi:

"Some of the researchers have said: Surely, the traditions indicating that the successors of the Prophet (S) will be twelve are famous and from many different chains of transmissions. With the passing of time and the change of circumstances, it is known that the intent of the Messenger of Allah (S) from this tradition was the twelve Imams from his Household and Progeny.

For it is not possible to apply this tradition onto the caliphs that came after him from his companions as they were less than twelve. It cannot be applied to the Ummayyad kings as they were more than twelve; also, because of their horrible oppression, except for 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. Furthermore, they were not Hashimites.

Based on the tradition from 'Abd al-Malik on the authority of Jabir: The Prophet (S) said: *They are all from Bani Hashim.* This tradition is preferred over the other one because of the claim of the low voice of the Prophet (S), because the other narrators do not like the succession of the Hashimites. It also cannot be applied to the 'Abbaside kings as they were more than twelve as well, and also because they did not abide by the verse:

***Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives.*** 16

Thus, this tradition must be applied to the twelve Imams from his Household and Progeny (as), because they were the most learned of their time, the most honourable, the most splendid, the most pious, the most devout, the highest in nobility, the best in family and the best before Allah.

Their knowledge was from their forefathers, which was connected to their great-grandfather the Prophet (S). It was hereditary and directly imparted by Allah. The knowledgeable, the researchers, the mystics and the fortunate have recognised them as such."17

The intent of the Prophet (S) about the twelve successors is the twelve Imams from his Household (as). The tradition of the Two Weighty Things and other traditions mentioned in this book and elsewhere bear witness to and prefer this fact.

It is reported from al-Suday in his Commentary (of the Qur'an), who is a Sunni scholar and is trustworthy for them, "When Sarah began to dislike the position of Hajar, Allah, the Exalted, revealed to Ibrahim: Leave with Isma'il and his mother for the house of the assigned Prophet (S). For indeed, I will spread

your progeny (on Earth) and will give them power over the ones who deny me. I will make from his Progeny twelve great men."[18]

The above also confirms what is in the present day Torah:

And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.[19]

***

There are many authentic traditions that stipulate the divine leadership of the Twelve Imams (as) from our (Shi'ah) sources. It suffices to study their transmission to the Infallibles (as) due to its continuous transmission [*tawatur*]. In this concise work we will only mention two transmissions of the tradition known as the tradition of the Tablet [*hadith al-lawh*]. It has been transmitted with many chains of transmissions by the greatest experts of traditions. Some of these are reliable:

## The First Transmission

The report of Shaykh al-Saduq (ra) from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as), on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari saying: I entered the presence of Fatimah (as) while a tablet was in front of her which contained the names of the successors from her progeny. I counted them to be twelve, the last being al-Qa'im. There were three named Muhammad and four 'Ali, may the blessings of Allah be upon them all.[20]

## The Second Transmission

This transmission contains prophecies of the unseen. The content of this tradition prove it to be issued from the infallible. The greatest of our experts in traditions have reported it, like Shaykh al-Saduq, Shaykh al-Mufid and Shaykh al-Tusi, may Allah increase their status. They have reported it on the authority of 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Salim, on the authority of Abu Basir from al-Imam al-Sadiq (as) saying: My father (as) said to Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari:

*I have a matter to discuss with you. When do you have time so that I can sit alone with you and discuss it?* Jabir replied to him: Whenever you want. One day my father sat down with him and said: *O Jabir, tell me about the tablet which you saw in the hand of my grandmother, Fatimah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (as). What did my mother inform you about what is written in that tablet?*

Jabir said: I take Allah as my witness that one day I entered the presence of your mother Fatimah (as) during the life of the Messenger of Allah (S). Thus, I congratulated her on the birth of al-Husayn. I saw in her hands a green tablet. I thought it was made of emerald. It had white writing like that of the colour of the sun. I asked her: May my father and mother be your ransom, O daughter of the Messenger of Allah (S). What is this tablet? She answered: *This is the tablet that Allah gave to his Messenger* (*S*) *as a gift. It contains the names of my father, my husband, my two sons and the successors from my progeny. My father gave it to me to give me the glad tidings.* Jabir said: Your mother Fatimah (as) gave it to me. I read it and made a copy from it.

My father said to him: *O Jabir, can you show it to me?* Jabir replied: Yes. Then my father walked with him to his house. My father took out a fine paper and said: *O Jabir, look in your book while I read to you.* Therefore, Jabir looked in his copy while my father read to him. Not a single word differed between the two. Jabir says: I take Allah as my witness that that is how I saw it written in the tablet:

**In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, this is a letter from Allah, the Honourable, the All-Wise to Muhammad, His Prophet, His light, His representative, His veil and His guide. The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down from the Lord of the Worlds.**

**Muhammad, revere My Names and thank Me for My bounties. Do not reject My blessings. Surely, I am Allah, there is no god but I, the Destroyer of the tyrants, the Granter of victory to the oppressed and the Compensator of all rewards. Certainly, I am Allah there is no god but I. Thus, whoever places hope in the mercy of someone other than Me and fears the justice of other than Me, then I will punish him a punishment that I will not give to anyone in this worlds. Only worship Me and only rely on Me.**

**Surely, I did not send a Prophet whose days have completed and his time has finished except that I made for him a successor. I have given you priority over all Prophets and I have given priority to your successor over all successors. I have honoured you with your two young brave grandsons, Hasan and Husayn. I have made Hasan the source of My Knowledge after the completion of his father's period. And I have made Husyan the treasure of My revelation.**

**I have honoured him with martyrdom and have made his end fortunate. He is the greatest of all the martyrs and the highest of them in status. I have placed My complete word with him and My considerable proof with him. Through his progeny I will reward and punish. The first one of them is 'Ali, the master of the worshippers and the beauty of My previous beloved ones. His son resembles his grandfather, Mahmud. He is Muhammad, the splitter of My Knowledge and the source of My Wisdom.**

**The doubters in Ja'far will be destroyed quickly. The one who rejects him is like the one who rejects Me. This My word is true that I will honour the place of Ja'far and I will please him amongst his followers, helpers and friends.**

**After him will be Musa, whose time will see dark mischief, because the thread of My obligation does not break and My proof is not hidden. Indeed, My guardians will drink from the cup of perfection. Whoever rejects anyone of them has rejected My blessing. And whoever changes a single verse from My Book has related falsehood to Me.**

**Woe onto the rejecting liars of 'Ali, My Guardian and Helper, after the completing period of Musa, My servant, My beloved and My chosen one. I will place the weighty responsibilities of Prophethood with him. I will try him proficiently for it. A mischievous proud man will kill him. He will be buried in a city that the pious servant has built next to the worst of My creation.**

**This My word is true that I will please him with Muhammad, his son and his successor after him and the inheritor of his knowledge. He is the source of My Knowledge, the repository of My secrets and My proof over My creation. No servant will believe in him except that I will make the Paradise his place of rest. I will accept his intercession for seventy of his family members for whom the Hell would have become obligatory.**

**For his son 'Ali, My Guardian, My Helper, My witness over My creation and My trustworthy over My revelation, I will end with fortune. I will bring forth from him the caller to My path and the treasure of My Knowledge, al-Hasan.**

**I will complete that with his son M u h a m m a d, the mercy for the universe. He will have the perfection of Musa, the magnificence of 'Isa and the patience of Ayyub. My beloved ones will be humiliated during his period. Their heads will be given as gifts like the heads of Turks and Daylamis. They will be killed, burnt, will be frightened, terrified and fearful. The Earth will be coloured with their blood. The afflicted sounds of their women will circulate.**

**Those are My true beloved Gurdians. Through them I will remove every dark mischief. I will remove the earthquakes through them and remove the burdens and chains through them. They are upon whom is blessing and mercy from their Lord. And they are the rightly-guided.**

'Abd al-Rahman ibn Salim says that Abu Basir said, "If you only hear this one tradition during all your life then it is sufficient for you. Preserve it from all those who do not deserve it."[21]

***

The proofs regarding the divine leadership of the Infallible Imams (as) are more than can be counted in this concise book. We will end this brief section with a noble sermon from Imam al-Sadiq (as) describing the status of infallibility and the divine leadership. The master of the experts of the traditions, Muhammad ibn Yaqub al-Kulayni has transmitted it from Muhammad ibn Yahya,[22] on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa,[23] on the authority of al-Hasan ibn Mahbub,[24] on the authority of Ishaq ibn Ghalib[25] from Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (as), a sermon in which the status and the attributes of the Imams (as) has been described:

*Surely, Allah, the Mighty and High, elucidated His religion through the Imams of guidance from the Household of our Prophet (S). He has made His path shine through them. He has opened the hidden sources of His Knowledge through them. From the Ummah of Muhammad (S), whoever recognises the obligatory right of his Imam has found the sweetness of the faith. He has also come to know the brilliance of his Islam, because Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has appointed the Imam as a banner for His creation.*

*He has made the Imam a proof over His bounties and His universe. Allah has dressed him with the crown of honour and has covered him with the light of the Almighty. Due to this the Imam has support from the heavens. The bounties are never disconnected from him. No one can reach what is with Allah except through the Imam. Allah does not accept the deeds of His servants without the recognition of the Imam. He knows what may come to him of the obscurities of the darkness, the puzzles of the practices and the doubts of the temptations.*

*Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, always chooses an Imam for His creation, one after the other from the sons of al-Husayn. He selects them. He is pleased with His creation through them and approves of them. Whenever an Imam passes away from them then Allah appoints for His creation another one as a clear sign, illuminating guide, right leader and learned proof.*

*The Imams are from Allah. They guide to the righteousness and judge with justice. They are the proofs of Allah and they call towards Him. They are His custodians in His creation. The people owe them their guidance. They give light to the civilisations. The inherited possessions grow due to their blessing. Allah has made them a means of life for mankind. They are lights in the darkness, the keys of speech and the pillars of Islam. Due to them, the extents of Allah flow in them for that which is ordained.*

*Therefore, the Imam is the chosen and the selected. He is the saviour guide. He is the awaited one who will rise. Allah has chosen him for that. When He created the Imam, He created him as His special creation. Before He created the creation, He created the Imams under the right side of His throne in a state that He granted them the wisdom of His unseen knowledge. He chose them for His Knowledge due to their purification.*

*The Imams were to remain from Adam (as) and they were the best of the children of Nuh (as). They were the chosen ones from the progeny of Ibrahim (as) from the children of Isma'il. They are the chosen ones from the progeny of Muhammad (S). They are always observed by Allah's vision. They are protected and preserved by Allah's cover. The tricks of Iblis (Satan) and his army are pushed away from them.*

*The hollow darknesses and the effusions of every unjust are kept away from them. The evil loathers are diverted from them. They are free from all imperfections and protected from all (spiritual) calamities. They are infallible of all errors and protected from every indecency. In their young age they are known for their forbearance and goodness. In their old age they are ascribed with chastity, knowledge and*

*virtue. They support the command of their fathers, while keeping quiet during the lives of their fathers.*

*When the period of their father ends and the Divine Will ends with him, and the Divine Intent comes to him for His love and his father departs from this world, then the command of Allah transfers to him. Allah then makes His religion follow him and makes him the proof over His servants. Allah raises the Imam in His land and endorses him with His spirit. He gives the Imam His Knowledge and informs him of His conclusive explanation. He entrusts His secret with the Imam and assigns him the greatest command.*

*Allah informs the Imam with the virtue of the explanation of His Knowledge. He raises the Imam as a banner for His creation and makes him a proof over the inhabitants of His universe. He makes him a light for the followers of His religion and a custodian over His servants. Allah is pleased with him as the Imam for them. He entrusts His secret with the Imam and places His Knowledge with him.*

*He reveals His Wisdom to the Imam and observes him for His religion. Allah revives the courses of His path, divine duties and the divine law through the Imam. The Imam rises with justice with dismay of the ignorant and baffle of the controversial. He stands with radiant light, practical cure, shining truth and flourishing explanations. He stands on the right path, upon which his forefathers, the truthful, passed.*

*None but the mischievous ignore the right of such a learned Imam. None but the misled reject them. No one turns away from them except that he rebels against Allah, the Mighty and High.*[26]

Indeed, every sentence of this noble sermon requires detailed explanation. We suffice with a few points:

**(a)**

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) made 'the Imams of guidance' the topic of his sermon to clarify the necessity of the existence of the Imam for the people:

(***Remember***) ***the day when We will call every people with their Imam.***[27]

The divine leader of the people must be the leader of guidance. As Allah, the Exalted says:

***And We made of them Imams to guide by Our command.***[28]

***You are only a warner and*** (***there is***) ***a guide for every people.***[29]

The recognition of the Imam of guidance is based on the recognition of guidance. Recognition of guidance requires contemplation upon the verses of the Book that have come about this topic, which exceed two hundred and ninety verses. This short book does not allow us to explain them.

The guidance is perfection for the creation: *He said:*

***Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it*** (***to its goal***).[30]

***Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who creates, then makes complete, and Who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal).*** [31]

The guidance of every created being is in accordance with its creation. Therefore as the human being is the best of creation, then his guidance is the highest level of the perfection of all creations.

The Imam (as) has explained the greatness of the status of divine leadership by describing them as the Imams of guidance. In fact, he has clarified the specific characteristics of the Imam and what are the requirements of this status for those who observe and reflect.

After a brief summary the Imam (as) goes into detail. He explained the position of the divine leader [*Imam*] in the divine religion. The Imam is the interpreter of the principles of faith and its branches, because Allah, the Exalted, has not endorsed the views of the creation, which are open to error and dispute. Error and dispute in religion are two calamities that invalidate the purpose of divine law and these two engulf the people into the darkness of misguidance.

In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has not left a single iota of ambiguity and discrepancy about the principles of His faith and its branches which the Imams of guidance have not explained. As the Imam (as) said: *Surely, Allah, the Mighty and High, elucidated His religion through the Imams of guidance from the Household of our Prophet (S).*

**(b)**

The human being, in accordance with his nature, seeks his Exalted Creator. The goal of this nature is not achieved except by sincerely reaching the path to Allah, which is the right religion: *Say:*

***This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain.*** [32]

The factors that led astray from the religion of Allah, the Exalted, are present in every age, like human error and desire, and the misleaders from Allah's path from the jinn and man: ***And follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way;*** [33] ***They have taken a small price for the communications of Allah, so they turn away from His way; surely evil is it that they do.*** [34] Thus, the presence of an Imam is necessary to fulfil the purpose of creating this nature—that is to reach Allah—and legislating the right path—that is the religion and the way to Allah—when he (as) said: *He has made His path shine through them.*

**(c)**

The purpose of creating the human intellect is to make him realise the reality of knowledge and recognition. The human being demands with the tongue of his nature, from the Giver of wisdom and perception: O Lord, show me the things as they are. Give me self-recognition and make me realise my origination, my presence in this world and my end.

The thirst of human perception is not quenched except by the spring of life of divine knowledge. Otherwise, the result of the human philosophy is also confusion of the perfect beings, which is that they should know that they do not know.

Hence, it is necessary that there be a human being who has access to the spring of life and sources of knowledge and wisdom to quench the thirst of reaching the reality by his own hand. Only thus the purpose of creating wisdom and perception is fulfilled. For this reason, the Imam (as) has said in a reliable citation: *Whoever believes that Allah protests through a servant in His land, but hides from him all that which he requires then he has related falsehood to Allah.*[35]

Undoubtedly, the belief that Allah has made a human being a proof over His servants, that He has covered from His proof what His servants are in need of and that He does not teach him, is an accusation upon Allah, the Exalted. This notion has originated from their not knowing the endless Knowledge, Power and Wisdom. Thus, the Imam (as) said: *He has opened the hidden sources of His Knowledge through them.*

**(d)**

*Allah has dressed him with the crown of honour.* The crown of dignity, which is on the head of the Imam (as), is knowledge and power. Thus, it has been reported from Abu al-Hasan al-Rida (as) that when asked about the signs of the Imam (as) he replied: *His knowledge and the acceptance of his prayer.*[36]

This sign is because the origin of disarray and insignificance in human beings is ignorance and incapability. Since the Imam is the teacher of the Book of Allah, and he does not separate from it on the basis of the stipulation in the tradition of the Two Weighty Things, and the Book explains everything in accordance with the Word of the Exalted:

***And We have revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything;***[37]

therefore, no knowledge from the knowledge of the Divine Book escapes him.

This point can be derived from a reliable tradition: It is reported on the authority of Ibn Bukayr from Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (as) that, “I was with the Imam when Sulayman was mentioned to him and the knowledge he was given and the kingdom he was bestowed. Thus, the Imam (as) said to me: What was given to Sulayman ibn Dawud? Surely, he only had one word from the great names. And as for your master for whom Allah has said:

***Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge of the entire Book.***[38]

By Allah, ‘Ali had the knowledge of the complete Book. I said: By Allah, you are saying the truth. May I be your ransom!”[39]

Thus, due to the connection with Allah's affair, the Imam has every prayer granted to him. With this knowledge and power, he is dressed with the crown of honour.

**(e)**

*Allah has covered him with the light of the Almighty.* The word 'light' is annexed to the Holy Name 'Almighty'. The annexation to any divine name acquires its qualities simply due to the annexation.

Allah is the Almighty who restores every broken thing: *O Setter of broken bones.*[40]

The Imam is covered with the light of the Almighty so that he can restore every break or defect regarding Islam and the Muslims.

**(f)**

*The Imams are from Allah. They guide to the righteousness and judge with justice.* The Imam is the chosen human being from Allah, the Exalted. He is the selected one by Allah's selection and raised by Allah for the divine leadership and guidance. Thus, when an Imam passes away then Allah appoints another one in his place as a clear sign, illuminating guide, right leader and learned proof to serve the purpose of human creation and the sending of the Prophets (as). That purpose can be summarised in two expressions: guidance to the righteous and justice for the righteous. These two are the outcome of the theoretical and practical wisdom, and the conclusion of human perfection in intellect and intent.

These two matters are ascertained through intellect, that understands things as they are, and through intent that rises for every action as it should. This is the status of intellectual and practical infallibility, and why the Imam (as) said: *The Imams are from Allah. They guide to righteousness and judge with justice.*

**(g)**

*Allah has chosen him for that. When He created the Imam, He created him as His special creation.* Allah made the intrinsic nature of the Imam under the right side of His throne. Allah nurtured him with His vision and grants him the wisdom to His unseen knowledge. There is no course for anyone to it:

***Except to him whom He chooses as an apostle.***[41]

In this origination, as for lineage, the Imams are from the best of the progeny of Nuh (as), from the chosen ones of the children of Ibrahim (as), from the selected ones of the offspring of Isma'il (as) and the most sincere from the progeny of Muhammad (S). In their physical form, the Imams are free from all deficiencies, and in their spirit they are infallible from all errors and protected from all sins.

Iblis (Satan) has been kept away from their holy beings as he has been quoted:

***Then by Thy Might I will surely make them all live an evil life, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones.***[42]

This is due to the honour that has come their way under the shadow of Allah's service:

***Surely, as regards My servants, you have no authority over them.***[43]

The speech of the Imam (as): *then the command of Allah transfers to him* indicates that the command of Allah transfers from the former Imam to the subsequent one. This command is that which has come in an authentic tradition from al-Sadiq (as): *Surely, Allah is One, Unified in Oneness. He is Peerless in His Command. Thus, He created a creation to whom He gave power over that command. O son of Abu Ya'fur, we are that creation. We are the proofs of Allah over His servants. We store His Knowledge and we are firm with it.*[44]

**(h)**

*Allah endorses him with His spirit.* The spirit that Allah has endorsed the Imam with is explained in the authentic tradition reported on the authority of Abu Basir saying: I heard Abu 'Abd Allah (as) saying:

***And they ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord.***[45]

The Imam (as) said: *This (soul) is superior to (the angels) Jibra'il and Mika'il. It was not with anyone who has passed away except Muhammad (S) and it is with the Imams (as). It directs them. It is not that whatever is demanded is found.*[46]

**(i)**

*He gives the Imam His Knowledge.* It has come in an authentic tradition from Abu Ja'far (as) saying: *Surely, Allah has Knowledge that no one knows other than Him and He has knowledge that He has given to His angels, His prophets and His messengers. Thus, we have all that.* He then pointed to his chest.[47]

**(j)**

*He entrusts His secret with the Imam.* It has come in an authentic tradition reported on the authority of Mu'ammar ibn Khalad from Abu al-Hasan (as) that: *The knower cannot inform of what he knows because it is a secret of Allah. He gave the secret to Jibra'il (as). Jibra'il brought it to Muhammad (S) and Muhammad (S) gave it to whomever Allah willed.*[48]

**(k)**

*Allah is pleased with them as the Imams for them.* Undoubtedly, the *Ummah* needs an Imam. The Imam must be one with whom Allah is pleased. However, who is the Imam with whom Allah is pleased?

Between knowledge and ignorance, Allah is pleased with knowledge:

***Say: Are those who know and those who do not know alike?***[49]

Between safety and calamity, He is pleased with safety:

***With it Allah guides him who will follow His pleasure into the ways of safety.*** 50

Between wisdom and foolishness, He is pleased with wisdom:

***He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good.*** 51

Between justice and injustice, He is pleased with justice:

***Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good.*** 52

Between truth and falsehood, He is pleased with truth:

***And say: The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing).*** 53

Between right and wrong, He is pleased with right:

***They shall not speak except he whom the Beneficent permits and who speaks the right thing.*** 54

Therefore, Allah would only be pleased with an Imam for the *Ummah* who has the attributes which Allah is pleased with. Amongst those attributes are knowledge, justice, safety, wisdom, righteousness, truth and guidance.

From another angle, we see that choosing the best is liked by Allah, the Exalted:

***Therefore give good news to My servants, those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it.*** 55

Allah also orders to take hold of the best:

***And enjoin your people to take hold of what is best thereof.*** 56

He commands for the best speech:

***And say to My servants (that) they speak that which is best.*** 57

He commands to have disputations—if need be—in the best manner:

***And have disputations with them in the best manner.*** 58

When it is necessary, repel and reject in the best way:

***Repel evil by what is best.*** 59

Allah rewards for the best deeds:

***And We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.*** 60

He reveals that which is best:

***Allah has revealed the best announcement.*** 61

Now then, is it possible that He would choose someone for divine leadership who is not the best, the most perfect, the most virtuous, the most learned, the most just, etc. and someone who does not contain the noble characteristics mentioned in the tradition?

The necessity of commanding to follow the best is that the best be followed. Then how can it be logical that Allah would be pleased with the leadership and obedience of someone who is not the best?

***And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure?*** 62

Hence, the Imam (as) has said: *Allah assigns him the greatest command. He informs the Imam with the virtue of the explanation of His Knowledge. He raises the Imam as a banner for His creation and makes him a proof over the inhabitants of His universe. He makes them a light for the followers of His religion and a custodian over His servants. Allah is pleased with them as the Imams for His creation.*

***

## The Followers of the Twelve Imams

**The Shi'ahs (Followers) of the Twelve Imams (as) (Shi'at al-A'immat al-Ithnai 'Ashar)**

According to the commentaries of the Sunnis and Shi'ahs,63 the Shi'ahs of the Household (as) are the ones for whom this verse is revealed, the Exalted said:

..(***As for***) ***those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men.*** 64

Allah, the Exalted, says:

***Only Allah is your guardian and His Messenger and those who believe, keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow.*** 65

According to the Shi'ah and Sunni reports and what the commentators of the two schools of thought have mentioned, this verse was revealed in praise of the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (as).66

After this verse, the Glorified said:

***And whoever takes Allah and His Messenger and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allah are they that shall be triumphant.*** 67

It is reported that Nawf al-Bakali said to the Commander of the Faithful (as): O Commander of the Faithful, describe for me your Shi'ahs. Thus, 'Ali (as) cried for his Shi'ahs and then said: *O Nawf, my Shi'ahs by Allah, are the forbearing, the learned about Allah and His religion, abiding His obedience and His Command.*[68]

Allah, the Glorified, said:

***And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they.***[69]

The Shi'ahs are on the religion of their Imams (as). Their religion is piety, chastity, truthfulness, goodness, striving, honesty with just and unjust, lengthy prostrations, nightly prayers, refraining from forbidden acts, awaiting the relief with patience, keeping good company, being good to neighbours...[70]

The Shi'ahs are people free from evil morals and adorned with noble deeds. In this brief work, we will suffice with the mention of two traditions regarding evil and noble deeds. Their every sentence contains doors of practical wisdom for whoever contemplates upon them; albeit this is not the place to explain them.

## First Tradition

The Commander of the Faithful (as) said to a man who asked him to admonish him:

*Do not be like him who hopes for (bliss in) the next life without action, and delays repentance by lengthening desires, who utters words like ascetics in this world but acts like those who are eager for it. If he is allowed something from it he does not feel satisfied and if he is denied he is not content.*

*He is not grateful for what he begets and covets for an increase in whatever remains with him. He refrains others but not himself. He commands others for what he himself does not do. He loves the virtuous but does not behave like them. He hates the vicious but himself is one of them. He dislikes death because of the excess of his sins, but adheres to that for which he is afraid of death.*

*If he falls ill he feels ashamed. If he is healthy he feels secure and indulges in amusements. When he recovers from illness he feels vain about himself. When he is afflicted he loses hope. If distress befalls him he prays like a bewildered man. When he finds ease of life he falls into deceit and turns his face away. His heart overpowers him by means of imaginary things, while he cannot control his heart by his conviction.*

*For others he is afraid of small sins, but for himself he expects more reward than his performance. If he becomes wealthy he becomes self-conscious and falls into vice. If he becomes poor he despairs and becomes weak. He is brief when he is doing good things, but goes too far when he is begging. When*

*passion overtakes him he is quick in committing sin but delays repentance. If hardship befalls him he goes beyond the canons of the* (*Islamic*) *community.*

*He describes instructive events but does not take instruction himself. He preaches at length but does not accept any preaching for himself. He is tall in speaking but short in action. He aspires for things that will perish and ignores things that will last for good. He regards profit as loss and loss as profit. He fears death but does nothing in its anticipation.*

*He regards the sins of others as big but considers the same things for himself as small. If he does something in obedience to Allah he considers it much but if others do the same he considers it small. He therefore rebukes others but flatters himself. Entertainment in the company of the wealthy is dearer to him than remembrance* (*of Allah*) *with the poor.*

*He orders others for his own interests and does not do so against himself for others' interests. He guides others but misguides himself. He is obeyed by others but he himself disobeys* (*Allah*)*. He seeks fulfilment of obligations* (*towards himself*) *but does not fulfil his obligations* (*towards others*)*. He fears the people* (*and acts*) *for other than his Lord and does not fear his Lord in his dealings with the people.*[71]

## Second Tradition

It has come in the authentic report of 'Abd Allah ibn Bukayr from Abu 'Abd Allah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, blessings of Allah be upon them both, saying:

*We indeed love our Shi'ah, the ones who are wise, understanding, learned, forbearing, moderate, patient, truthful and honest.* He then added: *Surely, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has distinguished the prophets with excellence in conduct. Whoever has this trait should thank Allah for it. Whoever does not have this trait should beseech Allah for it.* The reporter says: I said: May I be your ransom, what is that? He replied: *Piety, contentment, patience, thankfulness, forbearance, chastity, generosity, courageousness, zeal, goodness, truthfulness and honesty.*[72]

Below, we explain these characteristics.

### Wisdom ('Aql)

The Imam (as) gave precedence to wisdom, because wisdom is the pillar of humanity.[73]

It is reported from the Messenger of Allah (S): *Allah has not given anything better than wisdom to the servants. Hence, a wise person's sleep is better than an ignorant one's vigilance. A wise person's state of not fasting is better than the fast of an ignorant. The stay of a wise is better than the travel of an ignorant. Allah does not send a messenger or a prophet unless he is complete in wisdom and his wisdom is better than that of all of his people.*

*A prophet keeps in himself better efforts than all the diligent. The wise do not fulfil the obligations of*

*Allah without wisdom. None of the worshippers can ever reach the level of the virtue of the worship of the wise. Indeed the wise are those who possess understanding and for whom Allah, the Mighty and High has said:* ***Only those possessed of understanding will mind***[74]. [75]

## Keeping the Promise (Wafa)

The Imam (as) ended with the keeping of promises. It is reported from Abu Malik that: I said to 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as): Inform me of all the religion. He (as) replied: *Saying the truth, ruling with justice and keeping the promise.*[76]

It is reported that Abu 'Abd Allah (as) said: *Allah does not permit anyone of the people to go against three things: being kind to parents whether they are good or evil, keeping promise to those good and evil, and honesty to good and evil.*[77]

It has come in an authentic tradition on the authority of Abu Ja'far (as) from his father (as) that: *Whoever has four characteristics his Islam is complete, he will be purified of his sins and he will meet his Lord, the Mighty and High, in a state when He is pleased with him: He who keeps his promise with people for the sake of Allah, the Mighty and High, whose tongue utters truth with people, who feels diffidence of doing any evil before Allah and the people, and whose manner with his family is good.*[78]

It is transmitted from Abu Ja'far (as) that: *Four things cause rapid punishment: a person, to whom you have carried out a favour, recompenses you with evil; a man who you do not do any wrong to treats you unjustly; a person with whom you made a promise on a matter, then you kept your promise with him but he betrayed his promise; and a person whose relatives establish ties with him but he breaks ties with them.*[79]

Al-Sadiq (as) has transmitted from his forefathers (as) that: The Messenger of Allah (S) said: *The closest one of you to me tomorrow will be the most truthful, the most honest, the most complete in keeping promise, the best in conduct and the closest one to the people.*[80]

Imam Ali (as) in his will to al-Ashtar said: *Beware of bragging over your subjects for having done good to them or exaggerating in doing something that was your duty or making promises then breaking them, because bragging nullifies good, exaggerating takes away the light of truth and breaking the promise causes hate from Allah and the people. Allah, the Exalted, says:* ***It is most hateful to Allah that you should say that which you do not do***[81]. [82]

The Imam (as) then described the excellence in conduct, which is:

## Piety (Wara')

It has come in a reliable [*muaththaq*] tradition on the authority of 'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn Hilal al-Thaqafi from Abu Abd Allah (as) that: I said to him, "I only see you once in a few years. Tell me something that I should abide by." Thus, he (as) said: *I prescribe to you God-wariness, piety and diligence. Beware that*

*diligence is not useful unless there is piety with it.*[83]

In an authentic tradition from Abu ‘Abd Allah (as), it has come: *We do not count a person to be a believer until he intentionally obeys all of our commands. Beware, indeed obeying our command intentionally is piety. Therefore, beautify yourselves with it. May Allah have mercy on you. Inflict our enemies with piety, may Allah raise you.*[84]

The Commander of the Faithful (as) was asked, “Which of the deeds is the best before Allah?” He replied: *Total submission and piety.*[85]

It is reported from Abu ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad Ja’far (as) that he said: *Be God-wary, be God-wary, upon you is piety, truthfulness, honesty, chastity of stomach and private-parts. You will be with us in the highest escort.*[86]

It is transmitted from Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) that he said: Among the calls of Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, to Musa (as) was: *O Musa, the close ones to Me do not do anything to become close to Me other than remain pious and refrain from forbidden things. For, I will certainly permit them to Paradise and will not place anyone with them.*[87]

## Contentment (Qunu’)

It is reported from ‘Ali (as) that: *Contentment is as good as estate and good moral is as good as a blessing.* He (as) was asked about the Word of the Exalted: ***We shall revive him with a good life.***[88] He replied: *It is contentment.*[89]

It is reported from Al-Sadiq (as) that: *Whoever is content with his share is at rest from grief, lying and trouble. Whoever has lack of contentment has an increase in desire and greed. Desiring the world is the origin of all evil. The one who has desire and greed cannot be saved from Hell unless he repents.*

This is why the Prophet (S) said: *Contentment is a sovereignty that does not come to an end and the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, rides it. It carries the content to his abode. Therefore, have trust in Allah in what you do not have and be pleased with what He has given you. Have patience in what afflicts you because that is a determined matter.*[90]

It is reported from Abu al-Hasan al-Rida (as) that he said: *He who is only content with abundant sustenance, then it is not sufficient for him to do anything but abundant deeds. He who is content with humble sustenance, then it is sufficient for him to do small deeds.*[91]

It is reported on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) that the Commander of the Faithful (as) said: *O son of Adam, if you want from this world only that which will suffice you, then the slightest of what is in it will suffice you. And if you want more than that which will suffice you, then all that which is in it will not suffice you.*[92]

Abu Ja'far (as) said: Beware of aspiring he who is above you for Allah, the Mighty and High, says to His Prophet (S):

***And let not their property and their children excite your admiration;***[93]

and He says:

***And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) the splendour of this world's life.***[94]

If you get any of that then remember the life of the Messenger of Allah (S), because his food was barley, his sweet was dates and his fuel was palm leaves, if he obtained that.[95]

Al-Rida (as) related from his forefathers (as) saying: Abu Ayyub Khalid ibn Zayd came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said: O Messenger of Allah, admonish me in short words so that I may memorise them. The Prophet (S) stated: *I advise you of five things: Be hopeless of what is in the hands of people, as that is self-sufficiency. Beware of greed, because it brings poverty. Perform your prayers as your farewell (from the world). Be careful of what you give as an excuse, and choose for your brother what you choose for yourself.*[96]

## Patience (Sabr)

Allah, the Exalted, said:

***O you who believe! Take assistance through patience and prayer.***[97]

It has come in an authentic tradition on the authority of al-Fadl from Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq (as) that: *Patience is to faith like the head is to the body. Therefore, if the head goes so does the body. Similarly, if patience parts so does faith.*[98]

It is related on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah (as) that the Messenger of Allah stated: *A time will come when a king will not become a king except by killing and oppression, a wealthy will not become wealthy except by usurping and miserliness, and no one would be able to love except by losing faith and following evil desire. Whoever reaches such a time, then he must have patience over poverty even if he can become wealthy, he must have patience over dislike even if he can love, and he must have patience over humility even if he can have dignity. Allah will bestow such a person with the reward of fifty truthful ones who have testified for me.*[99]

An authentic tradition from Abu 'Abd Allah (as) from the Messenger of Allah (S) states: *Allah, the Mighty and High, said: I have indeed made this world a loan for my servants. Therefore, whichever one of my servants gives me a loan, whatever I like I give ten times to seven hundred times in place of one. However, if he does not give me a loan then I take away from him something by force. If he shows patience over it then I give him three virtues, of which if I gave even one of to my angels they would be*

*pleased with Me for it.*

Then Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) recited the Word of Allah, the Mighty and High: ***Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah’s and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings;*** this is one of the three, ***and mercy from their Lord,*** this is second, ***and those are the followers of the right course***, 100 and this the third. Then the Imam (as) stated: *This is for someone from whom Allah takes away something by force.* 101

In an authentic tradition Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) says: *Be patient upon difficulties, excel in patience upon obligations, and remain steadfast about the Imams (as).* 102

It is related from al-Rida (as) that: *On the Day of Judgement a caller will call, ‘Where are the ones who were patient?’ Hence, a group of people will rise. Then the caller will call again, ‘Where are the ones who took patience?’ Then another group of people will rise.* The narrator said: May I be your ransom, what are the patient and those who took patience? The Imam (as) replied: *The first group are the ones who were patient upon fulfilling their obligations and the second group are the ones who refrained from the forbidden acts.* 103

It is related on the authority of ‘Ali (as) saying: *The Messenger of Allah (S) said: Patience is of three types: patience upon hardships, over obedience and against sins. Whoever has patience upon hardship, until he fights it with good commemoration then Allah writes for him three hundred levels of reward, the difference between each level is like the distance between the heavens and the earth. Whoever has patience over obedience, Allah writes for him six hundred levels of reward, the difference between each level is the distance between the boundaries of the earth to the empyrean. Whoever has patience against sins, Allah writes for him nine hundred levels of reward. The difference between each level is the distance between the boundaries of the earth to the end of the empyrean.* 104

## Thankfulness (Shukr)

Allah, the Exalted, said:

***Why should Allah chastise you if you are grateful and believe? And Allah is the Multiplier of rewards, Omniscient.*** 105

***There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning. Surely We have created man from a small life-germ uniting (itself): We mean to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing. Surely We have shown him the way: he may be thankful or unthankful.*** 106

***Give thanks, O family of Dawud! And very few of My servants are grateful.*** 107

***Grateful for His favours; He chose him and guided him on the right path.*** 108

It is related on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) that: Allah, the Mighty and High, revealed to Musa (as): *O Musa, thank Me the way I deserved to be thanked.* Musa (as) asked: *O my Lord, how do I thank You the way You deserve to be thanked, because each time I thank You that is in itself a blessing from You?* Allah answered: *O Musa, now you have thanked Me when you have come to know that even the direction for thanking to thank Me is from Me.* 109

In an authentic tradition on the authority of Isma’il ibn al-Fadl saying: Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) said: When you begin your morning or evening then say ten times: *O Allah, whatever blessing You have bestowed upon me this morning and any well-being in my religion or worldly affairs is from You alone. You have no partners. All praise is for You. O Lord, I am grateful to You for everything for this until You become pleased and even after You are pleased.*

If You say this then you have performed your gratitude for the blessings that Allah has blessed you with in that day and night. 110

In another authentic tradition on the authority of Hafs ibn al-Bakhtari that Abu ‘Abd Allah (as) said: *Prophet Nuh (as) used to say this prayer*111 *when he began his morning. Hence, he (as) was titled a very grateful servant.* He (as) then added: The Messenger of Allah (S) said: *Whoever trusts Allah is saved.* 112

It is related on the authority of al-Sadiq (as) on the authority of his forefathers (as) saying: *A person who is not fasting and is thankful has the recompense of a fasting person whose fast is rewarded. A healthy thanking person has the reward of an ill that has patience, and charitable thankful person has the reward of a disadvantaged content one.* 113

In an authentic tradition from Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (as) that he said to one of his students, “O Mu’awiyyah, whoever obtains three things will not be deprived of three things, whoever obtains prayer will be granted the answer, whoever obtains gratitude will be granted more, and whoever obtains trust in Allah will be granted sufficiency. Indeed, Allah, the Mighty and High, says in His Book: ***And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him;***114 **He also says: *If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more,***115 and He says: ***Call upon Me, I will answer you*** 116.”117

## Forbearance (Hilm)

Forbearance is to control oneself from outburst of rage, and balance of the faculty of anger.

It is related on the authority of Al-Rida (as) saying: *A person cannot become a true worshipper until he becomes forbearing.* 118

It is related on the authority of Abu Ja’far al-Baqir (as) that: ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) used to say: *A man who forbears at the time of anger amazes me.* 119

It is also related on the authority of Abu Ja’far (as) that: Indeed, Allah, the Mighty and High, loves the

modest and the forbearing.[120]

It is related on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful (as) that: *There is no honour more elevating than forbearance.*[121]

It is related from al-Rabi', an attendant of al-Mansur, the caliph that: Al-Mansur said to al-Sadiq (as), "Relate to me a tradition from yourself that I may be admonished from it, and it may be an obstacle for me from grave offenses." Thus, al-Sadiq (as) said: *You must abide by forbearance, because it is a pillar of knowledge. Hold yourself at the time of showing power because if you do what you have power over then you are as if you have given life to anger or given health to hatred or you like to be remembered with tyranny. You must know that if you punish someone who deserves it, then you will be described as just and I do not know a state better than the state of justice. A state that causes thankfulness is better than a state that causes patience.* Al-Mansur said, "You have admonished me and what a nice job you have done. You have said it concisely."[122]

It is related on the authority of 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) that: *Allah does not like any swallowing better than two swallowings: swallowing of anger when a beliver resists it through forbearance and swallowing of distress when a believer resists it through patience.*[123]

It is related on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah (as) that: *Whoever has three qualities in him, his faith is complete: he who has patience when oppressed, suppresses his anger, and reckoned but forgives and forgets, then he is amongst those who Allah will enter in the Paradise without account and will intercede for the good and bad.*[124]

It is in the will of the Commander of the Faithful (as) to his son al-Hasan (as): *O my son, wisdom is a friend of man, forbearance is his assistant, friendliness is his father and patience is his best soldier.*[125]

The word of the Exalted is sufficient regarding the significance of forbearance:

***And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! He between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend. And none are made to receive it but those who are patient, and none are made to receive it but those who have a mighty good fortune.***[126]

## Modesty (Haya')

Modesty is to take hold of oneself from shameful deeds.

It is related on the authority of Mu'adh ibn Kathir from one of the two (as) that: ***Modesty and faith are combined together. If one of them leaves the other one follows.***[127]

It is related on the authority of Abu 'Abd Allah (as) that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: ***If someone has four qualities in him and even if he was full of sins from his neck to the feet, then Allah will***

***change them to good deeds: truthfulness, modesty, good conduct and thankfulness.*** 128

## Generosity (Sakha')

It is related on the authority of Ja'far ibn Muhammad (as) that he related from his father (as) that his forefathers (as) related saying: the Messenger of Allah (S) said: ***Generous is close to Allah, close to people, and close to the Paradise. On the contrary, the miser is far from Allah, far from people, and far from the Hell.*** 129

***

Here conclude the noble ethics which every Shi'ah must have. Whoever desires perfection in humanistic virtues must ponder upon the words of the infallible Household (as), and in the implications of their traditions. They are the mines of knowledge and wisdom. We will mention three traditions here:

It is related from the Prophet (S) that: **The faith of a believer does not attain completion until he embraces one hundred and three attributes in action, practice, intention, hidden and apparent.**

The Commander of the Faithful (as) asked: *O Messenger of Allah (S), what are those one hundred and three attributes?*

The Prophet (S) said: *O 'Ali (as), among the attributes of a believer are that his thinking is free, his report is inherent, his knowledge is immense, and his forbearance is great. He is nice in discord and generous at request. He is the most open-hearted of people and most humble in spirit. A believer's laugh is through his smile. His gathering is training. He reminds the negligent and teaches the ignorant. He does not hurt the ones that hurt him and does not tackle a subject that is not his. He does not rejoice at misfortune and does not backbite anyone. He is clear from forbidden acts and upright from doubts.*

*He gives plenty, but harms less. He is an aid for the stranger and a father to the orphan. His joy is on his face and his grief is in his heart. He is cheerful in poverty. He is sweeter than honey and harder than rock. He does not reveal a secret and does not tear down the cover. A believer has subtle movements and pleasant views. He worships much. He is respectful, sociable and silent. He is forbearing when unrecognised and extremely patient with the ones who harm him.*

*He honours the elderly and has mercy upon the small. He is honest when trusted and far from disloyalty. His friend is piety and his oath is chastity. A believer has much caution and fewer faults. His movements are manners and his speech is amazing. He holds his slips and does not follow on defectiveness.*

*He is dignified, patient, content, thankful, quiet, truthful, kind, virtuous, forbearing, gentle, pure and distinguished. He does not accuse or lie, nor does he backbite or swear. He is neither envious nor miserly. He is cheerful and smiling. He is neither sensitive nor spying.*

*He aims for the best of the matters and more brilliant of the ethics. He is comprised in Allah's protection*

*and supported with Allah's direction. He is resilient and firm with certainty. He does not harm the one who hates him and does not sin with the one he loves. He is patient in difficulties. He does not oppress nor act outrageously. He does not act with greed. Poverty is his motto and patience is his mantle. He has modest expense and is incredibly helpful. He fasts excessively, stands long in prayers, and sleeps little.*

*His heart is devout and his knowledge is pure. When he overpowers, he forgives and when he promises, he fulfils. He fasts with desire and prays with respect. He carries out his act with goodness as if he sees it. He lowers his glance. He is generous, does not reject who asks, and is not miserly to one who requires something. He keeps kinship with brothers and continuously performs good deeds.*

*His speech is balanced and he speaks quietly. A believer neither drowns in hatred nor is destroyed in love. He does not accept falsehood from his friends nor does he reject righteousness from his enemy. He does not learn except for knowing and does not know except for practicing. His resentment is minute and his gratitude is plenty. In the day he seeks sustenance and at night he cries over his mistakes.*

*If he enters upon a course with worldly people, he is the nicest of them, and if he enters upon a course with Godly people, he is the most godfearing of them. He is not satisfied with any doubtful thing in his income and does not compromise in his religion. He is compassionate over his brother in errors and protects what has passed of his old friendship.* [130]

It is related on the authority of 'Ali ibn al–Husayn Zayn al–'Abidin (as) that: *If you see a person whose manner and direction are good, his speech is calm, and his actions are humble, then do not hasten to be deceived by him. There are many people who are incapable of obtaining the world and from mounting onto that which is prohibited due to the weakness of their determination, their contempt and their cowardice. Thus, they display their religion as a trap for obtaining the world. They mingle with the people for showing off and when it is possible for them, they dive into the prohibited.*

*If you find him abstaining from forbidden wealth then do not hasten to be deceived by him, because the desires of people are different. There are many people who distance themselves from forbidden wealth, even if it is plenty. However, they cannot control their lust and if they are faced with it, they commit the prohibited.*

*If you see him abstaining from lust, then do not hasten to be deceived by him until you see his wisdom, because there are many people who abstain from that. However, they do not have firm wisdom. Thus, they cause more mischief due to their ignorance than virtue due to their wisdom.*

*If you discover him to have firm wisdom then do not hasten to be deceived by him, unless you see if his desires are in control of his wisdom or if his wisdom is in control of his desires. Does he love evil ranks or abstain from them? There are many people who lose both this world and the hereafter by abstaining from worldly rank for the sake of this world. They find the joy of evil rank to be better than the joy of wealth and permissible bounties. They refrain from all those seeking rank. And when it is said to him to*

*fear Allah, then pride carries him off to sin, therefore hell is sufficient for him;* ***and certainly it is an evil resting place****.* 131

*He acts rashly; the first evil leads him to extreme loss. His Lord pulls him after demanding from him what he cannot do in his sin. He makes legal that which Allah made forbidden and makes illegal that which Allah made permissible. He does not care about what he overlooks from his religion if he reaches the rank for which he was pretending to be pious. They it is upon whom are Allah's wrath and curse, and He has promised them a disgraceful punishment.*

*On the contrary, he is truly the best person who makes his desires subservient to the command of Allah and makes every effort to please Allah. He sees humiliation in the company of truth closer to eternal honour than honour in the company of falsehood. He knows that the bad times he goes through in this world will result in the eternal blessing of an abode which will not perish or come to an end. Similarly, he knows that the good times he will see due to following his evil desires will cause him to face a punishment that will not end or decline. Thus, such a person is a good person. Grab hold of such a person and follow his way. Through him find access to your Lord, because God does not reject his prayer and does not disappoint his request.* 132

The Imam (as) is explaining that the criteria of human perfection are neither words and humble actions, nor abstention from desire of wealth and food. In fact, the criterion of human perfection is a wisdom purified from the grime of desire so that it can be a source of virtue and reform, and a soul that obeys Allah's commands. It should be such that it cannot be deceived by any desire, even the desires of fame and status, that would leave honour in the company of falsehood and would choose humility in the company of truth.

A ninety-four year old man named 'Unwan al-Basri narrates that: "I had been studying under Malik ibn Anas for a number of years. When Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) came to Madinah, I went to visit him and was interested in learning from him just as I had been learning from Malik. He said to me one day: "I am a man much sought after and am also occupied by various supplications throughout the day and the night so please do not disturb me in my state of supplication and go and learn from Malik and study under him, just as you were doing before."

I became sad on hearing this and left the Imam's presence, and said to myself, "If the Imam had perceived any good in me he would not have prevented me from studying under him and learning from him." I then went to the mosque of the Holy Prophet (S) and I gave my salutations to him, then I turned from the grave and prayed two cycles of prayer at the *rawdah* 133 and said supplicating Allah (SWT): "O Allah (SWT)! O Allah (SWT)! I beseech You please make Ja'far's (as) heart incline towards me, and grant me from his knowledge that which will guide me on the right path."

Then I returned home, sad and upset, and did not even attend Malik b. Anas's study circles for my heart was filled only with love for Ja'far (as). I did not leave my house except to attend congregational prayers,

until I finally ran out of patience. When I could bear it no longer, I put my shoes and my cloak on, and made my way to Ja'far's (as) house after the 'Asr (afternoon) prayer.

When I arrived at his house, I sought permission to enter, and a servant of his came out and asked me what I wanted. I replied: "I've come to extend my salutations to the noble one. He said that the Imam was busy praying. So I waited on the doorstep, and it wasn't long before the servant came out again and said: "Come in by the grace of Allah (SWT)."

So I entered and greeted the Imam, and he returned my greeting, saying: "Take a seat and may Allah (SWT) forgive you." So I sat down. Then he bowed his head, looking down for quite a long time before he asked me my title, to which I replied: "Abu 'Abd Allah." He said: "May Allah (SWT) extend your progeny and enable you to succeed in doing what pleases Him." Upon hearing this, I thought to myself that if I were to take away nothing of benefit from this visit except this prayer (that he had wished for me), it would be more than enough.

Then he bowed his head down again for a while, then raised it saying: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, what do you want?" I replied: "I asked Allah (SWT) to give me a place in your heart and to grant me benefit from your knowledge, so I hope that Allah (SWT) will grant me what I asked Him for with respect to you."

The Imam said: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, knowledge is not acquired through learning. Rather it is a light that illuminates in the heart of one who wants Allah (SWT) to guide him. So if you want knowledge, first seek true servitude (to Allah (SWT)) within yourself. And seek knowledge according to its use (i.e. what you can act upon) and ask Allah (SWT) to make you understand, and He will make you understand."

I asked: "O noble one" and he immediately said: "Call me Abu 'Abd Allah", so I started again: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, what constitutes true servitude to Allah (AS)?" He replied: "Three things, 1) that in all that Allah (SWT) has placed at his disposal, the servant does not consider any of it his own possession, for verily servants do not have the right to ownership. They see all wealth as belonging to Allah (SWT) and so they dispose of it as Allah (SWT) commands them to. 2) that the servant does not make plans for himself (i.e. does not see himself as the executer of his plans), and 3) that the servant occupies himself solely with observing what Allah (SWT) has commanded and refraining from that which He has forbidden.

So when the servant does not see any of the wealth at his disposal as his own, giving from it in the way of Allah (SWT) becomes easy for him. When the servant entrusts all his plans to the Master Planner, the tribulations of this world become insignificant in his eyes. When the servant occupies himself with observing Allah's (SWT) commands and refraining from what He has forbidden, he no longer has time for showing off and useless debates with people.

So when Allah grants (SWT) these three characteristics to a servant, the world (i.e. worldly matters), Satan and people (and their opinions) become insignificant in his eyes, and he does not seek after worldly gains to amass possessions, nor does he demand fame and status from people, and nor does

he waste his time on futile things. This is but the first stage that the pious God-conscious ones (*muttaqun*) reach. Verily Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

***"As for the future abode, We assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor to make mischief, and the good end is for those who are God-conscious (muttaqun)."***[134]

I asked: "O Abu 'Abd Allah, please give me some advice." The Imam replied, "I advise you on nine issues. Know that they are my advice especially to those who strive on the path to Allah (SWT), and I beseech Allah (SWT) to help you act upon this advice. Three of them do with self-discipline, three do with clemency towards others, and three do with knowledge, so learn them well, and do not take them lightly".

I emptied my heart of all else in order to receive this advice, and the Imam continued: "As for the three pieces of advice on self-discipline – firstly, do not eat that which you have no appetite for, for this brings about idiocy and stupidity. Secondly, do not eat unless you are hungry, and thirdly, when you do eat, eat only that which is lawful (*halal*) and begin in the Name of Allah (SWT), and remind yourself of the tradition of the Prophet (S): "There is no vessel that man fills worse than his own stomach." So if you must fill it, then allow one third of it for food, another third for drink, and keep the last third for air.

The three pieces of advice to do with clemency are – firstly, if someone were to say to you: 'If you dare say a word, I'll give you ten back,' then you should be such as to reply, 'Even if you say ten words, you will not hear a single one back from me.' Secondly, when someone insults you, say: 'If you are right in what you are saying, then may Allah (SWT) forgive me for it, and if you are wrong then may He forgive you for it.' Thirdly, when someone treats you harshly, return it with good counsel and pray for Him.

As for the advice to do with knowledge – firstly, ask the scholars that which you are ignorant of, but do not ask them obnoxiously or testingly. Secondly, do not act based on your own opinion about something, and exercise precaution in all things wherever possible. And thirdly, beware of giving religious decrees and legal opinions as you would beware of a lion, and do not put your neck at stake for people to walk all over.

Now please take your leave O Abu 'Abd Allah, for I have advised you, and please do not preoccupy me further from my supplications, as I am a man who does not waste his breath. ***'And peace be on him who follows the guidance."***[135]

***

We will suffice by mentioning these traditions and will not embark on their commentary because each of these traditions, in fact, each sentence of these traditions, contains treasures of knowledge and recognition. We will elaborate a sentence from this tradition, which is his (as) word: *If you want knowledge, first seek true servitude within yourself.*

Servitude is either relative, meaning it rotates around the subject that it is related to, or it is real, meaning it implies servitude of the essentially in need to the Self-Sufficient in essence.

Whoever knows his self, knows that his self does not belong to him and he does not control anything for himself either useful or harmful, nor does he control his death or life or rising again. He would recognise his Lord with the words of Abu 'Abd Allah (as): *None but Allah can create something out of nothing. None but Allah can transfer one substance into another. None but Allah can transfer existence into non-existence.* 136

He would learn that the relationship of everything to Allah's Intent, other than Allah Himself, is like the relationship of shapes present in the mind to those in the surroundings. The difference between the two relationships is astonishing, as the shapes present in the mind decline with slumber and sleep, whereas people and minds are stationary due to the Everliving, the Self-subsisting, Whom slumber does not overtake nor sleep. There is no likeness of His Subsistence and Creation. However, the Glorified said:

***O people! A parable is set forth, therefore listen to it: surely those whom you call upon besides Allah cannot create a fly, though they should all gather for it, and should the fly snatch away anything from them, they could not take it back from it, weak are the invoker and the invoked.*** 137

Whoever reflects upon the creation of a fly and upon the strengths and the body Allah has endowed it with, will realise that whatever other than Allah is called upon is incapable of creating its body and shape, and giving life to its dead substance. We are unable to comprehend what subtle wisdom is placed in its creation. Whoever reflects upon the incapability of the ones called upon other than Allah, that they cannot take back this weak creation, would acknowledge that they are servants that belong to Allah and have no power. The explanation of the Word of the Exalted would be understood after this verse:

***They have not estimated Allah with the estimation that is due to Him; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty,*** 138

and this verse would also be understood:

***There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Beneficent Allah as a servant.*** 139

Whoever understands real servitude knows that it demands the reality of servitude, which takes a servant to the reality of worship. The status of the liberated people is purely for Allah. They worship Allah to thank Him and not due to fear or hope.

Those who want to perfect their souls must perceive actual servitude, and render it the right it deserves. Its right is to find in oneself the reality of servitude, which is the key to knowledge, and it is not taught. Surely knowledge is a light, which Allah casts into the heart of whoever He wishes to guide. This is the

elevation of perfection, which the servants of Allah attain through crossing the stages of knowledge of certainty, the revelation of certainty and the truth of certainty. For this reason, the Imam (as) said: *If you want knowledge, first seek true servitude within yourself.*

The purpose of this point is not to research into the depths of this tradition; however, it is to remind us to reflect upon the words of the infallible Household (as). We ask Allah for the direction to His servitude and worship, which is the ultimate goal of the creation. The Word of the Exalted is sufficient for the one hoping to reach the stage of servitude:

***And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace. And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing. And they who say: O our Lord! Turn away from us the punishment of Hell, surely the punishment thereof is lasting.***

***Surely it is an evil abode and (evil) place to stay. And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just mean. And they who do not call upon another god with Allah and do not slay the soul, which Allah has forbidden except in the requirements of justice, and (who) do not commit fornication and he who does this shall find a requital of sin;***

***The punishment shall be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he shall abide therein in abasement; Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever repents and does good, he surely turns to Allah a (goodly) turning.***

***And they who do not bear witness to what is false, and when they pass by what is vain, they pass by nobly. And they who, when reminded of the communications of their Lord, do not fall down thereat deaf and blind.***

***And they who say: O our Lord! Grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us guides to those who guard (against evil). These shall be rewarded with high places because they were patient, and shall be met therein with greetings and salutations. Abiding therein; goodly the abode and the resting-place.*** [140]

This is a minute piece of the immense literature that is transmitted regarding noble ethics and good manners. It is sufficient for any sensible person who wishes to perfect his soul with virtues. This little collection can take mankind to perfection.

We will end this discussion with the words of the Commander of the Faithful (as) that describe his true followers:

It is related that a companion of the Commander of the Faithful (as) called Hammam, who was a man

devoted to worship, said to him: O Commander of the Faithful, describe to me the pious man in such a way as though I may see him.

The Commander of the Faithful (as) avoided the reply and said: *O Hammam, fear Allah and perform good acts because verily 'Allah is with those who guard* (*themselves against evil*)*, and those who do good* (*to others*)*.'*[141]

Hammam was not satisfied with this and insisted that he speak. Thereupon, the Commander of the Faithful (as) praised Allah and extolled Him and sought His blessings on the Holy Prophet (S) and then spoke: *Now then, Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, created the creation. He created them without any need for their obedience or security from their sinning, because the sin of anyone who sins does not harm Him, nor does the obedience of anyone who obeys Him benefit Him. He has distributed among them their livelihood, and has assigned them their positions in the world.*

*Thus, the God-fearing in it are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put their ears to that knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain in the time of trials just as they remain in comfort. If there had not been fixed periods* (*of life*) *ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of* (*their*) *eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart, and so everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus, to them Paradise is as though they see it and are enjoying its favours. To them, Hell is also as if they see it and are suffering punishment in it.*

*Their hearts are grieved, they are protected against evils, their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste. They endured* (*hardship*) *for a short while and, consequently, they secured comfort for a long time. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them. The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by ransom.*

*During night they are upstanding on their feet reading portions of the Qur'an and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness* (*for Paradise*) *they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. Yet, when they come across a verse which contains fear* (*of Hell*) *they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate themselves on their foreheads, their palms, their knees and their toes, and beseech Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear* (*of Allah*) *has made them thin like arrows. If anyone looks at them he believes they are sick, although they are not sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern* (*i.e., fear*) *has made them mad.*

*They are not satisfied with their meagre good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deeds. When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he*

*says: 'I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know. O' Allah do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know.'*

*The peculiarity of anyone of them is that you will see that he has strength in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in forbearance, moderation in riches, devotion in worship, gracefulness in starvation, endurance in hardship, desire for the lawful, pleasure in guidance and hatred from greed. He performs virtuous deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning his anxiety is to remember (Allah).*

*He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy, fear lest the night is passed in forgetfulness and joy over the favour and mercy received by him. If his self refuses to endure a thing which it does not like he does not grant its request towards what it likes. The coolness of his eye lies in what is to last forever, while from the things (of this world) that will not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance, and speech with action.*

*You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Good alone is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah), he is counted among those who remember (Him); yet, if he is among those who remember, he is not counted among the forgetful. He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him.*

*Indecent speech is far from him, his utterance is lenient, his evils are non-existent, his virtues are ever-present, his good is at the forefront and mischief has turned its face (from him). He is dignified during calamities, patient during distresses, and thankful during ease. He does not commit excess over him whom he hates, and does not commit sin for the sake of him whom he loves. He admits truth before evidence is brought against him. He does not misappropriate what is placed in his custody, and does not forget what he is required to remember. He does not call others bad names, he does not cause harm to his neighbour, he does not feel happy at others' misfortunes, he does not enter into wrong and does not go out of right.*

*If he is silent his silence does not grieve him, if he laughs he does not raise his voice, and if he is wronged he endures till Allah takes revenge on his behalf. His own self is in distress because of him, while the people are in ease from him. He puts himself in hardship for the sake of his next life, and makes people feel safe from himself. His keeping away from others is by way of asceticism and purification, and his nearness to those to whom he is near is by way of leniency and mercifulness. His keeping away is not by way of vanity or feeling of greatness, nor his nearness by way of deceit and cheating.*

It is related that Hammam passed into a deep swoon and then expired. Then the Commander of the

Faithful (as) said: *Verily, by Allah I had this fear about him.* Then he added: *Effective advices produce such effects on receptive minds.* Someone said to him: O Commander of the Faithful, how is it that you do not receive such an effect?

The Commander of the Faithful (as) replied: *Woe to you. For death there is a fixed hour which cannot be exceeded, and a cause which does not change. Now look, never repeat such talk which Satan had put on your tongue.* 142

This is an example of the teachings of our Imams (as) and the training of our leaders (as). Thus, if Islam had not been covered with the delusions of its followers and the light of the guidance of the Imams of the Muslims had not disappeared in the actions of the ones claiming to follow them, then the meaning of this verse would have come into sight:

***He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions.*** 143

1. Sahih al-Bukhari: Kitab al-Ahkam, vol. 8, pp 127; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 93.
2. Sahih Muslim: vol. 6, pp 3.
3. Sahih Muslim: vol. 6, pp 3; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 98.
4. Sahih Ibn Habban: vol. 15, pp 43.
5. Sunan al-Tirmidhi: vol. 3, pp 340.
6. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 92.
7. Ibid.
8. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 99.
9. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 108.
10. Musnad by Ibn Ju'd: pp 390, no. 266.
11. Musnad Abu Ya'la: vol. 13, pp 456.
12. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 5, pp 93.
13. Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn: vol. 4, pp 501.
14. Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn: vol. 3, pp 618; Sunan Abu Dawud: vol. 2, pp 309; Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal: vol. 1, pp 398, & 406, vol. 5, pp 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 94, 95, 97, 100, 101, 106, 107 & 108; Musnad Abu Ya'la: vol. 8, pp 444, vol. 9, pp 222; Al- Mu'jam al-Kabir: vol. 2, pp 196, 197, 199, 206, 207, 208, 214, 215, 218, 223, 226, 240, 248, 253, 254 & 255, vol. 10, pp 157, & vol. 22, pp 120; Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat: vol. 1, pp 263; Al-Ahad wa-al-Mathani: vol. 3, pp 128; Al-Tarikh al-Kabir by al-Bukhari: vol. 3, pp 185, vol. 8, pp 410; Tahdhib al-Kamal: vol. 3, pp 223, & 224, vol. 33, pp 272; Al-Thiqat by Ibn Habban: vol. 7, pp 241; Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin in Isbhan: vol. 2, pp 89; Musnad Abu Dawud al-Tiyalisi: pp 105 & 180; Ta'jil al-Manfa'at bi-Zawa'id Rijal al-A'immat al-Arba'ah: pp 538; Tarikh Baghdad: vol. 14, pp 354; Tarikh Madinah Damishq: vol. 21, pp 288, vol. 32, pp 303; ...; Siyar A'lam al-Nubala': vol. 8, pp 184; and other many more Sunni sources. Kashf al-Ghita': vol. 1, pp 7; 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (A): vol. 1, pp 49, ch. 6, hadith no. 9; Al-Khisal: pp 467...; Al-Amali by al-Saduq: pp 386, ch. 51, hadith no. 4, pp 387...; Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mat: pp 68 & 271, ...; Kifayat al-Athar: pp 35, 49, &...; Rawdat al-Wa'izin: pp 261 & 262; Dala'il al-Imamat: pp 20; Sharh al-Akhbar: vol. 3, pp 400; Kitab al-Ghaybah: pp 103, 117, 118, 120 &...; Al-Ghaybah by al-Tusi: pp 128 &...; Manaqib Al Abu Talib: vol. 1, pp 295; Al-'Umdah: pp 416 &...; Al-Tara'if: pp 169 &...; and other Shi'i sources.
15. Holy Qur'an, 5: 12.
16. Holy Qur'an, 42: 23.
17. Yanabi' al-Mawaddah: vol. 3, pp 292.
18. Kashf al-Ghita': vol. 1, pp 7.

19. Genesis: 17.
20. Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah: 269.
21. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 527, ch. The Twelve Imams.
22. Al-Najashi says in his praise: He was the Shaykh of our teachers in his time. He was trustworthy and eminent. He reported some six thousand traditions.
23. He is the Shaykh of the residents of Qum. He is distinguished from them and is their jurist. He needs no defence. He is from the companions of al-Rida, al-Jawad and al-Hadi (A).
24. He is one of the four that were the pillars of their time. He is one of the companions of the consensus [ashab al-ijma], on whom all the schools of thought (of the Shi'ah) have a consensus that whatever is transmitted from them with an authentic chain is correct. He is among the companions of Imam al-Kazim and Imam al-Rida (A).
25. He has specific narrations in his authentication from the likes of Safwan ibn Yahya.
26. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 203, Kitab al-Hujjah: Fadl al-Imam wa Sifatuh, hadith no. 2.
27. Holy Qur'an, 17: 71.
28. Holy Qur'an, 32: 24.
29. Holy Qur'an, 13: 7.
30. Holy Qur'an, 20: 50.
31. Holy Qur'an, 87: 1-3.
32. Holy Qur'an, 12: 108.
33. Holy Qur'an, 6: 153.
34. Holy Qur'an, 9: 9.
35. Basa'ir al-Darajat: pp 143, part 3, ch. Nadir, hadith no. 4.
36. 'Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (A): vol. 2, pp 200, ch. 46, hadith no. 1.
37. Holy Qur'an, 16: 89.
38. Holy Qur'an, 13: 43.
39. Basa'ir al-Darajat: pp 232, part 5, ch. Knowledge of the Imam (A).
40. Tafsir al-'Ayyashi: vol. 2, pp 198, hadith no. 88 ch. 12; Misbah al-Mutahajjid: pp 228.
41. Holy Qur'an, 72: 27.
42. Holy Qur'an, 40: 82-3.
43. Holy Qur'an, 15: 42.
44. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 193, hadith no. 5.
45. Holy Qur'an, 17: 85.
46. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 273, hadith no. 4.
47. Basa'ir al-Darajat: part 2, pp 130, ch. The Imams (A)... hadith no. 5.
48. Basa'ir al-Darajat: part 8, pp 398, ch. The Imams (A)... hadith no. 6.
49. Holy Qur'an, 39: 9.
50. Holy Qur'an, 5: 16.
51. Holy Qur'an, 2: 269.
52. Holy Qur'an, 16: 90.
53. Holy Qur'an, 17: 81.
54. Holy Qur'an, 78: 38.
55. Holy Qur'an, 39: 18.
56. Holy Qur'an, 7: 145.
57. Holy Qur'an, 17: 53.
58. Holy Qur'an, 16: 125.
59. Holy Qur'an, 23: 96.
60. Holy Qur'an, 16: 97.
61. Holy Qur'an, 39: 23.
62. Holy Qur'an, 5: 50.

63. Al-Tibrani has said in Jami' al-Bayan: vol. 30, vol. 335: Ibn Hamid related to us that: 'Isa ibn Farqad related to us on the authority of Abu al-Jarud, on the authority of Muhammad ibn 'Ali that: Surely they are the best of men. The Prophet (S) said: O 'Ali, it you and your Shi'ahs.
Al-Durr al-Manthur: vol. 6, pp 379: Ibn 'Asakar has transmitted on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah that: We were in the presence of the Prophet (S), when 'Ali came so the Prophet (S) said: I swear by the One in Whose hand is my life, surely he ('Ali) and his Shi'ah are the successful ones on the Day of Judgment. This verse was revealed then: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men. Ever since then, whenever 'Ali would come, the companions of the Prophet (S) used to say: The best of men has come.
Ibn 'Uday has transmitted on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas saying: When this verse was revealed: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men; the Prophet (S) said to 'Ali that: That is you and your Shi'ahs on the Day of Judgment, pleasing (Him) and pleased (from Him).
Ibn Mardawayh has transmitted on the authority of 'Ali that: The Messenger of Allah said to me: Did you not hear the Word of Allah: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men; that is you and your Shi'ahs. My promise with you and your Shi'ahs is the Pool [hawd] when the nations will come there for accountability, you will be called with the title: The ones with shining foreheads.
Al-Shawkani has transmitted in Fath al-Qadir: vol. 5, pp 477, from Ibn 'Asakar saying: Ibn 'Asakar in Tarikh Madinat Damishq: vol. 42, pp 371: on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah that: We were with the Prophet (S) so 'Ali ibn Abu Talib came, the Prophet (S) said: My brother has come to you. He then turned to the Ka'bah and struck it with his hand and said: I swear by the One in Whose hand is my life, surely he ('Ali) and his Shi'ah are the successful ones on the Day of Judgment. He then added: Surely, he is the first of you to believe. He is the most faithful with the covenant of Allah and the most firm on the Command of Allah, the most fair for the public, the best distributor with equality and he is the best of you in virtue before Allah. Thus, this verse was revealed: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men. The companions of the Prophet (S) used to say whenever 'Ali would come: The best of men has come.
Refer to Yanabi' al-Mawaddah: vol. 1, pp 197, 223, vol. 2, pp 357, 452; Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah: ch. 11, part 1, verse: 11, pp 161; and other Sunni Commentary and Traditional sources.
It has come in al-Mahasin: vol. 1, pp 171, hadith no. 140: From Abu Ja'far (A) about the Word of Allah, the Exalted: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men; saying: They are the Shi'ahs of the Household (A).
It has come in Rawdat al-Wa'izin: pp 105: Al-Baqir (A) said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said to 'Ali starting with the verse: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men; they are you and your Shi'ahs. Our meeting place is the Pool. When the people are being resurrected, you and your Shi'ahs will be satisfied, quenched of thirst, with shining foreheads.
It has come in Sharh al-Akhbar: vol. 1, pp 202, hadith no. 167: It is reported on the authority of 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ali that he said: This verse was revealed for 'Ali and his Shi'ahs: Those who believe and do good, surely they are the best of men.
Al-Amali by Al-Shaykh al-Tusi: pp 252, 405 & 671; Mishkat al-Anwar: pp 167; and other Shi'ah sources.
64. Holy Qur'an, 98: 7.
65. Holy Qur'an, 5: 55.
66. Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba: pp 102; Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat: vol. 6, pp 218; Ma'rifat 'Ulum al-Hadith: pp 102; Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah by Ibn Abu al-Hadid: vol. 13, pp 277; Nazm Durar al-Simtayn: pp 86; Jami' al-Bayan (Tafsir al-Tabari): vol. 6, pp 389; Ahkam al-Holy Qur'an, vol. 2, pp 557; Shawahid al-Tanzil: vol. 1, pp 209 to 253 & 403; Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Holy Qur'an, vol. 6, pp 221; Tafsir Ibn Kathir: vol. 2, pp 74; Al-Durr al-Manthur: vol. 2, pp 293; Tarikh Madinah Damishq: vol. 42, pp 357; Al-Bidayat wa-al-Nihayah: vol. 7, pp 394; and other Sunni sources.
Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 289 & 427; Da'a'im al-Islam: vol. 1, pp 16; Al-Khisal: pp 580; Al-Amali by Al-Saduq: pp 186, majlis 26, hadith 4; Rawdat al-Wa'izin: pp 92; Manaqib Amir al-Mu'minin (A): vol. 1, pp 151, 170 & 189; Al-Amali by Al-Shaykh al-Tusi: pp 549, ch. 24, hadith no. 4; Al-Ihtijaj: vol. 1, pp 73 & 202; Tafsir al-'Ayyashi: vol. 1, pp 327; Tafsir al-Qummi: vol. 1, pp 170; Tafsir Furat al-Kufi: pp 125; Tafsir al-Tibyan: vol. 3, pp 558; and other Shi'ah sources.
67. Holy Qur'an, 5: 56.
68. Al-Amali by Al-Shaykh al-Tusi: pp 576, ch. 24, hadith no. 3.

69. Holy Qur'an, 4: 69.
70. Al-Khisal by Al-Saduq: vol. 2, pp 479, ch. 12, hadith no. 46.
71. Nahj al-Balaghah: Saying no. 150. Sayyid Radi says: If this book (Nahj al-Balaghah) had contained nothing save this short utterance, it would have sufficed as a successful piece of preaching, a specimen of high philosophy, an object of wisdom for the onlooker and a source of instruction for the meditative watcher.
72. Al-Amali by Al-Shaykh al-Mufid: pp 192.
73. Al-Kafi: vol. 1, pp 25.
74. Holy Qur'an, 13: 19.
75. Al-Mahasin by Al-Barqi: vol. 1, pp 193, ch. al-'Aql, hadith no. 11.
76. Al-Khisal by al-Saduq: vol. 1, pp 113, ch. 3, hadith no. 90.
77. Al-Khisal by al-Saduq: vol. 1, pp 128, ch. 3, hadith no. 129.
78. Al-Khisal by al-Saduq: vol. 1, pp 222, ch. 4, hadith no. 50.
79. Al-Khisal by al-Saduq: vol. 1, pp 230, ch. 4, hadith no. 71.
80. Al-Amali by al-Tusi: pp 229, ch. 7, hadith no. 53.
81. Holy Qur'an, 61: 3.
82. Nahj al-Balaghah: letter no. 53.
83. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 76, ch. piety, hadith no. 1.
84. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 78, ch. piety, hadith no. 13.
85. Al-Amali by al-Saduq: pp 479, ch. 62, hadith no. 4.
86. Al-Amali by al-Tusi: pp 222, ch. 8, hadith no. 34.
87. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 80, ch. refraining from forbidden acts, hadith no. 3.
88. Holy Qur'an, 16: 97.
89. Nahj al-Balaghah: short sayings no. 229.
90. Misbah al-Shari'ah: pp 203, ch. 98.
91. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 138.
92. Ibid.
93. Holy Qur'an, 9: 85.
94. Holy Qur'an, 20: 131.
95. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 137.
96. Al-Amali by al-Tusi: pp 508, ch. 18, hadith no. 18.
97. Holy Qur'an, 2: 153.
98. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 89.
99. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 91.
100. Quran: 2: 156-7.
101. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 92 & with slight difference in Al-Khisal by al-Saduq: vol. 1, pp 130, ch. 3, hadith no. 135.
102. Tafsir al-Qummi: vol. 1, pp 129, explanation of ch. 2, verse 200.
103. Ibid.
104. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 91.
105. Holy Qur'an, 4: 147.
106. Holy Qur'an, 76: 1-3.
107. Holy Qur'an, 34: 13.
108. Holy Qur'an, 16: 121.
109. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 98.
110. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 99.
111. i.e. the previous prayer.
112. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 99.
113. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 94.
114. Holy Qur'an, 65: 3.

115. Holy Qur'an, 14: 7.
116. Holy Qur'an, 40: 60.
117. Al-Khisal: vol. 1, pp 101, ch. 3, hadith no. 56.
118. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 111.
119. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 112.
120. Ibid.
121. Al-Amali by Shaykh Saduq: pp 399, ch. 52, hadith no. 9.
122. Al-Amali by Shaykh Saduq: pp 711, ch. 39, hadith no. 9.
123. Al-Khisal: vol. 1, pp 50, ch. 2, hadith no. 60.
124. Al-Khisal: vol. 1, pp 104, ch. 3, hadith no. 63.
125. Al-Amali by Shaykh al-Tusi: pp 146, ch. 5, hadith no. 53.
126. Holy Qur'an, 41: 34-35.
127. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 106.
128. Al-Kafi: vol. 2, pp 107.
129.
130. Kitab al-Tamhis: pp 74.
131. Holy Qur'an, 2: 206.
132. Al-Ihtijaj by Al-Tabarsi: vol. 2, pp 52 & Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 2, pp 84.
133. It is an area near the Prophet's (S) grave which is considered to be a piece of Paradise.
134. Holy Quran, 28:83
135. Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 1, pp 224, & Mishkat al-Anwar: pp 562.
136. Shaykh Saduq, Divine Unity: pp 68, ch. 2, hadith no. 22.
137. Holy Qur'an, 22: 73.
138. Holy Qur'an, 22: 74.
139. Holy Qur'an, 19: 93.
140. Holy Qur'an, 25: 63-76.
141. Holy Qur'an, 16: 128.
142. Nahjul Balaghah: sermon no. 192.
143. Holy Qur'an, 48: 28.

---

**Source URL:**
https://www.al-islam.org/principles-faith-usul-al-din-husayn-wahid-khorasani/twelve-imams#comment-0