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AHLUL-BAIT
(THE PROPHET'S HOUSEHOLD)
(THEIR STATUS, MANNER AND COURSE)

PRESENTED BY
THE AHL UL BAIT (AS)
WORLD ASSEMBLY

*In the name of Allah
the Beneficent, the Merciful*

**“...Allah desires only to keep away uncleanness from you People
of the House (Ahlul-Bait) and make you pure as pure can be.”**

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

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PRESENTATION

It is an undisputed fact of history acknowledged by all Muslims alike that the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (s.a.w.)^(*), at the end of his mission on earth addressed his companions in the following words:

“I am leaving among you two precious things: The Book of Allah and my Progeny my Household. As long as you adhere to them you will never go astray after me. These (two) will never part with each other until they return to me at the Pool of ‘Kawther’ in Paradise”.

The Prophet’s Household or to put it more properly as the Holy ‘Qur’an describes them, the *Ahlul-Bait*, are the guiding stars of the firmament of Islam. Models par excellence; they personified the light of the Qur’an and the teachings of the Messenger of Allah in their lives. They imbibed from Muhammad’s knowledge, grew up in his house and followed in his foot-steps, calling people to the Book of Allah and urging them to hold fast to the traditions set by the final Messenger to mankind. They are, as the traditions say: ‘The companions of the Qur’an and never part from it’, because they embody all the concepts, guidelines and values brought

(*) (s.a.w.) is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *Sal-lallahu alayhi wa alihi* which means ‘May Allah bless him and his Household and is exclusively used for the Prophet’.

to us by the Qur'an. The Qur'an itself says the following about them:

"...Allah desires only to keep away uncleanness from you People of the House and make you pure as pure can be."

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

There are several verses in the Qur'an as well as Traditions of the Prophet, exclusively in praise of the *Ahlul-Bait* some of which we will recount in this book for the enlightenment of our readers.

Whoever studies the lives of the *Ahlul-Bait* will at once recognize the pivotal role they played and the great task they shouldered in shaping the destiny of Islam. They actively endeavoured to keep the *Shari'a* (divine laws) pure, and strived to preserve the Islamic ideology in its original form. They even sacrificed their lives in order to safeguard these high principles and rendered them practical for the Muslim nation.

The glorious lives of the *Ahlul-Bait* have always been a source of inspiration to the Muslims in every era and place, interacting with their consciousness, enriching their progress and upholding their Islamic heritage.

Today, their tombs are the sites of frequent visitations by the faithful, who make pilgrimages even from far flung places around the globe to pay homage and to experience spiritual enlightenment.

In short the *Ahlul-Bait* can be described as the frame ensuring the unity of the Muslim nation and holding it together.

This concise book is an attempt to introduce some aspects of the lives of the *Ahlul-Bait*, their lofty status and their impact on Islamic history and culture. We hope this brief

study about the *Ahlul-Bait*, their lives, times and teachings, would serve as a guidance to our readers and make them sincerely follow the path of these blessed ones.

We also appeal to the Muslim community to close ranks and steadfastly gather around these beacons of light, and emulate their heroic examples by bravely facing the subversive elements who are trying to disunite the Muslims and sow discord amongst them. At this crucial juncture when the Muslim nation is passing through a critical period in its struggle against the combined forces of imperialism, zionism and the like, only the correct application of the Message of Islam and sincere belief in its Divine Justice will help us weather the storm, and that is not possible, except by treading the path charted out by the *Ahlul-Bait*.

The energies of the Muslim nation should be directed towards the Call of Islam, to defend its sanctity and to stop those who are engaged in sowing the seeds of dissension and spreading the venoms of blasphemy and sectarianism among the Muslims.

O' followers of the great Muhammad (s.a.w.), O' lovers of the *Ahlul-Bait*, unite together into a cohesive unit, as you are of a single religion. Your honour and dignity will not become manifest unless you adhere to the message of Islam and sincerely apply Allah's Book and the traditions of His Prophet in your daily lives.

"And say: Work; so Allah will see your work, and (so will) His Apostle and the believers."

Holy Qur'an (9:105)

Al-Balagh Foundation

INTRODUCTION

The *Ahlul-Bait*, are those glowing personalities, endeared and respected by every Muslim alike who loves the Almighty's final Messenger to mankind and sincerely believes in his mission. The Muslims have known this lofty term, this guiding star on the horizon of Islam, eversince the Glorious Qur'an pronounced this blessed epithet, to address the family of our Prophet in the following terms:

"...Allah desires only to keep away uncleanness from you People of the House (Ahlul-Bait) and make you pure as pure can be."

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

This verse was a significant event in the continuity of Divine Guidance, because it revealed a blessed group, a straight course, and an unwavering axis, towards which Allah directs the believers. It brought into limelight the pure and spotless character of the *Ahlul-Bait* and projected them as the vanguard of the Muslim nation, bestowing upon them in explicit terms the Will of the 'All-wise, the All-knowing'.

The revelation had a significant impact on the Muslim nation in shaping its history and moulding its culture. All Islamic scholars and researchers unanimously agree with this view. No one can dispute the fact that the Qur'an does not define the leadership of the Muslim nation after the Prophet, for Almighty Allah does not leave a people without gui-

dance.

Besides granting this exclusive elite the attribute of purity from sins and errors, several other verses of the Qur'an describe them in the most eloquent terms. They emphasize their superiority over the rest of the Muslims and present them as paragons of virtue to be emulated by all alike in order that Muslims measure according to the Qur'anic philosophy of life.

“Surely the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct...”

Holy Qur'an (49:13)

The various books of Islamic sciences written on such diverse subjects as art, religion, literature, science, philosophy, sociology, history etc., by scholars from different walks of lives and inclinations throughout the history of Islam, all agree on the pivotal role of the *Ahlul-Bait* and the greatness of this 'blessed tree'. The faith of the believers is measured in accordance with the degree of their love for the Prophet and his *Ahlul-Bait* as well as their endeavours in preaching the merits of this noble family and instilling the Muslims' heart with its divinely-ordained love. At the same time a true Muslim is required shun those who were hostile towards the Prophet's honoured Household and caused them calamities and grief.

Their close proximity to the Prophet, together with their vast knowledge, piety, morals, high ideals, steadfastness in defending the rights of the oppressed, and fighting tyranny and despotism by knowledge, and at times by sword if circumstances compelled, have made the *Ahlul-Bait* a unique group. All Muslim scholars are unanimous that besides Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), his daughter Fatima, her hus-

band Ali, and their two sons Hasan and Husain (a.s.)^(*), were the ones whom Allah kept pure from errors and sins:

Allah has made love and respect towards them obligatory and has described it as a token of thanks from the Muslim nation towards their beloved Prophet for his efforts in enlightening them with the message of Islam.

“Say: (O’ Muhammad, unto mankind): I do not ask of you any reward for this; but love for my near kins; and whoever earns good. We give him more of good therein...”

Holy Qur’an (42:23)

Another indication of their honoured status is the obligatory blessings *Salawat*, ordained by Allah for the Prophet and his Household during the five daily prayers a Muslim has to perform:

“Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! call for (divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (worthy) salutation.”

Holy Qur’an (33:56)

The Messenger of Allah expounding the meaning of the word ‘salutation’ as mentioned in the Qur’an instructed the Muslims:

“Say: O Allah, shower your blessings on Muhammad and the (pure) progeny of Muhammad as you had showered your blessings on Abraham and the progeny of Abraham; You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.”

The Qur’an emphasizes the lofty position and significance of the *Ahlul-Bait* so as to make the Muslim nation follow their perfect example, look for guidance towards them

(*) (a.s.) is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *Alayhi/alayha/alayhim as-Salam* which means peace be upon him/her/them. It is exclusively said of the members of the Prophet’s Household and other prophets.

and acknowledge their leadership, after Prophet Muhammad.

By bestowing these attributes upon them the Qur'an disclosed the ideological and missionary aspect of its universal message, inviting mankind to contemplate and think rationally about the mission of this infallible group to whom Allah has granted the status of leadership *Imamate*.

We shall discuss in the following pages, the life and teachings of the *Ahlul-Bait* in the light of Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions and will also quote the tributes paid by various scholars and men of letters, to this 'blessed tree', the infallible progeny of the Almighty's final Messenger.

AHLUL-BAIT IN THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

The Glorious Qur'an, the revealed word of Almighty Allah to His last and greatest Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.), is the source of all divine laws and has given humanity a perfect system of life and a code of well-defined ethical values. Every Muslim knows that he is obliged to apply Qur'anic instructions in his daily life and refer to them for guidance. Numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an spotlight the lofty position of the *Ahlul-Bait*, directing and exhorting the Muslims to adhere to their path. Broadly speaking these verses could be classified as follows:

1. There are instances of direct references by virtue of special epithets such as *Ahlul-Bait* in the verse of purification *ayat al-Tathir*, or *al-Qurba* as in *ayat al-Mawadda*. Sometimes the verses make indirect references which the Prophet expounded to his companions.

2. The Qur'an also records certain incidents and events relating to the *Ahlul-Bait*, focussing on their merits and virtue, and thereby solving the leadership issue for the Muslim community. It either refers to them collectively as in the *Mubahala* verse and the eighth verse of *Dahr sura*, or individually as in the *Wilaya* verse which is quoted below:

"Only Allah is your (Wali) and His Apostle and those who believe,

those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-due while they bow".

Holy Qur'an (5:55)

We shall now study in detail some of the verses - out of the many - which throw light on the lofty merits and greatness of Prophet Muhammad's immediate family.

1. The Verse of Purity (Tathir).

"...Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you people of the House and make you pure as pure can be".

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

All exegists of the Holy Qur'an and narrators of the Prophet's traditions, unanimously agree that the word *Ahlul-Bait*, or the Household of the Prophet as used by Almighty Allah in the Qur'an, refers only to four persons: The Prophet's daughter Fatima (a.s.), her husband Ali (a.s.) and their two children Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.).

The famous exegete Suyuti in his renowned commentary 'Dur al-Manthur' cites Tabarani's narration from Umm Salama that the Prophet once told his beloved daughter Fatima to call her husband Ali and their two sons Hasan and Husain. When they came, the Prophet covered them with a *Fadak** cloak and putting his hand on them, said: O Allah! these are the ahl of Muhammad (another version says aal i.e. family), so, shower your blessings and favours on aal Muhammad as you showered them on aal Abraham; You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.. Umm Salama said that she raised the cloak to join them, but the Prophet pulled it out of her hand and said: **'You are (also) on the right'**.⁽¹⁾

Another narration from Umm Salama says that once the

(*) *Fadak* is a place near Madina

Prophet was in her house lying on a mattress, covered with a cloak from *Khaibar* when his beloved daughter Fatima (a.s.) entered with a dish called *al-Khazira* (a kind of food). The Prophet asked her to call her husband (Ali) and her two sons, Hasan and Husain. She called them and as they all sat together to eat, Allah revealed the following verse to the Prophet.

"...Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you, o' people of the House and make you pure as pure can be".

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

Upon this the Prophet covered them all with his cloak and lifting his hands towards the sky said:

"O Allah! this is my family and the nearest of my kin, keep away from them uncleanness and keep them pure as pure can be".

Umm Salama adds that thrice the Prophet repeated these words and when she poked her head under the cloak and asked him Am I with you? In a refraining gesture, he said twice:

"You are (also) among the righteous".⁽²⁾

On many an occasion the Prophet explained the meaning of this verse to the Muslims and drew their attention to its significance. Abi Sa'id Khidri quotes the Prophet as saying:

"This verse was revealed concerning five persons): Myself, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain."

"...Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you, people of the House and make you pure as pure can be".⁽³⁾

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

A Tradition from A'isha who was a wife of the Prophet, also confirms the five persons meant in this verse. She says: once the Prophet came wrapped up in a cloak of black hair. After a while Hasan entered and he took him inside the cloak, then Husain came and joined them inside the cloak. Soon his daughter Fatima came and he took her inside also;

then Ali entered and he was also taken inside the cloak. When all five of them were assembled under the cloak, Aa'isha says the Prophet recited (the purification verse) as a further confirmation of the *Ahlul-Bait's* dignity, as the verse had already been revealed earlier concerning these five infallible:

“Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you, People of the House and make you pure as pure can be.”⁽⁴⁾

Another famous narration found in Islamic works, says that after the revelation of this verse the Prophet while passing his daughter Fatima's (a.s.) house on his way to the mosque for the dawn prayers, used to call:

“To prayer, O Ahlul-Bait, to prayer; Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you, People of the House and make you pure as pure can be.”⁽⁵⁾

This is how the Holy Qur'an refers to the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), and makes clear their infallible personalities, which are far from uncleanness, disobedience error, sin and personal whim.

Their character and etiquette are models of perfection to be emulated by the Muslims. The Qur'an's emphasis on their noble status and lofty position, was to urge the Muslim nation to follow their bright examples and refer to them after the Prophet for information and guidance concerning divine laws and its decisions. They are the one towards whom the Muslim nation looks for a practical criterion of Islam, and refers in matters relating to differences of ideas, opinions and thinking.

Numerous verses of the Qur'an prove these facts and leave no one in doubt as to the leadership of the *Ahlul-Bait* after the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.)

The Prophet's daily morning habit of stopping at his daughter Fatima's house and addressing her Household as *Ahlul-Bait* meant that he was practically explaining the purification verse for the Muslims. The Prophet was drawing the attention of the Muslim nation, towards the significance of his *Ahlul-Bait*, so they could love, obey and follow them, and be prevented from going astray.

Tabrani, quotes the following from Abi Hamra who was a witness to the Prophet's daily habit: "For six months I regularly saw the Messenger of Allah who on approaching the door of Ali and Fatima, used to recite this verse:

"Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you, People of the House and make you pure as pure can be".⁽⁶⁾

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

The famous scholar Fakhruddin Razi, in his renowned commentary 'al-Tafsir al-Kabir', commenting on the verse: "***And enjoin prayer on your followers and steadily adhere to it...***" (20:132) says that after its revelation the Prophet used to go to Ali and Fatima every morning and call them to prayer. And He did this for months.

Hammad ibn Salama, quoting Ali ibn Zaid, on the authority of Anas has also given an identical narration.⁽⁷⁾

Thus it is clear from the above discussions that the Prophet's daily habit of stopping at his daughter Fatima's (a.s.) house and addressing her Household as *Ahlul-Bait*, was not without reason. In fact he was expounding the meaning of the term *Ahlul-Bait* and practically explaining to the Muslims the purification verse and the particular persons meant by it. To be more precise, he was drawing the attention of the Muslim nation towards the significance of his *Ahlul-Bait* and their leadership after him so that the Muslims

should love, obey and follow them.

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to clear any doubts that may arise in the minds of our readers, that this verse may also include the wives of the Prophet – as some are bound to misinterpret. The fact is, it absolutely does not, as is crystal clear from our above discussion which has proved that it is exclusively addressed to the five persons already mentioned, four of whom are males, with the exception of the Prophet's daughter Fatima (a.s.).

Moreover it is obvious from the use of the masculine gender in this verse – clear for those acquainted with the Arabic language – the words *ankum* (عنكم) and *yutah-hirakum* (يطهركم) meaning 'from you' and 'purify you' used in the Qur'an are masculine terms and refer to the said persons collectively, the majority of whom are males. If Allah had addressed the Prophet's wives – as some misconstrue – then the Qur'an, the finest masterpiece of Arabic language would surely have used the feminine gender *ankunna* (عنكن) and *yutah-hirakunna* (يطهركن) instead of the masculine, because they numbered more.

Thus it is evident that this verse draws a clear picture in the minds about the true objectives of the Book of Allah. By emphasizing the purity and infallible leadership on the unwavering axis called *Ahlul-Bait*, it endeavours to build the edifice of the Muslim society on the solid base of cleanliness and virtue.

2– The Verse of Affection (Mawadda).

“...say (O' Muhammad unto mankind): I do not ask of you any reward for it (preaching the message), but love for my near relatives 'Ahlul-Bait'; and whoever earns good, we give him more of good

therein:...

Holy Qur'an (42:23)

The Prophet (s.a.w.) explicitly told the Muslims that this verse refers to his *Ahlul-Bait* that is Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain and urged them to obey and follow these illustrious personalities after him.

All commentators, traditionists and biographers are unanimous that the Prophet while explaining this verse, said that the word 'near relatives' as used here refers exclusively to his *Ahlul-Bait* that is Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain.

The renowned Scholar, Zamakhshari, in his commentary 'Kashshaf', says "...it is narrated that the idolators gathered at a meeting and said to each other: 'Will Muhammad ask us for a reward for what he is preaching?' It was then that Allah revealed this verse to the Prophet as an answer".

"Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I do not ask of you any reward for it (for preaching the message), but love for my near relatives (Ahlul-Bait); and whoever earns good, we give him more of good therein..."⁽⁸⁾

Zamakhshari adds: "It is also narrated that on the revelation of the said verse, the Messenger of Allah was asked: Who are your near relatives whom we must love? He said: Ali, Fatima and their two sons (Hasan and Husain)".

Allama Bahrani, refers to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's 'Musnad', who – through a chain of narrators – on the authority of Sa'id ibn Jubair quotes ibn Abbas: "When Allah's words were revealed:

"Say (O' Muhammad) I do not ask of you any reward for it (preaching the message), but love for my near relatives 'Ahlul-Bait'..."

The Messenger of Allah was asked as to who his near

relatives were whose love has been made obligatory for the Muslims? The Prophet replied:

“Ali, Fatima and their two sons (Hasan and Husain).”⁹¹

Fakhruddin Razi in his ‘al-Tafsir al-Kabir’, after citing Zamakhshari’s above narration says:

“I state ‘aal’ Muhammad (s.a.w.) are those whose affairs are completely intertwined with his the (Prophet’s)... And without doubt no one was so near to the Prophet than Fatima, Ali, Hasan and Husain. This is a well-known fact of all chains of narrations, and these are they who are his ‘aal’^(*)”.

Thus it is an undisputed fact that the words *Ahlul-Bait* or *aal* Muhammad (s.a.w.) refer only to the immediate family of the Prophet; his daughter Fatima, son-in-law Ali and grandsons Hasan and Husain and no one else besides.

We have already cited some instances of the Prophet’s love for his family. No doubt being his only surviving child, Fatima was intensely loved by her father. The Prophet’s famous words are a testimony to this fact.

“Fatima is a part of me and whoever hurts Fatima, hurts me.”

Fatima was so dear to him that the Prophet spurned offers for her hand from many wealthy Arabs and gave her in marriage to his own cousin, Ali ibn Abi Talib, whom he himself had brought up.

On several occasions the Prophet singled out Ali’s pre-eminence as well as the position of his grand-children Hasan and Husain.

The traditions also confirm this and also confirm his

(*) Anyone well-versed in the Arabic language will vouch that *Aal* cannot be misinterpreted for the *umma* or people *naas* as some later misinformed writers have suggested

natural inclination towards Ali who and his grand-children Hasan and Husain.

Therefore it becomes a duty for all those who claim to be part of the Prophet's nation to follow the Prophet's traditions in respect to his *Ahlul-Bait*. Moreover Allah Himself has commanded the Muslims to do so, as is evident by the following verses:

“Say (O’ Muhammad say unto mankind) if you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you...”

Holy Qur’an (3:31)

“...and follow him (the Prophet) so that you may be guided.”

Holy Qur’an (7:158)

“...therefore let those beware who go against his (Prophet’s) instructions...”

Holy Qur’an (24:63)

“Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent example...”^(*)

Holy Qur’an (31:21)

Besides the above mentioned verses another proof of the superiority of the *Ahlul-Bait* over the rest of the Muslims are the blessings, a Muslim invokes on Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his *aal* (family) when he recites the *Tashahud* in each of the five daily prayers:

"O Allah, shower Your blessings upon Muhammad and 'aal' Muhammad".

No less a personality than Imam Shafi'i regarded as a founding father of a school of jurisprudence in Islam, in a famous ode in praise of the *Ahlul-Bait* has not only stressed their love to be a synonym for faith but has categorically rebuked those who deny their pre-eminence:

(*) To copy and follow.

O rider stand on the stony ground of Mina.

And cry to those stopped at Khif and those bestirring.

When the pilgrims come at dawn to Mina.

Moving like the rolling of the waves of the surging Euphrates.

If love for Muhammad's 'aal' is 'Rafdh' (heresy).

Then Jinn and Men bear witness I am a Rafidhi (heretic)⁽¹⁰⁾

Muhibuddin Tabari in his book 'Dhakhai'r al-Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi al-Qurba' quoting Ibn Abbas, the Prophet's cousin and companion says:

"On the revelation of *ayat al-Mawadda* people asked the Prophet as to who were his relatives whom they were required to love. The Prophet replied: *Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain*. (This is also stated by Ahmad in 'al-Manaqib'⁽¹¹⁾.

Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatam, Ibn Mardawayah and Tabarani in 'Mu'jam al-Kabir', have also quoted the same words from Ibn Abbas, regarding this verse.

Jalaluddin Suyuti relates that the Prophet's elder grandson Imam Hasan ibn Ali (a.s.) said in one of his sermons:

***"I am of the 'Ahlul-Bait' whose love Allah has made obligatory for every Muslim"*.**

And then he recited this same verse:

'Say (O' Muhammad) I do not ask of you any reward for it (preaching the message), but love for my near relatives (Ahlul-Bait)...'

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

It should however be noted that the Qur'an does not mean mere sentimental ties of the Muslim communities with the Prophet's Household but stresses a deep and heartfelt love. the true expres-

sion of love by the Muslims can best be displayed by following the high examples set by the *Ahlul-Bait*, applying their teachings and guidelines in our daily behaviour and acknowledging them as leaders after the Holy Prophet.

By placing this verse on the Prophet's tongue, and enjoining him to inform the Muslims that he does not want any fee or reward for communicating the divine Message, except the love for his immediate relatives, Allah was making clear to the Muslims that loyalty towards the *Ahlul-Bait* and acceptance of their leadership is the only way for their progress and development in this world and their salvation in the hereafter.

The very emphasis on the word 'near relatives' by Almighty Allah in the Holy Qur'an and the subsequent command to the Muslims, is a concrete proof of the *Ahlul-Bait's* right to leadership; otherwise Allah would not have revealed the verse at all and neither would the Prophet had stressed its significance.

Thus how beautifully the Qur'an reminds us of our gratitude towards the Prophet's task of enlightening us with the message of Islam. In other words it means that we will be considered ingrateful wretches, not deserving to be called Muslims, if we do not adhere to the path of the *Ahlul-Bait*. The Qur'an also tells us that we must adhere to the path of the *Ahlul-Bait* and take them as models, so as to mould our own lives and characters in accordance with such attributes as purity and cleanliness.

Thus it is clear from the various interpretations, narrations and traditions cited from scholars of different doctrinal leanings that the Prophet minced no words when interpreting this blessed verse.

3. The Verse of Malediction (Mubahala).

“But whoever disputes with you (O’ Muhammad) in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our selves (anfus) (*) and your selves, then let us beseech Allah and invoke His curse upon the liars”

Holy Qur’an (3:61)

This verse points towards an epoch-making event, narrated by all historians and commentators; an event which revealed to the Muslims how near and dear the progeny of the Prophet are to Allah the Exalted.

This event which clearly marked out the distinct status of the *Ahlul-Bait*, is known in the annals of Islamic history as *Mubahala*, that is invoking Allah’s malediction on the liars. Historians and exegetists have narrated the event as follows:

A deputation (**) from the Christians of Najran came to the Prophet of Islam to argue the merits of their faith. The Holy Prophet advanced to them arguments showing that Jesus the son of Mary was a human-being and a Prophet, and it was blasphemy to regard him as a son of God, because Allah the Exalted is high above all such human characteristics. It was, when the Prophet having argued to the point fully and convincingly, found them still deliberately persisting in their

(*) There is no English equivalent for the Arabic word *nafs* which is the singular form of *anfus*, the nearest meaning of which is like oneself or nearest and dearest of people.

(**) The deputation comprised three prominent Christian leaders of Arabia, Abdul Masih, the Political leader: ‘al-Ayham’, in-charge of their Agro-Pastoral affairs, and Abu Hatam ibn Alqama, who was a Bishop or Pontiff.

false belief in the deity of Prophet Jesus, that Allah revealed this verse. It was a challenge to the Christians, to pray and invoke Allah that the curse may overtake the party that insisted upon falsehood.⁽¹²⁾

Early the next morning on the 24th of the lunar month of *Dhilhijja*, the Prophet in accordance with Allah's command came out to the meeting grounds, carrying Husain in his arms and leading Hasan (our sons) by his hand, followed by his beloved daughter Fatima (our women), behind whom came Ali (our selves) carrying the banner of Islam. Seeing the Prophet was accompanied by his immediate family and convinced that Muhammad (s.a.w.) was truthful, otherwise he would not have dared to bring his dearest of kin along, the Christians backed away from the maledictory confrontation and agreed to pay *Jizya* instead.

Zamakhshari says in his book 'Al-Kashshaf':

That (when this verse was revealed) the Prophet asked the Christians to a *Mubahala* (malediction) to invoke the curse of Allah on the liars. The Christians held a discourse among themselves that night, in which their leader Abdul Massih stated his views as follows: "By God, O Christians, you know that Muhammad is a God-sent Prophet, who has brought to you the final message from your Lord. By God, no nation ever dared to challenge a Prophet for malediction, but woe befell them. Not only will they perish but their children will also be afflicted with the curse". Saying that it is better to reach a compromise with the Prophet, rather than challenge his truth and perish, Abdul Massih advised his party to stop hostilities and retain their religion, by submitting to the Prophet's terms. "So if you persist (for a confrontation), we

will all perish. But if you want to keep your faith you should refuse (to have a showdown) and remain as you are. Therefore make peace with the man (the Prophet) and return to your land”.

Zamakhshari continues: “the next day the Prophet, carrying Husain in his arms, leading Hasan by the hand; followed by his daughter Fatima, behind whom came Ali, entered the appointed place and was heard saying (to his *Ahlul-Bait*):

“When I invoke Allah, you all say: Amen.”

The pontiff of Najran on seeing the Prophet and his *Ahlul-Bait*, addressed the Christians:

“O’ Christians, I am beholding such faces that if God wishes (for their sake), He would move mountains from their places. Do not accept their challenge for *Mubahala* for if you do you would all perish and there would remain no Christian on the face of the earth till the Day of Resurrection.” Heeding his advice the Christians said to the Prophet: “O Abul Qasim, we decided not to hold *Mubahala* with you. You keep your religion and we will keep ours.”

The Prophet told them:

“If you refuse to hold (*Mubahala*), then submit, (accept Islam) and you will receive what the Muslims receive, and contribute what the Muslims contribute.”.

The Christians saying they had no desire to fight the Arabs, proposed a treaty asking for peace, and freedom from forced compulsion to make them forsake their religion. In return they agreed to pay the Muslims an annual tribute of two thousand suits; one thousand of which in the month of *Safar* and the remaining one thousand in *Rajab*, besides thirty coats of iron mail.

Accepting the proposal the Prophet remarked:

“By the One Who has my soul in His hand, death was looming large over the people of Najran. (Had they dared to accept the challenge of ‘Mubahala’). They would have been transformed into apes and swines, and the valley would have been set ablaze. Allah would have destroyed Najran with its people, sparing not even the birds on the treetops, and before the passing of the year the Christians would have all been dead.”⁽¹³⁾

Continuing his comments on the *Mubahala* verse’, Zamakhshari lays emphasis on the position of the *Ahlul-Bait* by quoting the following narration from the Prophet’s wife Aa’isha: ‘He mentioned them *Ahlul-Bait* before mentioning the word ‘selves’ in order to highlight their position and their proximity (to Allah), and to stress their preference to ‘selves’, which could be sacrificed for them...There is no stronger evidence than this regarding the merits of the *Ahl al-Kisa*’^(*). It is the proof of the truthfulness of the Prophet’s mission, because nobody however biased has narrated that they(the Christians) dared to accept that (the challenge for *Mubahala*).’⁽¹⁴⁾

Fakhruddin Razi in his ‘al-Tafsir al-Kabir’, gives an identical narration and after having stated what Zamakhshari has said; adds: ‘Mind, that all interpreters (of the Qur’an) and narrators (of the Prophet’s traditions) are unanimous about the authenticity of this narration.’⁽¹⁵⁾

(*) *Ahl al-Kisa* is a term denoting those who gathered with the Prophet under his *Kisa* (cloak) whereupon the verse of purity was revealed: They are Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain, as had been already discussed earlier.

Allama Muhammad Husain Tabataba'i, the renowned modern day exegetist, in his monumental commentary on the Holy Qur'an, 'Tafsir al-Mizan', referring to the verse 'those through whom Allah has cursed their enemies', says that these are none other than the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain. He adds '...this narration has been related by all traditionists and recorded by all compilers (of traditions) in their collections, such as Muslim in his 'Sahih' and Tirmidhi in his 'Sahih', besides historians have confirmed it as well.

Eversince the interpreters have related it without any objection or doubt, including such famous traditionists and historians as Tabari, Abul Fida, Ibn Kathir, Suyuti and others.'

Thus in the light of the above discussions it is clear that all interpreters have unanimously defined the *Ahlul-Bait* as Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain.

The very mention of them in the *Mubahala* verse, which makes them the means for invoking Allah is a clear pointer to their lofty and sanctified stature. The fact that Allah asked His Messenger to bring these pure personalities along with him to the malediction grounds is once again a clear proof of their purity. The challenge for invoking Allah's curse on His enemies, discloses in what high esteem they were held by the Almighty.

Since the confrontation was between truth and falsehood, two directly opposite currents, the situation demanded that faith be represented by its very best, upon whom the whole edifice of Islam stood. And no one was more qualified to accompany the Prophet to *Mubahala*, on whose outcome hung the fate of Islam, than his *Ahlul-Bait*:

the torch-bearers of guidance and virtue. The Almighty Allah, Who Himself had bestowed on them the mantle of purity earlier in the Holy Qur'an, once again made them the cynosure of all eyes, proving the truth of Islam through them. In fact, He, the All-wise was indicating to the faint-hearted Muslims that the continuation of divine mission will not stop with the Seal of the Prophets, but will continue through his infallible progeny. No invocation of theirs would be ignored and no word of theirs could be belied; even mountains would move, by their mere utterances as was well understood by the Christians.

This itself is sufficient to remove the last lingering doubts from the minds of certain segments about these immaculate personalities; the result of centuries of hypocrisy, which misled many simple souls. With the clearing of the mist, the picture gradually emerges all the more vivid that what we have received from the *Ahlul-Bait*; of teachings, thoughts, interpretations, narrations, jurisprudence etc...is the pure unpolluted nectar of Islam, bequeathed by the Prophet and sincerely preserved and conveyed to the Muslims by his Household. Through them the Qur'an challenged the enemies of Islam, and made it clear for all time that those who oppose them are nothing but liars, deserving to be cursed and punished: '...invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie.'

Had it not been for their eternal truth and unwavering steadfastness, Allah would never have bestowed upon them such an honour, and the Qur'an would not have spoken of them in such glowing terms.

There are some minute linguistic points in this verse which are worthy of note. This group (Ali, Fatima, Hasan

and Husain) is used as the adjunct, and the Prophet as the possessor, in a genitive term, as is seen in 'our sons', 'our women' and 'ourselves'.

Had not the Prophet taken Fatima along with him, people would have thought that 'our women' means the Prophet's wives and 'our sons' refers to Fatima though she was a female and 'ourselves' indicates his sacred self alone.

But by taking along only these four and no one else besides, the Prophet was showing the Muslims, that the best example for women is Fatima and the best example for boys are Hasan and Husain, according to the Qur'an's wordings, which also delicately used the word *our selves* for Ali, thereby pointing to his close proximity with the Prophet, and solving the question of succession once and for all.

4— The Verse of Prayer (Salat).

“Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! call for (divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.”

Holy Qur'an (33:56)

The previous verses of the Holy Qur'an revealed to us as to who are the Prophets' *Ahlul-Bait*, their purity of character and the command for Muslims to love and obey them. This verse refers to the salutations *salawat*, which a Muslim is obliged to send on the Prophet and his progeny during the five daily prayers.

In this verse, the Muslims are ordered here to send blessings on the Prophet and his *aal* (progeny), a term exclusively reserved for Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain and their righteous descendants. The emphasis on the Prophet's *aal* in salutations is yet another indication of their pivotal position after

the Prophet. By asking the Muslims to exalt them, Allah the Exalted was reminding the Muslim communities that He had chosen the *Ahlul-Bait*, for the role of leading the Muslim nation.

In his 'Tafsir al-Kabir', Fakhruddin Razi, commenting on the above verse narrates the following quotation from the Prophet, who was asked by some of his companions on how to send blessing upon him. The Prophet replied:

“Say: ‘O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad and on Muhammad’s progeny as You sent blessings on Abraham and on Abraham’s progeny; and send grace on Muhammad and on Muhammad’s progeny, as You sent grace on Abraham and on Abraham’s progeny, You are the Praised, the Glorious!’”

Before giving this narration, Razi, interprets the verse and comments: ‘This is a proof of the Shafi’i school, because order means an obligation(*); so, to send blessings on the Prophet (s.a.w.) is obligatory, at least in the *Tashahhud* (Testimony during the prayers) if not elsewhere’⁽¹⁶⁾

Razi further argues: ‘If Allah and His angels send their blessings on him (the Prophet), then what need is there for our blessings?’ He himself provides the answer: ‘When we send blessings on him, it is not because he is in need of them, because already having Allah’s blessings, he does not even require the blessings of the angels. But when we send, we send to glorify Allah, and also it (sending blessings) reveals our gratitude towards Allah, so that He may have compas-

(*) The famous Jurist Imam Shafi’i had concluded that when there is an ‘order’ in the Qur’an or the Traditions, then its carrying out is obligatory; unless the context tells clearly that it is a recommendation.

sion on us and reward us. That is why the Prophet said:

“Whoever sends blessings on me once, Allah will send blessings on him ten times.”

It will be not out of context here to cite Imam Shafi'i's famous quatrain on this subject.

“O’ Household of the Messenger of Allah love for you.

Is an obligation from Allah, revealed in the Qur’an.

It suffices as the greatest honour bestowed on you.

That his prayer is as nothing who does not salute you”.

Suyuti, in his ‘Dur al-Manthur’, citing Abdul-Razzaq, Ibn Abi Shaiba, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abd ibn Hamid, Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nisa’i, Ibn Maja, Ibn Mardawaya, who have all narrated from Ka’b ibn Ujra, says, a man once asked the Prophet that greeting you is clear to everybody, but how does one sends blessings on you. The Prophet replied, say:

“O Allah, send blessing on Muhammad and on Muhammad’s progeny, as You sent blessings on Abraham and on Abraham’s progeny, You are the Praised, the Glorious”.

Suyuti has cited eighteen different narrations other than this, with slight variations stressing that the blessings on the Prophet should include his progeny also. The same has been narrated by compilers of all ‘Sunan’ and ‘Jawami’, books quoting a number of the Prophet’s companions, such as Abdulla Ibn Abbas, Talha, Abu Sa’id Khidhri, Abu Huraira, Abu Mas’ud Ansari, Buraida, Ibn Mas’ud, Ka’b ibn Amra, and last but not the least, Ali ibn Abi Talib himself. Similarly it has been narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Tirmidhi who have quoted Imam Hasan ibn Ali from the Prophet as follows:

“He is a miser who, on the mention of my name to him, does not

send blessings on me. ^{*(17)}

Thus all jurists agree that it is obligatory for Muslims to send blessings on Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his progeny during the *Tashahhud* (Testimony)(*) in the five daily prayers.⁽¹⁸⁾

By analysing this verse we easily discover the real objective behind this obligatory command; which is to revere Muhammad's (s.a.w.) pure progeny, from whom Allah has kept away all uncleanness and error, and made them pure as pure can be. The emphasis on his *aal* by the Prophet is yet another indication to the Muslims of their pivotal position after him. By commanding Muslims to send their blessings on them, Allah the Exalted was reminding Muslims of the *Ahlul-Bait* eventual's leadership. In other words by taking them as exemplars and accepting their leadership, the Muslims would be spared from trials and Controversies.

So it is clear that Allah has not mentioned them in the Prayers for nought. Had it not been for their probity that was proved time and again and for their magnanimity of character as well as their deep knowledge, Allah would not have ordered the Muslims to adhere to their straight course and seek blessings for them in every prayer. The very fact that this blessing should be invoked every day in each prayer a Muslim performs was but to draw the attention of the Muslim communities towards the significance of the *Ahlul-Bait*;

(*) Muhaqqiq Hilli, one of the great *Shi'ite* jurists, who lived in the 'seventh century of the *Hijra*': The Testimony. It is obligatory to recite it once in a two-*Rak'at* prayer, and twice in three and four and four-*Rak'at* prayers. If one or the two of them were dropped intentionally, the prayer is regarded as null and void. In each, five things are compulsory; sitting during the Testimony, reciting the two testimonies, sending blessings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his progeny.'

which should serve as a constant reminder that it is they who are Muhammad's (s.a.w.) rightful heirs. Or to put it more clearly, anyone ignoring their status deliberately or otherwise, has no excuses whatsoever and is deceiving his own self to be led astray from the Allah's command.

5. The Verse of Guardianship (Wilaya):

“Only Allah is your Guardian and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while in (Ruku’). And whoever takes Allah and His Apostle and those who believe as his guardian, then surely the party of Allah are they that shall be triumphant.”

Holy Qur'an (5:55–56)

Zamakhshari, in his 'Al-Kashshaf', says the following about this verse:

“It was revealed in favour of Ali (May Allah enlighten his face) when a beggar asked him (for alms) while he was in the position of *Ruku'* during prayer, and he gave away his ring (in the some position). It seems it was loose on his little finger, for he did not exert any effort in taking it off, which would have nullified his prayer. If you ask; 'How could it be in favour of Ali (May Allah be pleased with him), when the wordings are in the collective form?' I say: The form is collective, though its instigator is a single-man, because this is to encourage people to follow his example and earn a similar reward, and also to draw attention (to the fact that) the believers must be extremely mindful and benevolent, towards the poor, in as much as, if a situation could not be postponed to after the prayer, it may not be delayed till having finished it”.⁽¹⁹⁾

Wahidi, in 'Asbab al-Nuzul', citing Kalbi's narration

concerning the cause for the revelation of this verse says:

“The latter part of this verse is in favour of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib’ (May Allah be gracious to him) because he gave a ring to a beggar while in *Ruku’* during prayer”.⁽²⁰⁾

Besides the above mentioned scholars many other exegetes and compilers of the Prophet’s traditions have stated that this verse is in favour of Imam Ali and records an important event.

6. The Verse of Proclamation (Tabligh).

“O Prophet proclaim what has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do it not you have not conveyed His message, and Allah will protect you from the (evil designs of) people...”⁽²¹⁾

Holy Qur’an (5:67)

Perhaps the most clear portent of Imam Ali’s excellence over the Muslims after the Prophet, is the above aya, which marks a decisive phase in the history of divine revelation. After creating this wide and wonderful world, the Almighty had sent an unbroken chain of prophets to guide mankind towards divine bliss. The last and the greatest link in this eternal chain was Muhammad al-Mustapha (s.a.w.), who was entrusted with the most comprehensive code of laws, capable of solving mankind’s needs till doomsday. Now, there no longer was need of any new messenger. But nonetheless, the Wise Creator cannot leave mankind’s struggle of thousands of years to the whims and fancies of fallible Arabs, who had spent the greater part of their lives in idolatry and sin. Therefore to ensure the safety of Islam and Muslims, Allah sent down this verse, appointing Imam Ali as the Prophet’s vicegerent. Narrators and historians have testified to that great event.

After performing the farewell pilgrimage, as the Seal of the Prophets was heading towards Madina, the Archangel Gabriel suddenly appeared, at a place where the routes parted for the different parts of Arabia. Learning the Almighty's command, the Prophet at once stopped at the pool *Ghadir* of Khum, and ordered all those who had gone ahead, and those that lagged behind to hasten to his station. When the great gathering of companions was assembled in the midday sun, the Prophet said he had a most important message to deliver.

A pulpit made of camel saddles was hastily set-up. Ascending it, he delivered a sermon asking the people to be witness that he had faithfully performed the task of prophethood entrusted to him by the Almighty.

The multitude cried in one voice: "We bear witness O Messenger of Allah."

He asked, who in their opinion was more worthy of obedience than their souls, to which they replied that Allah and His Prophet know better.

Then he said:

"O people Allah is my Master (Maula) and I am the master (Maula) of believers."⁽²²⁾

Muhammad (s.a.w.) then bent down and lifting up Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) in his hands, showed him to the vast crowd and proclaimed those famous words, which guaranteed the continuation of divine leadership:

"For whomsoever I am master (Maula), this Ali is his master (Maula)..."⁽²³⁾

Thrice he proclaimed these words before descending the pulpit, relieved of having performed the great task which would save the Muslims from going astray.

The great multitude of Muslims surged towards Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), felicitating him on his divine appointment. According to such famous scholars as Zamakhshari and Nasai, the first one to congratulate and swear allegiance *bai'a* to Imam Ali (a.s.) was Umar Ibn Khattab, who later became the second caliph.

Gabriel descended again with another revelation, showing that the Almighty was pleased with His Prophet for having excellently performed the great final mission to mankind.

“...today have I perfected unto you your religion and completed upon you My blessings and approved for you Islam as your religion...”

Holy Qur'an (5:3)

This most important task ensured the continuity of divine guidance. Since the Prophets were divinely appointed, so should be the successors or trustees of the Prophets, especially so in the case of Islam, which is the final message to the human race.

All scholars and historians have testified that the event of *Ghadir Khum*⁽²⁴⁾ did take place, and moreover books of *hadith* are witness that on many an occasion, the Prophet had emphasized his cousin's pre-eminence, over all other Muslims.

7. Insaan (Dahr) Chapter (Sura).

“...they fulfil vows and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide. And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive: We only feed you for Allah's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks: Surely we fear from our Lord a stern, distressful day. Therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness;...”

Holy Qur'an (76:7-11)

These verses of the Holy Qur'an speak of the *Ahlul-Bait*, eulogising their selflessness and piety. The historical occasion to which these blessed verses refer was, when Ali, Fatima and their two sons Hasan and Husain fasted for three consecutive days, and each day at the time of breaking the fast some needy person as verse number eight indicates – appeared and the *Ahlul-Bait* gladly fed him, and themselves passed the nights without food. Allah was so pleased by the generosity of the Prophet's Household that He converted their actions into verses of the Glorious Qur'an to serve as guidance for the Muslims. These verses not only portray the *Ahlul-Bait's* total submission to Allah's Will but also reveal them as pure and spotless personalities, promised esteem and admiration among the dwellers of Paradise. They are shown as immaculate models of emulation so that whoever among the Muslim communities follows their glowing path will achieve salvation and will be assembled in their illustrious company on the Resurrection Day.

Zamakhshari, in his 'Kashshaf' commenting on this verse, narrates from Abdulla Ibn Abbas – that once Hasan and Husain fell sick and the Prophet together with some of his companions visited his sick grandsons. He suggested that Ali should make a vow to Allah for his sons' health. Heeding the Prophet's suggestion Ali, Fatima along with their maid, Fidha, took a vow that if the boys recovered, they would fast for three consecutive days. Eventually Hasan and Husain recovered and to fulfill the vow they also fasted alongwith their parents and maid. Since there was nothing in the house to eat, Ali borrowed from Sham'un, a Khaibarisan Jew, three measures of barley. Fatima grounded one measure into flour and baked it into five loaves (of bread) equal to their

number, and placed before them for breaking the fast. Just then a beggar stopped at their door and said: “*al-Salaam Alaikum* (peace be upon you), O *Ahlul-Bait* of Muhammad (s.a.w.), (I am) one of the poorest of Muslims (so), feed me, may Allah feed you of the food of Paradise”! So they gladly gave him all the food and slept that night, tasting nothing but water.

They fasted again the next day and at sunset as they placed the bread before them to break the fast, an orphan knocked on the door asking for food and they cheerfully fed him, themselves going without food for yet another day. On the third day of the fast, as the breaking time approached, and the food was spread, a prisoner (of war) suddenly appeared at their door and the same scenario was repeated, with the Prophet’s *Ahlul-Bait* passing the third successive night without tasting a morsel of food. Zamakhshari continues that when dawn broke Ali holding the hands of Hasan and Husain came to the Prophet’s house. The Prophet seeing their pale countenances and noting that they were trembling from hunger, expressed dismay and at once accompanied them to their house. On entering the house he was shocked to see the sight of his daughter Fatima, sitting hollow-eyed on her prayer mat, her back stuck to her stomach. It was then that the angel Gabriel came down with this *Sura*, saying:

“O Muhammad, Allah congratulates you for (the sacrifice of) your household. Then he recited the (sura).”⁽²⁵⁾

Another famous scholar Sheikh Fadhl ibn Hasan Tabarsi, in his ‘*Majma‘ al-Bayan*’ after citing the same narration, adds: ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’ narrates from his father who quotes Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq on the authority of Abdulla ibn Maimun that Fatima had (some) barley from which porridge

was made and placed before them (for breaking the fast). Just then a beggar came and said, I am a poor man, may Allah have mercy upon you. Ali (a.s.) got up and gave him one third of the food. Then came an orphan and said, I am an orphan, may Allah have mercy upon you. Ali (a.s.) got up and gave him another third (of the food). Then came a prisoner (of war) and said, may Allah have mercy upon you. Ali gave him the remaining one-third, without, they, the *Ahlul-Bait* tasting anything and going without meals. Thereby Allah the Exalted revealed the said verses. It is clear that this *sura* was revealed in Madina, and as a scholar of the stature Abu Hamza Thamali testifies, the whole *sura* was revealed in favour of Ali and Fatima.

8. Other Verses of the Holy Qur'an.

What we discussed in the previous pages were some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an, highlighting the *Ahlul-Bait* as a group. Besides, there are numerous other verses in the book of Allah, which refer specifically to Imam Ali (a.s.) and to the other members of this blessed group individually.

The illustrious personality of Ali ibn Abi Talib, needs no introduction either to Muslims or to those with even a marginal knowledge of Islam. Ali was not only the Prophet's first cousin, but in fact was brought up personally by the Prophet Muhammad himself^(*).

Ali was therefore groomed under the Prophet's pat-

(*) Before the announcement of Muhammad's (s.a.w.) Prophethood, there was a severe famine in Mecca. As Abu Talib had a large household and was of scanty resources, the Prophet volunteered to take Ali (as) under his guardianship and bring him up to ease his uncle's burden.

ronge, acquiring his traits and behaviour, and sincerely believing in his cousin and guardian's divine mission even though he was still ten years old. Growing up into a valiant youth, Ali showed his prowess as a brave soldier in many a battle against the idolators and was soon entrusted with the responsibility of carrying the Prophet's standard. The battles of Badr, Uhud, Ahzab, Khaibar, Hunain etc. were almost single handed won for Islam by the flashing blade of Ali. History has preserved for posterity the praise showered by the Prophet on his young cousin's valour in words which continue to decorate the pages of history like eternal medals, and inspire humanity with the highest examples of patience and sacrifice.

Nay! the Prophet was not alone in his praise of Ali, for even Allah the Exalted revealed verses extolling Ali's virtue, generosity, bravery and above all with the announcement of his viceregency, the Almighty sealed the declaration that religion has been made complete today. The Qur'an speaks of Ali's patience, his magnanimity towards the enemies, his patience, his courage, etc. Here we cite some of the verses from the book of Allah as examples.

There are numerous other verses which elucidate the position, dignity and honour of this blessed group, the *Ahlul-Bait*, which cannot all be inserted here for lack of space. The readers may refer to the voluminous books of commentaries narrations, histories, biographies and the like for more details.

Before closing this chapter we briefly cite below a few verses of the Holy Qur'an which are undeniable proofs of the lofty stature of Imam Ali (a.s.), who was second only to his cousin the Prophet in excellence.

1- The Almighty says:

“...you are only a warner, and (there is) a guide for every people.”

Holy Qur'an (13:7)

It is stated that when this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah placing his hand on his chest said:

“I am the warner, and for every people there is a guide. Then pointing towards Imam Ali (a.s.), he said: You are the guide, Ali, by you the believers will be guided after me”.⁽²⁶⁾

2- The Almighty says:

“Is he who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal”.

Holy Qur'a (32:18)

All authoritative books mention that the verse refers to Imam Ali (a.s.), a believer and describes Walid ibn Uqba.⁽²⁷⁾ as a transgressor.

3- The Almighty says:

“Is he, then (to be counted equal to them) who was clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him recites...”

Holy Qur'an (11:17)

Suyuti in ‘Dur al-Manthur’, Fakhruddin Razi in ‘al-Tafsir al-Kabir’ and Muttaqi Hindi in ‘Kanz al-Ummal’, vol. 1, p. 251, have all narrated, that the words:

“He who has a clear proof, means Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), while “the Witness from Him” means Imam Ali (a.s.)⁽²⁸⁾

4- The Almighty says:

“...Allah it is Who is his Guardian, and Gabriel and the Righteous among the believers...”.

Holy Qur'an (66:4)

All leading scholars are unanimous that the Righteous among the believers is none other than Ali ibn Abi Talib.⁽²⁹⁾

5- The Almighty says:

“...and that the Retaining ears might retain it”.

Holy Qur'an (69:12)

After reciting this verse the Prophet turned towards Imam Ali (a.s.) and said: ***“I asked Allah to make it your ear”.***

Ali (a.s.) said:

“I never forgot anything I heard from the Messenger of Allah”.⁽³⁰⁾

Wahidi, in ‘Asbab al-Nuzul’ (Reasons of Revelation), citing a series of narrators, on the authority of Buraida, says about this verse:

“The Messenger of Allah told Ali: Allah ordered me to bring you nearer not to distance you, and to teach you so that you would retain it in, as it is Allah’s promise to let you retain it in. Then this verse was revealed: ‘...and that the Retaining ears might retain it’”.

“Surely as for those who believe and do good deeds for them will Allah bring about love.”

Holy Qur'an (19:96)

Once the Prophet told Ali:

“O Ali, say: O Allah, grant me your covenant, and place my love in the bosoms of the believers.” then the said verse was revealed in Ali’s favour”.⁽³¹⁾

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

Holy Qur'an (98:7)

On the revelation of this verse, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

“O Ali, these are you and your followers.”⁽³²⁾

“Do you consider (the person who undertakes) giving of water to the pilgrims and the guarding of the Sacred Mosque like him who believes in Allah and the Last Day” and strives in the way of Allah. They are not equal in the sight of Allah; and Allah does not guide the

unjust people.”

Holy Qur'an (9:19)

All leading Scholars of Islam such as Tabari, Fakhrudin Razi, Suyuti, Nisaburi, etc. have stated in their interpretations of this verse that once Abbas ibn Abdul Muttalib and Talha ibn Shaiba proudly boasted in front of Ali ibn Abi Talib about their respective duties; the supplying of water to pilgrims and holding the keys of the Holy Ka'ba. Imam Ali answered them that he has been praying towards the Ka'ba six months before anyone else (besides the Prophet) ever bowed in prayer and has never ceased struggling in the way of Allah. It was then that this verse was revealed to the Prophet as a proof of Ali's superiority over all other Muslims.⁽³³⁾

**AHLUL-BAIT IN
THE PROPHET'S
TRADITION**



AHLUL-BAIT IN THE PROPHET'S TRADITIONS.

Going through the traditions of the Prophet, his daily behaviour, and his relations with his *Ahlul-Bait*, whose purity the Holy Qur'an itself has testified, we realize that Ali, Fatima and their two sons, Hasan and Husain⁽³⁴⁾ were chosen for a unique role and a missionary responsibility for shaping the history of the Muslim communities. So the Prophet's frequent stress on these four luminaries was not without meaning, nor was it mere emotional behaviour towards his family. In fact he was only obeying Allah's commands to prepare and guide the Muslims towards acceptance of their leadership, after his eventual departure.

The first step which the Prophet took towards the formal building of this blessed family was the marriage of his daughter Fatima (a.s.) to his beloved cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) at the Almighty's command. Thus was implanted this blessed 'tree' which would eventually extend its shady branches over the Muslims and its historical progress.

Anas ibn Malik a companion of the Prophet narrates that on the occasion of this auspicious marriage, the Prophet told Ali (a.s.):

"Allah has ordered me to marry Fatima to you for four hundred (mithqal) (nearly 2000 grains) of silver, do you accept?"

Ali (a.s.) replied in the affirmative. The Prophet said:
“May Allah join you together, make you happy, bless you, and bring many a good out of you”. Annas, commenting on this adds: ‘By Allah, He did bring many a good out of them’.⁽³⁵⁾

It is narrated that at the time of solemnising the marriage the Prophet asked for water to be brought and after performing ablution, he sprinkled the remnant on Ali and Fatima, and said:

“Allah bless them with their offspring”.⁽³⁶⁾

History and traditions have recorded that the Prophet used to reject all offers for Fatima’s hand, even from some of his close companions and wealthy Quraishites, saying that:

“The command (from Allah) for her marriage has not yet come down”.⁽³⁷⁾

The Prophet’s refusal to marry his beloved daughter to any Tom, Dick and Harry of Arabia and the eventual divine decision in Ali’s favour, is but a clear evidence of the lofty position of the *Ahlul-Bait*, and of the noble intentions cherished by the Prophet for the good of the Muslim communities through this blessed family. The glowing testimony regarding their purity later made by the Qur’an and explained by the Prophet, are further proofs of these facts.

We now quote some traditions concerning the *Ahlul-Bait*, which throw light on the depth and real objective of divine care towards building this blessed family, whose members were entrusted the task of guiding the Muslims and delivering it from pitfalls and becoming a focal point around which it revolves.

So deep was the love of the Prophet for his only daughter Fatima and her husband Ali who was also his beloved cousin – the Prophet used to refer to Ali as ‘my brother’ – and to the

off-springs of this blessed union as “my sons”, words which the Holy Qur’an also testifies:

“And whoever disputes with you (O’ Muhammad) in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then, say: Come (to the Najrani Christians) let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women, and our selves and your selves...”

Holy Qur’an (3:61)

As we have already discussed in the opening chapter of this book, all exegists unanimously state that the word “our sons” as used by the Qur’an here, is a clear pointer to the Prophet’s grandsons, Hasan and Husain; while ‘our women’ refers to his daughter Fatima and “our selves” indicates his cousin and son-in-law, Ali. Besides, history is a witness and all biographers have narrated that no one else accompanied the Prophet for this famous event known as *Mubahala* in the annals of history, except these four figures – his *Ahlul-Bait*.

There are many other instances when the Prophet referred to his grandsons as ‘my sons’ in order to highlight their importance to the Muslim communities, some of which we recount below:

“Allah had placed the offspring of every Prophet in his loins, but He placed my offspring (progeny) in the loins of this (man)” – pointing towards Ali⁽³⁸⁾.

He used to caress Hasan and Husain, saying:

“All sons are their fathers’ as their agnation returns to their fathers, except the sons of Fatima, as I am their father and agnation”. (This is narrated by Ahmad ibn Hnaba in ‘al-Manaqib’⁽³⁹⁾)

From the traditions of the Prophet, we learn that the *Ahlul-Bait* are the refuge for the Muslims, and are never separate from the Qur’an. By stressing that they never part

from the Qur'an, the Prophet was disclosing their ideological mission in guiding the Muslim communities according to Allah's legislations. In other words he was making it clear to the Muslims that the divine book can not be fully comprehended or correctly interpreted, without the guidance of this chosen Household, who were actual witnesses to the gradual unfolding of this greatest revelation for mankind, and were personally groomed by him for the task ahead.

The famous tradition called *Thaqalain* (two weighty things the Qur'an and *Ahlul-Bait*), acknowledged by Muslims of all political and doctrinal schools lends proof to these facts.

Hereunder we recount the tradition stating some authentic sources quoted by the narrators:

1. The Tradition of Two Weighty Things (Thaqalain).

“I have been summoned (by Allah) and the moment is near for me to answer (to die). I leave among you the two weighty things: the Book of Allah the Almighty and my progeny; Allah's book is (like) a rope extending from heaven to earth, and my progeny are the (Ahlul-Bait). The Merciful informed me that the two will never part, until they come to me at the Pool (of Kawthar in Paradise), I warn you against deserting them”. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

All authoritative compilers such as Muslim, Tirmidhi and Hakim have placed emphasis on this *hadith* with light variations. Muslim quotes Zaid ibn Arqam as saying that once the Prophet stood up and praising Allah addressed his companions as follows:

“O People, I am but a mortal and it is time that I answer the call of my Lord's envoy (to die). I am leaving among you the two weighty

things, first of which is the Book of Allah (Qur'an) which contains guidance and light; so take the Book of Allah and hold fast to it. And my (Ahlul-Bait), I remind you of Allah (His commands) concerning my 'Ahlul-Bait'."⁽⁴¹⁾

According to another narration, the Prophet said:

"I am leaving among you two commandments and you will never go astray if you followed them: the Book of Allah and my 'Ahlul-Bait', and he added: 'They would never separate until they meet me at the pool (of Kawthar in Paradise). Be careful of your behaviour towards them, after me.'"⁽⁴²⁾

Ibn Hajr in his book 'al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa' writes that the Prophet used to refer to the Qur'an and his family as *Thiql*, because in Arabic *Thiql* means a very precious thing bestowed (by Allah). These (Qur'an and *Ahlul-Bait*) are precious because they are a source of knowledge and the secrets of divine legislation. That is why he exhorted the people to follow their examples. The reason they were called *Thaqalain* (two precious things) was to emphasize the respect for their rights. The stress that they never part with the Holy Qur'an is a clear indication that they, (the *Ahlul-Bait*) were well versed with the Book of Allah, scrupulously adhered to the Prophet's traditions and were never to part from the book till they reach the pool (in Paradise).⁽⁴³⁾

Allama Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Balaghi, in his book 'Aala' al-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an', says: That the *hadith* of *Thaqalain* is narrated through an authentic chain of succession and quoted by our Sunni brethren in their books, on the authority of the Prophet's companions who had heard it directly from the Prophet himself. Balaghi records the wordings of the tradition as:

"I am leaving among you the 'Thaqalain' two weighty things or

the 'Khalifatain' (two successors); the Book of Allah and my family, my 'Ahlul-Bait'; if you hold fast to them, you will never go astray, for they will never separate until they come to me at the pool".⁽⁴⁴⁾

Balaghi then goes on to state the names of the companions who heard this Hadith directly from the Prophet's lips:

1. Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.)
2. Abdulla ibn Abbas
3. Abu Dhar Ghaffari
4. Jabir ibn Abdulla Ansari
5. Abdulla ibn Umar
6. Hudhaifa ibn Usaid Yamani
7. Zaid ibn Arqam
8. Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf
9. Dhamra Aslami
10. Aamir ibn Layla
11. Abu Rafe
12. Abu Huraira
13. Abdulla Ibn Hantub
14. Zaid ibn Thabit
15. Umm Salama, the Prophet's wife
16. Umm Hani the Prophet's cousin and sister of Ali
17. Khuzaima ibn Thabit
18. Suhail ibn Sa'd
19. Udai ibn Hatam.
20. Aqaba ibn Aamir
21. Abu Ayub Ansari
22. Abu Sa'id Khidri
23. Abu Shuraih Khuza'i
24. Abu Qudama Ansari
25. Abu Layla
26. Abul Haitham ibn Taihan.

Those from Umm Hani downwards have narrated the hadith individually, while the others, together with seven other persons of the Quraish delivered their testimony as a group in the main square of the city of Kufa saying that they heard it directly from the Prophet. The number thus increases to 33, with the addition of the seven Quraishites.

Balaghi continues that this hadith is also narrated by Abu Na'im Isfahani in his book 'Manqabat al-Mutahharain', on the authority of Jubair ibn Mat'am, Anas ibn Malik and Barra ibn Aazib. He also cites the narration of Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad the *Khatib* (Orator) of Khwarazm, who has quoted Amr ibn Aas, to have heard from the Prophet. He adds that one rarely finds a compilation of *hadith* (tradition) written by Sunni scholars, which does not contain this particular *hadith*,

eversince the memorized and by–hearted traditions took the form of writing. Some of these books usually narrate the *hadith of Thaḡalain* quoting one or more of the Prophet’s companions, while in some others, the narration is on the authority of nearly twenty of the Prophet’s companions either generally, as in books like ‘Al–Sawa’iq’, or in authorized details, as in the books of Sakhawi, Suyuti, Samhudi, and others. In short we find that none of the great Sunni scholars, have failed to mention this tradition.

Then, he adds:

(All *Imamia* (Shi’a) scholars have recorded this tradition in their books, on the reputed authorities of such notable descendants of the Prophet as the Imams Muhammad al–Baqir, Ja’fer al–Sadiq, Musa al–Kadhim and Ali al–Ridha (peace be upon them) who present an unbroken chain of succession to the Prophet himself. The sources found in the *Imamia* books regarding this tradition are: The Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Jabir ibn Abdulla, Abi Sa’id, Zaid ibn Arqam, Zaid ibn Thabit, Hudhaifa ibn Ussaid Yamani, and several others, who quote directly from the Prophet).⁽⁴⁵⁾

Another famous scholar Allama Firuzabadi writes that Ahmad ibn Hanbal has repeated the exact words in the next two volumes of the same book ‘Musnad’: vol.4, p.366 and Balaghi in his ‘Sunan’, vol.2, p.148, and vol.7, p.30, Darimi in his ‘Sunan’, vol.2, p.431, Muttaqi in ‘Kanz Ummal’, vol.1, p.45 and vol.7, p.102, Tahawi in ‘Mushkil Aathar’, vol.4, p.368, Tirmidhi in his ‘Sahih’, vol.2, p.308, Ibn Athir Jazri in ‘Asad al–Ghaba’, vol.2, p.12, Suyuti in ‘Dur al–Manthur’ in the interpretation of the ‘Mawadda Verse’ of Shura Chapter, ‘Mustadrak al–Sahihain’ vol.3, pp. 109&148, Nisa’i in his

‘Khasa’is’, p.21.

It is narrated that the famous jurist Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s *Musnad* vol.3, p.17, Abu Sa’id Khidri’s narration from the Prophet:

“I am about to be summoned, and I have to answer (die). I am leaving among you the (Thaqalain) that is the Book of Allah the Exalted, and my progeny. The Book of Allah is a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth, and my progeny are the (Ahlul-Bait). the Merciful informed me that they would not part (with each other) until they come me at the pool (in Paradise). So, mind your behaviour towards them after me.”

Ahmad ibn Hanbal repeated the same words in his ‘Musnad’, vol.4, p.371 and vol.5, p.181. Moreover Abu Na’im in ‘Hulyat al-Awliya’’, vol.1, p.355, ‘Kanz al-Ummal’, vol.1, p.96, Hathami in his ‘Majam’’, vol. 9, pp.64 &163, ‘Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa’ of ibn Hijr, p.75., also mentions the same narration.

Thus the authoritative chain of succession in the narration of this *hadith* and its clear emphasis on the firm bond between the Book of Allah and the Prophet’s *Ahlul-Bait* is enough to make any Muslim with a discerning mind realize the facts that the Qur’an cannot be interpreted properly or its instructions cannot be applied in the correct sense of the word, unless and until the Muslim nation turns to the Prophet’s illustrious Progeny for guidance, who without the least doubt are its natural guardians.

2. The Tradition of Ark (Safina).

If *Thaqalain* places the *Ahlul-Bait* on a par with the Holy Qur’an, makes them guardians over it and entrusts them the task of interpreting and explaining its secrets, concepts and

meanings, as well as guardians over it, the *hadith* of Ark 'Safina', presents the Prophet's Household as the 'Ark of Salvation', and the place of refuge for the Muslims after the Messenger of Allah. The tradition could well be considered a clear warning to the Muslim nation that anyone failing to get on board of the 'Ark of Salvation' would naturally be drowned by the waves of deviation and anyone staying behind would certainly fail to reach the shores of safety and guidance.

Shabrawi Shafi'i, quoting Rafe', the slave of the Prophet's illustrious companion Abu Dhar Ghaffari, says: "Once Abu Dhar, (may Allah be pleased with him), climbed the threshold of the Ka'ba, grasped the ring of its door and turning his back towards it, said: O people, those who know me, know me (needs no introduction) and those who do not know me (hear) I am Abu Dhar; I have heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) say:

"My 'Ahlul-Bait' are like Noah's Ark, whoever boards it, is safe, and whoever remains behind is pushed into the Fire".

I have also heard the Messenger of Allah say:

"Let my 'Ahlul-Bait' be to you as the head is to the body and the eyes are to the head, because the body would not be guided except by the head, and the head cannot be guided except by the eyes."⁽⁴⁶⁾

Abu Na'im Isfahani in 'Hulyat al-Awliya' records the 'tradition of the Ark' from the authority of Sa'id ibn Jubair from Abdulla Ibn Abbas: "The Messenger of Allah said:

"The example of my 'Ahlul-Bait' among you is like Noah's Ark; whoever got aboard it was saved and whoever remained behind, was drowned."⁽⁴⁷⁾

Hakim in his 'Mustadrak al-Sahihain', vol.2, p. 343, has given an identical narration confirming the genuineness of

this *hadith* on the authority of the great traditionist, Muslim. And also Muttaqi in 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.6, p.216, Haithami in his 'Majma', vol. 9, p.168, Muhibuddin Tabari in 'Dhakha'ir', p.20, and Khatib Baghdadi in his monumental 'History of Baghdad' (vol. 12, p. 19) have cited this *hadith* ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Anas ibn Malik has quoted from the the Prophet the following wordings:

"Surely the likeness of me and my 'Ahlul-Bait' is similar to Noah's Ark, whoever boards it, is safe, and whoever remains behind is drowned." ⁽⁴⁹⁾

Jalaluddin Suyuti in his 'Dur al-Manthur', interpreting the verse:

"And when We said: Enter this township and eat easefully of it wherever you wish, and enter in at the gate prostrating, and say forgiveness, We will forgive you your wrongdoings" Holy Qur'an (2:58), says ibn Shaiba has quoted Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) to have said: 'Our likeness to this Muslim nation is that of Noah's Ark and the gate of remissions'" ⁽⁵⁰⁾

Muttaqi Hindi in 'Kanz al-Ummal' (vol.6, p.216) records the *hadith* in the following words:

"The likeness of my *Ahlul-Bait* among you is like that of Noah's Ark, whoever gets on board is safe, and whoever remains behind is doomed, and like that the Gate of remission for the children of Israel". He adds that it was quoted by Tabarani on the authority of Abi Dhar. ⁽⁵¹⁾

3. The Tradition of Security Against Discord.

This saying of the Prophet defines the ideological and political role of the *Ahlul-Bait*. Realizing that the greatest calamity threatening the survival of a nation is sedition and controversy of opinions which generate conflicting political

and ideological trends, the Messenger of Allah used to constantly advise Muslims to steadfastly adhere to his *Ahlul-Bait*. Time and again, he had reminded his companions that his *Ahlul-Bait* were synonym with the Qur'an and its call, and never part with it till the Day of Resurrection. He had also described them on various other occasions as the Ark of Deliverance and the Door of Repentance. Here, he likens them to the stars and the role these heavenly bodies play in guiding the travellers and sea-farers.

Tabarani, quoting Ibn Abbas, cites the Prophet to have said:

“The stars are a security for the people of the earth against drowning (when at sea) and my ‘Ahlul-Bait’ are a security to the people of the earth against discord.”⁽⁵²⁾

Muhibuddin Tabari also cites the prominent jurist Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's narration of this *hadith* in 'al-Manaqib'.⁽⁵³⁾

4. The Tradition of the Cloak (Kisa):^(*)

We have already briefly dealt with this tradition, while discussing the *Ayat al-Tathir* in the opening chapter of the book, *Ahlul-Bait* and the Qur'an'. Here we relate other authentic narrations concerning this famous tradition and will explain the Prophet's objective in stressing the significance of his *Ahlul-Bait*. This *hadith of al-Kisa'* has come down to us through different authoritative chains of narration and hereunder we shall relate some of the most outstanding ones.

(*) The name is derived from the Prophet's cloak with which he covered the four members of his *Ahlul-Bait*

Several narrations with slight variations have come down from Umm Salama the Prophet's wife concerning this *hadith*.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, in his 'Musnad', quotes Umm Salama as saying that once when the Prophet was in her house, a maid came and informed them that Ali and Fatima were at the door. The Prophet told her to get up and make room for his *Ahlul-Bait*. As she got up and moved to a nearby corner, Ali and Fatima entered with their two young boys Hasan and Husain. The Prophet seated his grandsons on his lap and kissed them. Then he embraced Ali with one hand and Fatima with the other, and covering them with a black cloak called *Khamisa*^(*) prayed:

“O Allah, towards You and not towards the Fire are I and my Household .’ Umm Salama said ‘and I O’ Messenger of Allah’. The Prophet replied, ‘you, too.’”(**)

Wahidi, in his book 'Asbab al-Nuzul', through a chain of narrators also cites Umm Salama – that once, when the Prophet was in her house, Fatima brought a bowl of porridge for him, whereupon he told her daughter to call her husband and their two sons. Soon Ali, Hasan and Husain entered and sat beside him to eat. The Prophet was seated on an elevated place with a cloak from Khaiber underneath him. Taking the cloak and covering them with it he prayed:

“O Allah, (these are) my Household, keep them pure as pure can be.”

Umm Salama thrust her head under the cloak, asking

(*) *Khamisa* is a square black cloak with two straps.

(**) That is: 'You, too, more safe from the Fire.'

whether she was also included, to which the Prophet twice replied that she was also on the right. Wahidi adds that it was then that the angel Gabriel descended by Allah's command to reveal this verse:

“Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you, people of House (Ahlul-Bait), and keep you pure as pure can be.”⁽⁵⁴⁾

Holy Qur'an (33:33)

5. The Tradition of Affection (Mawada):

We have already referred to this *hadith* while discussing the *Mawadda* verse in the opening chapter of the book and mentioned several narrators and authorities in its connections. Here we recount some more traditions stressing love towards the *Ahlul-Bait*.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Tabarani and Hakim, have all cited Abdulla Ibn Abbas to have said that when the ‘Verse of Purity’ was revealed the Prophet was asked as to who his near relatives were whose love was incumbent upon Muslims. He replied:

“Ali, Fatima and their two sons.”

Bazzaz and Tabarani have narrated a speech from Hasan ibn Ali (a.s.) as follows:

“Those who know me know me (needs no introduction) but those who do not know me (know then) I am Hasan the son of Muhammad (s.a.w.), I am the son of the Bearer of good tidings; I am the son of the Warner; I am the son of ‘Ahlul-Bait’ whose love Allah has been incumbent upon every Muslim, and for whom was revealed (the verse): ‘Say (O’ Muhammad unto mankind) I do not ask of you any reward for it (preaching the message), but love for my near relatives;...’ Therefore, striving towards good deeds is to love us, the ‘Ahlul-Bait’.”⁽⁵⁵⁾

Imam Abul Hasan Baghawi in his commentary on the

Mawadda Verse quotes Ibn Abbas that when this verse was revealed, the Prophet was asked as to who were his *Ahlul-Bait*, whom Allah has ordered the Muslims to love. To which the Prophet replied:

“Ali, Fatima, and their two sons (Hasan and Husain)”.

Saddi, quoting Abi Malik, on the authority of Ibn Abbas concerning the verse says that without doubt this hadith makes emphasis on love towards the Prophet’s Household.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Traditions emphasizing the *Ahlul-Bait*’s unique position abound and illuminate the books of narrations, out of which we have selected some of the most glowing ones from the most authoritative of scholars to bedeck our book. Many a voluminous book has been exclusively devoted to their merits, which are however outside the scope of our present study. In order to enlighten our readers with these paragons of virtue and guide them towards their brightly lit path, we briefly recount some more Traditions concerning the Prophet’s noble Household.

Tabarani, in ‘al-Awsat’, quotes Ibn Hajar’s narration from Jabir ibn Abdulla Ansari; that once the Prophet delivered a speech to his companions saying:

“O’ people whoever hates us ‘Ahlul-Bait’, Allah will resurrect him as a Jew on the Judgement Day”.⁽⁵⁷⁾

The famous scholars such as Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nisa’i, have all quoted Zaid ibn Arqam that the Messenger of Allah cautioned the Muslims regarding their behaviour towards his *Ahlul-Bait* in the following words:

“Remember Allah regarding my ‘Ahlul-Bait’.”⁽⁵⁸⁾

Khatib Baghdadi in his ‘Tarikh’ on the authority of Ali

ibn Abi Talib writes that the Prophet said:

“My intercession (on Judgement Day) for my Muslim communities will be for (only) those who loved my ‘Ahlul-Bait’.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

Thus it is clear that all traditions even though the chain of narrations may be different, are unanimous concerning reverence to the *Ahlul-Bait* and exhort Muslims to adhere to their course.

6– Other Narrations:

Muhibuddin Tabari has narrated from the Prophet:

“We are the ‘Ahlul-Bait’, none can be compared to us.”⁽⁶⁰⁾

This tradition of the Prophet is a clear pointer to the lofty status of his *Ahlul-Bait* and their unique position among the Muslim communities. It not only highlights these peerless personalities, but exhorts the Muslims to follow their illuminated path, not in blind obedience but by a way of discerning comparison with others.

Another famous tradition cited by the same author and also found in various other books runs as follows:

“We are the ‘Ahlul-Bait’ for whom Allah has chosen the hereafter to this world. My ‘Ahlul-Bait’ will face after me difficulties, hardships and persecution in the lands, until a people will come from there (pointing towards the east) bearers of black banners. They will demand the rights but it will be denied. So, they will fight and will emerge victorious. They will be given what they demanded, but will not accept it till they give it (the right to rule) to a man from my Ahlul-Bait, who would fill (the earth) with justice as it was filled with oppression. Therefore whoever finds that (period) let him join them even if he had to crawl over the snows.”⁽⁶¹⁾

On the same subject Dailami has quoted Abi Sa'id's tradition as follows: The Prophet once said:

“Whoever hurts me by (way of hurting) my family will be afflicted with Allah's severe wrath.”⁽⁶²⁾

Suyuti relates a tradition from the Prophet on the authority of Ali (a.s.):

“Teach your children three habits; to love your Prophet, to love his (Prophet’s) Household and to recite the Qur’an; because the carrier of the Qur’an will be in the shade of Allah along with His Prophet and the Chosen ones on the day when there will be no shade except that of Allah’s”⁽⁶³⁾

Tabarani quotes Ibn Abbas from the Prophet as follows:

“(on the Resurrection Day) no foot of a servant (of Allah) will move before being asked about four things: his years and how he spent them, his body and how he worn it out, his wealth and how he earned and spent it, and about his love towards us, the (Ahlul-Bait)”⁽⁶⁴⁾

Tabarani relates another tradition quoting Muttalib ibn Abdulla bin Hantab that once the Prophet delivered a speech at a place called Juhfa, saying:

“‘Am I not more superior to you than yourselves?’ The people replied: Yes, O Messenger of Allah!. The Prophet then said ‘I will question you (hold you responsible) about two things; the Qur’an and my ‘Ahlul-Bait’”⁽⁶⁵⁾

Thus the above cited narrations from different scholars of repute should leave no one in doubt about the unique role of the *Ahlul-Bait* in guiding the Muslim communities, after the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah had time and again made it clear that his *Ahlul-Bait* are to be taken as a final authority in all matters, because they are on a par with the Holy Qur’an and their deep knowledge will help expound the wisdom and significance of Allah’s revealed word to mankind.

THE QUR'AN AND THE SCHOLARS OF THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL-BAIT

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder (the Qur'an) and We will most surely be its guardian”.

Holy Qur'an (15:9)

The Qur'an is Allah's message, revealed to His last and the greatest Prophet, Muhammad ibn Abdulla (s.a.w.), and is the only divine book which has remained, unsullied, untainted, pure and unprofaned, from the passage of time. As the above-mentioned verse of the Holy Qur'an testifies, Allah Himself has guaranteed to guard it against any form of distortion, forgery and disfigurement, in such a way that falsehood cannot approach it from any direction. Remarkably, the Qur'an today is the same text which was revealed fourteen centuries ago to the Prophet, and is free from any additions or deletions.

Besides being the source of Islamic legislation and the basis of the divine Law, the Holy Qur'an serves as a balance for the authenticity of the Traditions, the criterion for rational thought, the fountain of knowledge, the key to virtue and happiness, and above all the constitution for mankind's progress and civilization.

The Muslims have been safeguarding this divine revelation for centuries passing it on to the coming generations with

utmost care and honesty exactly as it was brought down by the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet, and also memorizing the whole text by rote, so as to keep it free from interpolation. All Muslims unanimously deny the forged and doubtful narrations which contradict this consensus.

Shaikh Abu Ali Fadl ibn Hasan Tabarsi^(*), the author of the renowned exegy, 'Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an', which is regarded as a reference work for scholars and interpreters of the Qur'an, says:

"...of such (baseless) talk about additions and deletions in the Qur'an, it is unbecoming of any interpretation. As to the additions, it is unanimously regarded to be a false assumption; and concerning deletions, a group of our people *Shi'ites* and others (Sunnis) think of some alterations and deletions in the Qur'an, while the true belief of our people is to the contrary. This has been supported by (Sherif) Murtadha^(**) (may Allah bless his soul), who, extensively discoursed on it in his answers to 'The Tripolian Problems'. On several occasions he states, that our knowledge of the Qur'an's authenticity is as true as our knowledge of lands, great events, famous books and the written poetry of the Arabs, because there were enough motives for exercising the greatest care in relating and guarding it to a degree not allotted to any other subject; especially since the Qur'an is

(*) Shaikh Tabarsi was one of the most prominent interpreters and great *Shi'ite* scholars of the sixth century A.H.

(**) Sayid Murtadha is Ali ibn Husain, one of the greatest *Shi'ite* scholars of the 5th century A.H. He was the brother of Sherif Radhi, the compiler of Nahjul-Balagha, which contains Imam Ali's sermons, letters and sayings. He was tutored by Sheikh Mufid, and in turn was the teacher of Shaikh Abu Ja'fer Tusi, the founder of the great theological university of Najaf. He died in 436 A.H.

the miracle of prophethood, and source of legal sciences and religious teachings. The Muslim scholars have since reached the highest possible stage of learning by memorizing and guarding it to such an extent that they even know thoroughly each and everything concerning the different aspects of its grammatical parsing, syntax, reciting, letters and verses. So, how could it be altered or (parts of it) deleted under such an enormous care and unmatched strictness?...

“Sheikh Tabrsi gives an example of the works of renowned philologists of the Arabic language and says: “Knowing the interpretation of the Qur’an and its parts and correctly writing it, is as knowing it in general. This is similar to the knowledge we get from the compiled books, like those written by Sibawayh and Muzni, whose details are well known to the concerned people as are their characteristics to them, in as much as if an alien chapter of grammar was inserted in Sibawayh’s book it would immediately be detected and singled out as an interpolation to the original text, and the same can be said of Muzni’s works...it is obvious more care was exercised in writing the Qur’an correctly than Sibawayh’s book and the works of poets.

He (Tabrasi) further adds (Thus):

“During the days of the Prophet, the Qur’an was taught and memorized by several companions who used to recite it before the Prophet for its veracity. Some of the companions like Abdulla ibn Mas’ud, Ubai ibn Ka’b and others recited the Qur’an from memory to the Prophet several times. This means, clearly enough, that the Qur’an had been arranged in a collection and hence the views of those among the Imamis or others who disagree with this belief, hold no water. In fact,

their disagreement goes back to some of the doubtful traditions which cannot be compared with those whose truth is beyond question.”⁽⁶⁶⁾

“What is known among the Shi’a scholars and researchers, or what they even positively take for granted, is the rejection of the idea of any falsification”.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Shaikh Muhammad ibn Husain ibn Babawayh, (died 381 A.H.) known by the epithet of ‘Saduq’, in his treatise ‘I’tiqadat al-Saduq’ (Saduq’s Beliefs), says: “Our belief in the Qur’an which was sent down by Allah to His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.), is that it consists of what is between its two covers, and it is what is in circulation among the people, no more...Whoever ascribes to us that we say it was more than that, is but a liar, He goes on to recite his proofs in the treatise.”⁽⁶⁸⁾

Shaikh Ta’ifa (the head of the Group), Abu Ja’far Muhammad ibn Hasan Tusi (died 460 A.H.), in his commentary on the Qur’an ‘al-Tibyan’⁽⁶⁹⁾, says:

“As to what is said about its (Qur’an’s) additions and deletions, is also unbecoming of it, because any charge of addition is absolutely false; and, as to deletions from it, apparently the opinion of the Muslims rejects this idea, which is more appropriate to the truth of our sect, as was supported by (Sherif) Murtadha (may Allah bless him), and as is found in the narrative...Our narratives encourage its (Qur’an’s) recitation, adhering to it and turning towards it (as final authority) whenever there was any dispute in narrations concerning secondary matters. An irrefutable Tradition from the Prophet says:

“I am leaving among you the two weighty things (Thaqalain), as long as you stick to them, you will not go astray: the Book of Allah

and my family the ‘Ahlul-Bait’, and . These will never part until they meet me the Pool (of Kawthar in Paradise)”.

This means that the Qur’an must be there in all ages, as it is not reasonable to ask us to hold fast something which cannot be held fast. Similarly the *Ahlul-Bait*, or those whose instructions must be followed, must be there all the time. So, if what is amongst us is held to be unanimously true, then we must busy ourselves with its interpretation and explain its meanings, leaving aside everything else.

Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Balaghi, in his Tafsir ‘Aala’ Al-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Qur’an’, underlines this great fact – the eternity of the Qur’an and its immunity against any distortion and falsification.

He says:

“The Qur’an continues to enjoy great veneration among the Muslims, generation after generation. Everywhere you would encounter thousands of copies of the Book and thousands of those who learn it by heart. They studiously copy from one another, and the Muslims recite it to one another for verification. Thousands of its copies stand as sentinels over the learners, and thousands of learners stand as sentries over the copies of the Qur’an, and thousands of them both stand as guardians over the new copies. We say thousands, while actually they are hundreds of thousands. Nay! thousands of thousands, because no historical event received such kind of perpetuity and unquestionable eternity as the Qur’an did, as promised by Allah the Exalted:

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian”.

Holy Qur’an (15:9)

“Surely on Us (devolves) the collecting of it and the reciting of

it.”

Holy Qur'an (75:17)

“Therefore, if you happen to hear dubious narratives that something of the Qur'an was distorted and some of it was lost, do not heed such talk, as scholarly researches have proved how disordered, shaky and weak their narraters are, and how contradictory they are to the Muslims...”⁽⁷⁰⁾

In a chapter titled ‘The *Imamia*'s opinion rejecting deletions in the Qur'an’, Balaghi further states in his ‘Tafsir’: “It is no secret that Saduq (may Allah bless him) who is known for the great care he took in what he narrated, says in his book ‘al-I’tiqad’: Our belief in the Qur'an, which was sent down by Allah on His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.), is that it consists of all that is in between its two covers, and it is what is in circulation among the people, no more...Whoever ascribes to us that we say it was more than that, is but a liar.”

Another great early *Shi'ite* scholar, Shaikh Mufid, writes in his book ‘al-Maqalat’ that “A group of the *Imamia* say that nothing was deleted from it (the Qur'an) not even a single word, verse or *sura*, but what was omitted were the notes, explanations and interpretations concerning the meanings and the truth of its revelation, which had been written by the Commander of the Faithful Ali (a.s.) on his own compilation of the Book.”

In ‘Kash al-Ghita’ fi kittab al-Qur'an’, chapter eight, concerning the deletion, it is said: “No doubt that it is protected against any alteration by the Sovereign, the Almighty, as is proved by the evidence of the Qur'an and the scholars’ unanimity of opinion.”

Shaikh Bahauddin Amili says:“...they also differed concerning additions and deletions in it, but the truth is that the

Glorious Qur'an is protected against all that, be it addition or deletion. This is proved by Allah's saying: "***We surely are its guardians.***"

Muqaddas Baghdadi, in 'Sharh al-Wafiya', says: "...the talk about deletion which is in circulation among our companions, is in contrast to the unanimous talk of non-interference in it...it is said that Shaikh Ali ibn Abdul Aali had written an exclusive book refuting the deletion theory', quoting the afore-mentioned speech of Saduq."⁽⁷¹⁾

The late contemporary scholar, Shaikh Muhammad Husain Aal Kashif al-Ghita', in his 'Asl al-Shi'a wa Usuliha', says: "The Book which is (in circulation) among the Muslims is the Book which Allah had sent down to His Prophet – a miracle and challenge – and there is no deletion, distortion, nor additions in it..."

Another renowned scholar Sayyid Abdul-Husain Sharafuddin, in his 'Fusul al-Muhimma fi Ta'lif al-Umma', says: "...Falsehood cannot approach the Glorious Qur'an. It is what it contains between its two covers which are in the hands of the people, neither a letter more nor a letter less, and no word...has been replaced by another. Each and every of its letters has scrupulously come down to us, generation after generation, from the days of Revelation and Prophet-hood.

Sayyid Muhsin Amin Aamili, in his encyclopaedic work *A'yan al-Shi'a*, says:

"None of the *Imamis*, whether in the past or at present, say that the Qur'an has been subjected to additions, not even to a little degree. Actually, all of them agree that nothing was ever added to it, and the trusted ones confirm that nothing

has been deleted from it.”

This is the position of the *Shi'ite* scholars, regarding the Qur'an now in the hands of the Muslims. It is, as it was revealed to the Prophet, and it will remain pure and unadulterated, as long as man remains on the face of the earth, guiding humanity towards virtue and happiness.

Certain dubious narrations which allegedly speak about deletions in the holy text, and sometime claim of a Qur'an other than this have been exploited by purposeful offenders, and have obviously misled some people. These simple-minded souls cite the following narration from Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad Sadiq to support their misconstrued views:

“...but by Allah (pointing to his chest) we have the weapon of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), his sword and his armour. By Allah we have Fatima's 'Mashaf' (book), wherein are not any of the verses of Allah's Book. It is a dictation of the Messenger of Allah, written by Ali with his hand.”⁽⁷²⁾

They have misunderstood the Imam, and without going into the lexical meaning of the word *Mashaf*, thought that he was indicating a Qur'an other than the one in circulation. It was a grave mistake on the part of these people.

However, a careful scrutiny of the narrative, will help reveal the actual meaning of the word *Mashaf*:

By looking up the word *Mashaf* in Arabic lexicons, we discover what Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) actually meant.

Raghib Isfahani says:

(Al-Sahifa' means any flat thing such as the flatness of the cheek, a leaf, a page, or a sheet which is used for writing. Its plural is *Saha'if* or *Suhuf*, as the Almighty says:

“Suhuf' of Abraham and Moses, and also ...reciting pure 'suhuf'

(pages) wherein are all the correct books."

Holy Qur'an (87:19)

It is said that it means the Qur'an and that by using the plural *Suhuf* in which are 'Books', it is meant to say that they include more than what is in Allah's Books. Hence, A *Mashaf* is a collection of written *Suhuf*, and its plural form is *Masahif*.)⁽⁷³⁾

Therefore, the word *Mashaf*, means any book and is not a special term for "the Book of Allah". It can mean any collection of *Suhuf* (leaves of paper or skin), and only in this context the Qur'an can also be called *Mashaf* because it is a collection of *Suhuf*.

The exclusive names for the Book of Allah are: *Al-Qur'an*, *al-Dhikr*, *al-Furqan* and *al-Kitab*⁽⁷⁴⁾, as mentioned in the holy text itself. Allah did not call it "*Masha*", but it were the later Muslims who named it so, after having compiled it on leaves or sheets.

Thus, it is clear that the mistake arose from the linguistic use of the word during the early days of Islam, when people did not take 'al-Mashaf' to mean al-Qur'an, as it may imply in present day usage.

A closer look at Imam al-Sadiq's narration itself will help clarify the misconception. He says that in Fatima's *Mashaf*, there is not any of the verses of Allah's Book, which obviously means that it is neither the Qur'an nor any part of it. Nor is it a divine revelation, but it is a dictation of the Messenger of Allah written in Imam Ali's handwriting.

According to scholars the *Mashaf Fatima* was a collection of supplications and instructions which Prophet Muhammad dictated for the benefit of his beloved daughter.

THE QUR'AN IN THE NARRATIVES OF THE AHLUL-BAIT

A study of the narratives and the traditions that have reached us on the authority of the *Ahlul-Bait* and a glance at their lives and works, reveals that the message of the Holy Qur'an and the safeguarding of its letter and spirit, was the prime concern of these luminaries.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the Prophet's infallible Household, quotes the Messenger of Allah as saying:

“O people, you are in place OF TRUCE and on a journey, swiftly moving on. You have seen the night and the day, the sun and the moon, wearing out every novelty, nearing every remoteness and bringing about every promised, so take care to prepare the travelling equipage as the way is far.”

He says: Miqdad ibn Aswad rose and asked: O Messenger of Allah, what is the abode of truce? He said:

“The place of arrival and separation. Whenever calamities obscure your vision like pieces of dark night, turn to the Qur'an, as it is a reliable intercessor, a truthful arguer. Whoever places it before him, it will lead him to Paradise, and whoever puts it behind him, it will drive him to the Fire. It is the guide that shows the best path, it is the Book in which there are details, declaration and acquisition. It is the arbiter, without jest. It has the exoteric and the esoteric. Its exterior is judgement, its interior is knowledge. Its out-

side is elegant, its inside is profound. It has stars, and stars above stars. Its wonders are unaccountable, its varieties imperishable. In it are the torches of guidance, the lighthouse of wisdom, and the proof of knowledge to whoever knows the attribute. So, let the observer work his eyes and get to the attribute with his sight, then he will be safe from ruin, will get rid of clinging to wealth, as contemplation is the life of the discovering heart, as the one who seeks light walks in the dark with light. So, for you is good deliverance and a less waiting for”.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Imam al-Sadiq is quoted to have said:

“The memorizer of the Qur’an and one who practices its teachings, will be among the ranks of the honourable and the righteous.”⁽⁷⁶⁾

The fourth Imam Ali ibn Husain (a.s.) says: The Messenger of Allah said:

“Whoever is given the Qur’an by Allah, but thinks that someone else is given a better thing than he is, would be belittling the great and magnifying the little.”⁽⁷⁷⁾

The fifth Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) is quoted to have said: The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

“O readers of the Qur’an, fear Allah for having charged you with His Book, as I am responsible and you are responsible. I am responsible for communicating the Message, while you will be questioned about what you have been charged with the Book of Allah and my traditions”⁽⁷⁸⁾

Imam al-Sadiq has said:

“A believer should not die before learning the Qur’an, or trying to learn it.”⁽⁷⁹⁾

He is also quoted to have said:

“The Qur’an is Allah’s covenant to His creatures. So, a Muslim is ought to look into his covenant and read 50 verses of it every day.”⁽⁸⁰⁾ *“Three will complain to Allah the Exalted: A deserted*

mosque where local people do not pray in it; a learned man among the ignorant; and the Scripture which is covered with dust as nobody reads it”⁸¹ “The Qur’an is alive, it never dies. It goes on as the night and the day go on, and as the sun and the moon go on...”

The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib has said:

“...then, Allah sent to him (the Prophet) the Book as a light whose lamps cannot be extinguished, a torch whose gleam does not extinguish, a sea whose depth cannot be fathomed, a way whose light does not mislead, a ray whose light does not darken, a separator (of good from evil) whose arguments do not weaken, a clarifier whose foundations cannot be dismantled, a cure which has no diseases to be feared, and an honour whose supporters are not defeated, and a truth whose helpers are not abandoned, as it is the mine of belief and its core, the source of knowledge and its oceans, the gardens of justice and their pool, the foundation stones of Islam and its construction, the valleys of truth and its plains, the ocean which cannot be emptied by the users of its waters, the springs whose water cannot be dried up by takers, the drinking places whose waters cannot be exhausted by drinkers, the lighthouse whose guiding light the travellers cannot miss, the signs which no trader fails to see, and the highlands whose (limits) no approacher can pass. Allah has made it a quencher of the thirst of the learned, a bloom for the hearts of religious jurists, a highway for the courses of the righteous, a cure after which there is no ailment, an effulgence with which there is no darkness, a string whose grip is firm, a stronghold whose top is invulnerable, an honour for him who loves it, a peaceful (place) for him who enters it, a guidance for him who follows it, an excuse for him who adopts it, an argument for him who urges with it, a witness for him who quarrels with it, a success for him who argues for it, a carrier of burden for him who carries it, a carriage for him who acts upon it, a sign for him who seeks the way, a shield for him who arms himself (against misguidance) a know-

ledge for him who listens carefully, a worthy story for him who relates it and a final verdict for him who passes judgements. ⁸²

Thus, we recognize the value and the significance of the Qur'an as seen by the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) who dedicated their lives to its practical rendering for the benefit of the Muslims.

“(Surely) This Qur'an guides to that which is most upright.”

Holy Qur'an (17:9)

It is the constitution for mankind, the source of science and knowledge, the guide to virtue and happiness and the code for organizing human behaviour and social and political laws.

PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE QUR'AN

We have already proved, through the school of *Ahlul-Bait*, that the Book of Allah is eternal and is the source of all legislation, the criterion for judging the authenticity of the narrations, and the measure for distinguishing right from wrong.

The Prophet says:

“When any ‘hadith’ is ascribed to me, measure it according the Book of Allah, if it agrees with it, accept it. (but) if it contradicts it, hurl it on the wall (cast it away)”⁽⁸³⁾.

This method has defined for the Muslims in general, and for men of learning and knowledge in particular, how to understand the Qur'an and its texts, since this is the base on which stands the edifice of Islamic thought, faith and ideology. Any misconstrued idea of the holy message and failure to understand the correct meaning of its verses would spell disasters for Muslims, and would lead to discord among them, marring the pure originality of the Islamic thought.

Before going into this basic and important subject, we have to distinguish between ‘Tafsir’ (explanation) and *Ta'wil* (interpretation).

Lexically, ‘Tafsir’ means: uncovering and explaining the meaning of a word.⁽⁸⁴⁾ *Ta'wil* is said to mean: ‘Rejecting one

of the two possibilities to agree with the manifest apparent.⁽⁸⁵⁾

HOW TO EXPLAIN THE QUR'AN:

If *Tafsir* means explaining the words and phrases of the Qur'an, since they may have more than one meaning, then *Ta'wil* is the process of arriving at the intended meaning by debating the verse after wavering between two or more possibilities^(*). However, such an interpretation should not come out with something contrary to the apparent explanation 'Tafsir'.

A close scrutiny of the books of *Tafsir* and the methods of their authors, will make us realize that there are wide gaps and dangerous abysses in which some interpreters have fallen, and strayed away from the actual meanings of the Text, due to their misconstrued approach and at times prejudiced or irrational outlook in dealing with the verses of the Qur'an. They sometimes depended on weak or dubious narrations, or else, followed their personal inclinations, and consequently subjected the Qur'an to their own whims and fantasies, applying the meaning of the verses to particular events, persons and incidents not intended by the Qur'an, nor attested by historical facts or authentic traditions.

Instances of such ridiculous interpretations took place when some interpreters acquired certain theological and philosophic ideas and then tried to bear them upon the mean-

(*) An example of *Ta'wil* (interpretation) of the verse: 'His throne includes the heavens and the earth'. The 'throne' is interpreted to mean: Knowledge, Sovereignty and Supervision, etc. not the common tangible chair.

ings of the Qur'an.

Other writers, commentators made the mistake of trying to explain the Qur'anic verses according to scientific, economic, social and political ideas of their own era or the ideas put forth by laic theorists, without there being any real relation or true application.

Thus, we observe that divine words were moulded to suit one's desires, and we discern that interpreters both past and present, have tried to insert their personal ideas or the viewpoints of a certain school, however irrational, in their explanations.

Many interpreters of different Islamic sects, including the Shi'a and the Sunnis, committed similar mistakes, offering diverse excuses and justifications to defend their theories.

But a glance at the authentic traditions of the Prophet and the method of interpretation shown by the *Ahlul-Bait* and followed by committed commentators, reveals that interpretation has its own principles and rules which guide the reader of the Qur'an to the right, straight path of divine bliss.

Let us carefully read what we received from the Messenger of Allah and the Imams of his Household, who laid the sound foundations for interpretation, that protect this divine book against misinterpretation. Their rational method clearly enriches the world of humanity with meanings, ideas, concepts and judgements, away from uncertainty, calumny, impositions, wild fantasies or conjecture.

Tabrasi, quoting the Messenger of Allah on the authority of his *Ahlul-Bait* says:

"Explanation of the Qur'an is not permitted except through correct signs and explicit texts."⁽⁸⁶⁾

The *Ahlul-Bait* used to follow this method, refusing to

explain the Qur'an away from these two principles:

1. The explanation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an, that is, some Qur'anic verses explain some others.
2. The explanation of the Qur'an by true and authentic traditions and narratives.

So, all explanations must be according to these two principles. We, however, should not forget that reason plays an important role in understanding the Qur'an, explaining its meaning and interpreting its apparent texts, provided that one adheres to the divine text and the tradition. The Prophet has given the intellect a distinguished role in interpreting the Qur'an, by saying:

"The Qur'an is easy to manage, with many meanings, so take it at its best"⁽⁸⁷⁾

Also:

"Parse the Qur'an and look for its peculiarities."⁽⁸⁸⁾

The Qur'an itself refers to the role of the mind in explaining its verses, and praises the intellectuals who deduce the correct meaning:

"...those among them who can search out the knowledge of it would have known it..."

Holy Qur'an (4:83)

And it frowns upon those who stop reasoning while contemplating of the Qur'anic verses concepts:

"Do they not reflect on the Qur'an, or on their hearts there are locks.?"

Holy Qur'an (47:24)

Therefore, interpretation, according to the method of the *Ahlul-Bait*, is based on three foundations:

1. Explaining the Qur'an by the Qur'an.
2. Explaining the Qur'an by the Tradition.

3. Explaining the Qur'an by the reason, within the framework of the Qur'an and the Tradition.

So, it is obvious that the interpretation of the Qur'an has its own well-defined principles and rules. Therefore, any interpretation that is based on personal opinion, or on some transient scientific theories, or philosophical and theological ideas, or on weak narratives; or doubtful authorities, or contrary to the clear text of the Qur'an and the Traditions, and the like, is rejected by the method and school of *Ahlul-Bait*.

No matter whoever the interpreter is, his opinion may not be regarded as a proof against the Qur'an. It is the Qur'an which is a proof against the interpreter. Nor is such a person a proof against the Muslims.

The *Ahlul-Bait* have forbidden people from telling what they did not know or could not prove.

A narrative from Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) says:

“What you do know say it, and what you do not know, say: Allah knows better. One takes a verse from the Qur'an and splits it as wide as that between the heaven and the earth.”⁽⁸⁹⁾

THE PROPHET'S SUNNA AND THE SCHOOL OF THE AHLUL-BAIT

“May Allah prosper the person who heard my saying, memorized it, comprehended it and retold it as he had heard it, since a carrier of knowledge may not be a scholar, and perhaps one may transport knowledge to a more learned one.”⁽⁹⁰⁾

The Prophet's Traditions *sunna* come next to the Book of Allah, as a source of legislation on which the Muslims depend for judgements, laws and values. It is the key for defining, explaining and interpreting the Qur'an and giving practical shape to its legislative, ideological and educational concepts and contents.

Each and every word in the Qur'anic text is an eternal gem of intellect, wisdom and divine legislation, which the *sunna* undertakes to expound and interpret. The Prophet being the addressee of the divine revelation, knew the exact meaning and purpose of the divine message and its lofty objectives and goals.

In short, the *sunna* is the perennial spring which never runs dry, and the eternal truth, whom falsehood cannot approach from any direction. The *sunna* is the practical manifestation of the laws of life and the blueprint for mankind's happiness. It is as everlasting as the Qur'an. Allah, the Exalted says:

“...whatever the Apostle gives you accept it. And whatever he forbids abstain (from it).

Holy Qur'an (59:7)

“Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent example for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day...”

Holy Qur'an (33:21)

“...and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Apostle”

Holy Qur'an (4:59)

These divine instructions were strictly adhered to by the *Ahlul-Bait* and those who followed their radiant path of interpretation, narration, jurisprudence, legislation and ideology. The *Ahlul-Bait* struggled, suffered torture, imprisonment, exile and even martyrdom for the sake of safeguarding the Almighty's Message and the Prophet's pure *sunna*, and showing their practical application in daily life to the Muslims.

Their path was not a bed of roses and as has always been the case with the virtuous, they had to encounter in the shape of hypocrites and imposters whose hearts overflowed with vindiction against Islam. These charlatans posed as Muslims to distort and disfigure the Prophet's *sunna*, and never missed an opportunity to mislead simple minded people by misinterpreting the divine message, and giving it a wrong meaning. They even coined spurious traditions to further their sinister designs.

In view of the above intrigues, the role of the *Ahlul-Bait* in protecting the Prophet's pure *sunna*, was all the more important. Theirs was an unique job of scrupulously guarding and faithfully communicating the traditions of the Messenger of Islam in its true perspective.

They, consequently, fought against innovations in relig-

ion, and against all forms of deviations. They advocated sincere adherence to the Book of Allah and the Prophet's *sunna* by urging the Muslims to use the Qur'an as a criterion for judging the authenticity of the traditions, since the Glorious Qur'an is free of any falsifications and is marvellously preserved as it was when communicated to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) through the angel Gabriel.

“It is We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is We Who are its Guardian.”

Holy Qur'an (15:9)

It is clear that Allah has taken upon Himself to safeguard His revealed words from any corruption.

The Qur'an has thus remained remarkably intact and untouched by the hands of deviation, intrigue for forgery. In this respect, the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

“The bases of the occurrence of evils are those desires which are acted upon and the orders that are innovated. They are against the Book of Allah. People cooperate with one another about them even though it is against the religion of Allah. If wrong had been pure and unmixed, it would not be hidden from those who are in search of it. And if right had been pure without admixture of wrong, those who bear hatred towards it would have been silenced. What is, however, done is that something is taken from here and something from there and the two are mixed! At this stage Satan overpowers his friends, and they alone are saved for whom virtue has been appointed by Allah from before.”⁹¹

Once Abu Basir, a companion of Imam al-Sadiq complained that ‘certain things which one normally comes across are neither mentioned in the Qur'an, nor found in the Prophet's *sunna*, and whether or not such things were to be cited from the two sources’. The Imam replied: ***“No, because***

if you were right you would not get any reward, and if you were wrong you would be lying against Allah the Exalted"⁽⁹²⁾.

The Messenger of Allah said:

"Every innovation is an error and every error leads to the Fire."

Abdulla ibn Abi Ya'fur says that once he asked Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) about variations in narrations from certain reliable as well as doubtful persons. The Imam answered:

"If you come across a 'hadith' for which you could find an evidence in the Book of Allah, or in the Prophet's sayings (take it), otherwise the one who brought it deserves it more."⁽⁹³⁾

Ayub ibn Hur says: "I heard Abu Abdulla (Imam al-Sadiq) saying:

"Everything should be traced back to the Book of Allah and the 'sunna' and whichever 'hadith' that does not comply with the Book of Allah is but a fabrication"⁽⁹⁴⁾

Ayub ibn Rashid also quotes from Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) that:

"Whatever 'hadith' that did not conform to the Qur'an is a fabrication"⁽⁹⁵⁾

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) reportedly quotes from the Prophet:

"Whoever adhered to my sunna when there is difference among my Muslim communities will have the reward of a hundred martyrs".⁽⁹⁶⁾

A person once approached Imam Ali (a.s.) and inquired about the meanings of *sunna*, innovation, community and sect. Imam Ali replied:

"The sunna is what was done by the Messenger of Allah, innovation means what was invented after him, the community are the righteous though (they be) few, and the sect are the false though (they be) numerous."⁽⁹⁷⁾

Another narration from Imam Ali says:

“The ‘sunna’ is of two kinds: The obligatory ‘sunna’: to observe which, is guidance and to neglect it is error; and the optional ‘sunna’, to observe which is virtue, and to neglect it is not a fault”⁽⁹⁸⁾

Imam al-Sadiq quoting Imam Ali says:

“Over every truth there is a reality, and over every correct mode there is a light. Whatever corresponds to the Book of Allah take it, and whatever contradicts it leave it.”

He also says:

“May Allah have mercy on whoever quotes the Messenger of Allah without lying, even if people attack him.”⁽⁹⁹⁾

The Commander of the Faithful Ali (a.s.) said that he had heard the Messenger of Allah saying:

“If a ‘hadith’ comes to you with discrepancies and differences, parts of it contradicting each other, could not be from me and I did not say it, even if it is said that I did. If a ‘hadith’ comes to you with its parts confirming each other, it is from me and I said it. Whoever saw me dead is as if he saw me alive, and whoever visited me I would be his witness and observer on the Resurrection Day.”⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

He (a.s.) is also quoted to have said to Muhammad ibn Muslim:

“O Muhammad, whenever a narrative comes to you whether through a pious or a bad man agreeing with the Qur’an, take it; and whenever a narrative comes to you whether through a pious or a bad man contradicting the Qur’an, do not take it.”⁽¹⁰¹⁾

In this way the concept of the *sunna* of the Messenger of Allah can be seen through the school of the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) and their method, as well as the relation of this blessed *sunna* to the Book of Allah and its role in legislating and law-making, and in building the social and devotional life of the Muslim communities.

From this doctrinal method of the *Ahlul-Bait*, we come to the following conclusions:

1. Any utterance, act or teaching ascribed to the Prophet must be checked with the Book of Allah to see whether it is correct or not. If it conforms with the Qur'an then it is of the *sunna*, but if it contradicts the divine text, then it is not of the *sunna*.

2. The Qur'an and the *sunna* are the two sources of legislation, law-making, criteria, behaviour and the way of life. Whatever doctrinal precepts or ideological concepts must be in harmony with the Qur'an and the *sunna*, and if so should be enacted and sanctified as part of divine laws. But whatever concepts or rules which contradict the Qur'an and the *sunna*, are innovation, perversion and falsehood.

3. There is the established, agreed upon *sunna* which undoubtedly belongs to the Prophet and which conforms with the Qur'an. Such a *sunna* must be regarded as a scale and an apparatus for examining and scrutinizing the *hadiths* and narratives whose truthfulness is in question, and whatever found contradictory should be rejected. In this way the school of *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) defines the method of dealing with the pure *sunna* of the Prophet.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE SUNNA.

Scholars classify the *sunna* as follows:

1. Sayings: These consist of the *hadiths*, sermons, preachings, and correspondence of the Prophet Muhammad.

2. Actions: All the acts and deeds of the Prophet in his dealings with the people, or in performing worshipping rites.

Since the Prophet is infallible from sin and error his every act and word bears the stamp of trend and authority, and is regarded as divine inspiration. Hence his actions are divided into obligatory and permitted.

1– Obligatory acts: Such as the daily five times a day prayers, *Hajj*, fasting in the month of *Ramadhan*, prohibition of evil and promotion of justice are for all Muslims to perform and practice, and the negligence of which is a lapse.

2– Recommended: Several other acts of the Prophet which are not obligatory are regarded as permitted for Muslims to emulate.

3. Optional: The Prophet’s silence in respect to an act done by some people during his time, and which he knew about it, but did not object, such as some social dealings and individual practices are also considered part of His *sunna*. His silence towards such social deeds is regarded as proof of no-objection and hence worthy of a Muslim to practice, if he so desires.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATING AND PROVING:

The Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* have defined the methods of scrutinising and proving the *sunna* of the Prophet, which we dealt with in the previous pages.

Based on these principles, the jurists of the school of the *Ahlul-Bait* fixed the “Critical Method” in the scientific research of the Prophet’s *sunna*. To begin with, they recognize no piece of the *sunna* to be true and taken for granted. They start from ‘questioning’ the authenticity of an act or a tradition, and then proceed to investigate and examine every *hadith* and narration, in order to ascertain that it actually was said or done by the Prophet. They minutely deal with all aspects of the *hadith* or narration under question, and if proved true, would accept it as part of the *sunna*.

Consequently, they do regard any book of *hadith* to be absolutely correct, unless critically evaluated, scrutinized

and examined.

The four authoritative books of narratives comprising what had been received from the *Ahlul-Bait* are as follows:

1) 'Al-Kafi', compiled by Shaikh Muhammad bin Yaqub Kulaini (died 329 A.H.).

2) 'Man la Yahdharuh al-Faqih', compiled by Shaikh Muhammad bin Ali known as Ibn Babawayh Saduq (died 381 A.H.).

3) 'Al-Istibsar', compiled by Shaikh Muhammad bin Hasan Tusi (died 460 A.H.) also known as Shaikh Tayefa.

4) 'Al-Tahdhib' also by Shaikh Tusi.

In addition to the above four, the following books compiled at the beginning of the 2nd millennium of the Hijra, are also considered authentic:

5) 'Wasa'il al-Shi'a' by Shaikh Hur Amili.

6) 'Bihar al-Anwar' by Allama Muhammad Baqir Majlisi.

7) Other books of *hadith*.

Even the four books which form the base of Imami or Ja'fari jurisprudence, have been critically evaluated and subjected to, thorough cross examination and explanation by latter-day scholars.

Each and every *hadith* in these compilation has been researched and traced to its source, with detailed discussions on the chain of transmitters and their credentials. There are instances of rejection of certain traditions which found their way into these books, because of weak source of transmitters or by away of negligent scribes writing and adverse circumstances.

Imami scholars have applied the same method of objective criticism to the famous sunni collections such as 'Sahih

Bukhari', 'Sahih Muslim', 'Sunan Abi Dawud', 'Sunan Nasa'i', 'Sunan ibn Maja', 'Kanz al-Ummal', and other books of *hadith* and narratives, weighing them in the scientific and practical balance, and rejecting or accepting the traditions on the basis of the Holy Qur'an and the pure unadulterated *sunna* of the Prophet.

The usual method followed to ascertain the validity of a *hadith* is based on:

A. Examining the 'Supporting Proof': that is the chain of narrators. The scholars have to take great pains in investigating the 'supporters' of a tradition, to make sure of the credibility of the narrators, referring to special *Rijal* (Who-is-who) books which give descriptions of the narrators' personalities, testify their truthfulness or cast doubt on them. They are never prompted by the narrators' religious inclinations. If a narrator proved to be "Reliable and Truthful", his narration would be accepted.

B. Examining the text: they examine the context of a text and its meaning to see that it neither contradicts the Book of Allah, and the authorized *sunna*, nor the established mode of a positive rational fact.

If the 'support' and the 'text' proved to be correct, the scholars accept the narration. Otherwise, they would reject it; notwithstanding the status of its narrator.

Thus, the method of the scholars of the school of *Ahlul-Bait* is:

1. Not to view a book of *hadith* as completely correct or as completely false.

2. To accept a narration only because of its reliability and truthfulness, disregarding the sect or the group to which the

narrator belonged.

Whoever refers to the books of the principles of jurisprudence, of *Rijal* and inductive jurisprudence, will easily recognize this fact.

Thus way this scientific and critical method helps protect the originality and purity of religion, and in turn promotes Muslim solidarity by avoiding fanaticism, ignorance and bigotry. Actually, there is no room for fanaticism and bigotry in the scientific and critical method of research, which has to be objectively and honestly conducted.

**THE IMAMS OF AHLUL-BAIT
WERE THE NARRATORS
OF THE PROPHET**



THE IMAMS OF AHLUL-BAIT WERE THE NARRATORS OF THE PROPHET

The Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* were not men of innovation in religion nor of induction. They were narrators and trustees of the Prophet's *sunna*, and so, whatever they did was part of the *sunna*. They narrated; the sons quoting the fathers directly from their illustrious forbear the Messenger of Allah. Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“My narration is my father’s, and my father’s is my grandfather’s, and my grandfather’s is his father’s, and his father’s is the ‘hadith’ of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the ‘hadith’ of Ali ibn Abi Talib is the ‘hadith’ of the Messenger of Allah, and the ‘hadith’ of the Messenger of Allah, is the words of Allah, the Exalted”.⁽¹⁰²⁾

Qutaiba says that once someone asked Imam al-Sadiq a question and received the necessary reply. The man further asked him, that if it was such and such a case what would be his opinion? The Imam said:

“Stop it. Whatever I told you was from the Messenger of Allah. We are not of ‘what is your opinion’ group.”⁽¹⁰³⁾

Referring to this, Shaikh Baha'i says:

“All of our ‘hadiths’, except very few, reach back to our twelve Imams (a.s.), and through them to the Prophet (s.a.w.), as their knowledge is taken from that niche of light.”⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Shaikh Balaghi says:

Thus, all the *hadiths* quoted from the 12 infallible Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* are traced to the Prophet himself, and are a source of the precepts of religion.

As their blessed lives are interactive links in an unbroken chain, with no separation among them, right upto Prophet Muhammad. The *Ahlul-Bait* form a school and a living experience, incarnating Islam, preserving its principles and showing the practical application of its precepts.

Let us, then, glance at the links of the blessed chain of the Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* who narrated from the Messenger of Allah, so as to introduce to the concerned readers their scientific and legitimate position.

1. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.): Born in Mecca in the year 30 of *Aam al-Fil*, (Year of the Elephant) and martyred on 21st *Ramadhan* in the year 40 A.H. in Kufa (Iraq), two days after receiving a fatal blow on his head from the poisoned sword of the *Kharajite* Abdul-Rahman ibn Muljam, while in prostration during the morning prayer. His mausoleum in Najaf (Iraq) is a center of pilgrimage.

2. Imam Hasan ibn Ali (a.s.): Born in Madina in the year 3 A.H., forced to abdicate the Caliphate by Mu'awiya in 40 A.H., and martyred in the year 50 A.H. after being administered poison, at the instructions of Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan.

3. Imam Husain Ibn Ali (a.s.): Born in Madina in the year 4 A.H., and tragically martyred along with his small band of 72 faithful followers on the plains of Karbala (Iraq) on 10th of *Muharram* in the year 61 A.H., by the armies of Yazid ibn Mu'awiya. The shrine of the Leader of Martyrs in Karbala is a renowned site of pilgrimage for world Muslims.

We have already discussed the pre-eminent position of this illustrious trio, in the light of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's *sunna*, citing examples of the Prophet's love, and of divine favours upon them. After the sad demise of the Messenger of Allah, Imam Ali and his two sons Imam Hasan and Husain, continued to educate the Muslims regarding the eternal message of Islam, and in the process went through sufferings and even courted martyrdom, at the evil hands of the enemies of Islam. But the blessed chain starting with the Prophet, did not stop at the martyrdom of his grandson Husain in Karbala. It continued its unbroken march for the benefit of Islam and the Muslims through Husain's sole surviving son, Ali.

4. Imam Ali Ibn Husain (a.s.): Known as *Zain al-Abidin* (ornament of the worshippers), he was born in Madina in the year 38 A.H., and poisoned in the year 95 A.H. in Madina at the orders of the Umayyad Caliph Walid.

5. Imam Muhammad Ibn Ali: Also known as *al-Baqir al-Uloom* (Cleaver of knowledge), was born in Madina in the year 57 A.H., and poisoned in the year 114 A.H., at the instructions of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham ibn Abdul Malik.

6. Imam Ja'far Ibn Muhammad (a.s.): Known as *al-Sadiq* (the Truthful), was born in Madina in the year 83 A.H. and lived at a crucial period of Islamic history when the Umayyad oppressors were on the decline, and the Abbasids pretending to restore the rights of the Prophet's Household, were scheming to usurp power for themselves. Imam al-Sadiq, the direct descendant of the Prophet, took this opportunity to enlighten the Muslims on the truth of Islam, and hence his school of jurisprudence, which actually was the

flowering of the pure pristine *sunna* of his great ancestor, came to be known as the *Ja'fari* School. At the age of 63, the Imam was poisoned by the Abbasid Usurpor Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, and was laid to rest in Madina.

7. Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (a.s.): Known as *al-Kadhim* (Restrainer of Anger) was born in the year 128 A.H. in Abwa near Madina, underwent long periods of imprisonment and torture at the hands of Harun al-Rashid, who greatly dreaded the idea, that the Muslims would leave him for the direct descendant of the Prophet. In 183 A.H., Harun eventually poisoned Imam Musa al-Kadhim, whose holy Mausoleum in al-Kadhimiya (in Baghdad) is a centre of pilgrimage for world Muslims.

8. Imam Ali ibn Musa (a.s.): Known as *al-Ridha* (Pleased with Allah's will) was born in the year 148 A.H., was declared heir apparent by Ma'mun as a ruse to strengthen his own grip on the Caliphate. In the year 203 A.H. Ma'mun scared of the Imam's popularity among the masses administered him poison in the city of Tus, in Khorasan, where he rests today. Tus came to be known as *Mashahad al-Ridha* (martyrdom place of al-Ridha) and finally its shortened form 'Mashhad' as it is known today.

9. Imam Muhammad ibn Ali (a.s.): Known as *al-Jawad* (The Generous) was born in the year 195 A.H., and poisoned by Caliph Mu'tasim in the year 220 A.H., in the prime of his life at the age of 25 years. The Abbassid Caliphs who were aware of the rightful claims of the Imam's of the *Ahlul-Bait*, to be the leaders of the Muslims, did all within their worldly power to keep the masses away from them, by such methods as imprisonment, torture and poisoning. Imam al-Jawad rests in peace in the mausoleum of al-Kadhimiya,

besides his illustrious grandfather Imam Musa al-Kadhim.

10. Imam Ali ibn Muhammad (a.s.): Known as *al-Hadi* (The Guide) was born in Madina in the year 212 A.H., and martyred through poison by al-Mutawakkil in the year 254 A.H. in Samirra (Iraq) where his mausoleum stands today.

11. Imam Hasan ibn Ali (a.s.): Known as *al-Askari* was born in Madina in the year 232 A.H., and martyred in the year 260 A.H. in Samirra and was laid to rest besides his father.

12. Imam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (a.s.): Known as *al-Mahdi* (The Rightly Guided) was born in Samirra in the year 255 A.H. He is still alive and is in occultation, and in the light of the Prophet's traditions, it is a firm belief of the followers of the *Ahlul-Bait*, that Imam Mahdi will reappear and fill the earth with virtue and justice, as it will be brimming with oppression and tyranny.

Let us here relate a part of the sayings of some scholars concerning the fourth, fifth and the sixth Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait*.

Shaikh Mufid in 'al-Irshad', quotes Zuhri to have said:

"I have never seen any of that House (the Prophet's Household after the martyrdom of Imam Husain) more meritorious than Ali ibn al-Husain".⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Ibn Hajar, in his book 'al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa', describing Imam Ali ibn al-Husain, says:

"Zain al-Abidin succeeded his father in his knowledge, godliness and devotional servitude (to Allah)".⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Abi Hazim and Sufyan ibn Uyeina; each of them used to say:

"I have never seen a *Hashimite* more meritorious and more versed in jurisprudence than Ali ibn al-Husain".⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Before attaining martyrdom, Imam Husain had given the certificate of Imamate and of religious leadership to his son Ali. This, in itself, is a clear evidence of the high position of Zain al-Abidin who during his lifetime was the fountain of

knowledge and the trustee of the Prophet's *hadith* and *sunna*. Imam Ja'far is quoted to have said:

"On leaving for Iraq, Husain (a.s.) entrusted Ummi Salama (may Allah be pleased with her) his books and his will. When Ali ibn al-Husain (a.s.) returned, she gave them to him."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

The fifth Imam of the *Ahlul-Bait*, Muhammad ibn Ali, was called *al-Baqir* because of his extensive knowledge. He, like his father, was the most excellent man of his age, and was known for his piety, abstinence and knowledge, as admitted by scholars and narrators.

Jabir ibn Abdulla Ansari, the respected companion of the Prophet (s.a.w.) narrates that the Messenger of Allah foretold him:

"Jabir, perhaps you will live until you meet one of my descendants through Husain, called Muhammad, who will cleave knowledge. If you met him, convey to him my greetings."⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

This great companion did live to meet Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), while still a boy, and conveyed to him the greetings of his illustrious forbear Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.).

This Prophetic testimony is enough evidence of the high position of Imam al-Baqir, who was the sage of his age. The period in which Imam al-Baqir and his son Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq lived was one of the richest periods of Islamic history.

During that period, scholars, narrators, interpreters and students of various Islamic science found in Imam al-Baqir a direct source for the Prophet's *sunna*.

Ibn Imad Hanbali described him by saying:

"Abu Ja'far, Muhammad al-Baqir, was one of the jurists in Madina. He was called al-Baqir, (the Cleaver) because he used to 'cleave'" knowledge to reach to its root and expand on it."⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Ibn Jawzi quotes Ata', one of the elders of the second generation of Muslims, as saying:

“I never saw the scholars so humble in their knowledge except in the presence of Abu Ja'far al-Baqir...”⁽¹¹¹⁾

As for his son, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.), he needs no introduction. Scholars and narrators have quoted him extensively, with respect to his high position. Hereunder are some of them:

“Hafiz ibn Aqda Zaidi had collected in his book on *al-Rijal* more than four thousand reliable narrators who all quoted Ja'far ibn Muhammad, and he listed their writings”.⁽¹¹²⁾

Abu Na'im Isfahani in his *al-Hulya*, says:

“Ja'far al-Sadiq had been quoted by a number of well-known scholars and Imams, such as: Malik ibn Anas, Shu'ba ibn Hajjaj, Sufyan Thawri, Ibn Juraih, Abdulla ibn Amr, Ruh ibn Qasim, Sufyan ibn Uyeyna, Sulaiman ibn Bilal, Ismael ibn Ja'far Hatam ibn Ismael, Abdul-Aziz ibn Mukhtar, Wahab ibn Khalid, Ibrahim ibn Tahham, and many others. Muslim in his 'Sahih', also quotes him and regards his narrations as a proof of his authority. Others said that he was the original source of narrators such as: Malik, Imam Shafi'i, Hasan ibn Salih, Abu Ayub Sakhtiyani, Umar ibn Dinar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and others. Anas ibn Malik said: 'No eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no heart has ever thought, of anyone better than Ja'far al-Sadiq in his knowledge, worship and piety.’”⁽¹¹³⁾

Shaikh Mahmud Abu Zuhra, the Dean of al-Azhar university, in the preface to his book *al-Imam al-Sadiq*, says:

“We, by God-granted help and success, decided to write about Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, having already written about

seven of the generous Imams. We did not deffer our writing about him because he was lower in position than the others, but because he, actually, was superior to most of them, and had a particular merit over some of the great among them, as Abu Hanifa used to narrate quoting him and to see him the most learned about the differences (of opinion) among people and the most versed in jurisprudence. Imam Malik used to frequent his classes as a student, and as a narrator quotes him. He had the virtue of professorship over Abu Hanifa and Malik, and this is sufficient proof of his great merit. He could not be shoved aside because of any defficiency, nor could anyone else excel him because of any merit. Furthermore, he is the grandson of Ali Zain al-Abidin, who was the most honoured of the people of al-Madina in his time, as far as his merit, honour, piety and knowledge were concerned. Ibn Shihab Zahri and many others used to attend his lectures. He is the son of Muhammad al-Baqir, who cleaved knowledge and acquired its purest inner kernel. So, he was the one on whom Allah had bestowed personal honour in addition to the honour of his noble lineage, (i.e.) his Hashimite kinship and Muhammadan progeny".⁽¹¹⁴⁾

Amru ibn Miqdam says:

"If you look at Ja'far ibn Muhammad you will realize that he is of the Prophet's descendants."⁽¹¹⁵⁾

The famous historian, Ya'qubi, says:

"He was the best of people and the most versed, man in the religion of Allah. The men of learning, when quoting him, used to say: 'The learned one told us'".⁽¹¹⁶⁾

The above tributes paid to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq by some of his contemporaries, and later scholars are enough to prove his excellence as the Imam of the *Ahlul-Bait* during his

lifetime.

Let us now cast a glimpse on the equally meritorious personalities of his descendants, the other Imam's of the Prophet's Household.

Imam al-Sadiq introduced his son Musa to one of his companions, saying:

“This son of mine whom you have seen, if you asked him about what is in between the two covers of the Mashaf (the Qur’an), he would answer you with full knowledge.”⁽¹¹⁷⁾

Hafidh Razi in his encyclopaedic work on *Rijal* (who-is-who), writes:

“Musa ibn Ja’far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, narrated from his father, and was (in turn) quoted by his son Ali ibn Musa, and his brother Ali ibn Ja’far:... ‘He was trustworthy, sincere and an Imam of the Muslims.’”⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Muhammad ibn Ahmad Dhahabi says concerning him:

“Musa was one of the best wisemen, and a pious worshipper of Allah.”⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Kamal Din Muhammad ibn Talha Shafi’i says:

“He is the Imam of high station and power, the great and serious scholar, well-known for his servitude to Allah, the ever-obedient (to Allah), renowned for his miraculous wonders, spends the night in prayers, and the day in charitable deeds and in fasting. Because of his extreme forbearance towards transgressors, he was called *al-Kadhim* (the one who restrains his anger)”⁽¹²⁰⁾

Mu’min Shablanji writes in ‘Nur al-Absar’:

“Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, was the best worshipper and the most learned of all the people of his time...”⁽¹²¹⁾

The 8th Imam of the *Ahlul-Bait*, Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (a.s.), was like his father in respect to knowledge, piety and virtue. He undertook religious leadership and the task of Imamate after the martyrdom of Imam al-Kadhim who was poisoned by Harun al-Rashid in Baghdad. His glory was so prominent that the Abbassid caliph, Ma'mun, was forced to appoint him as heir apparent to the caliphate, not that Imam al-Ridha coveted worldly position, but because both friend and foe knew that he, being the direct descendant of the Prophet had more right to the leadership of the *umma*, than an unjust erring caliph.

His contemporaries testify to his noble birth, his profound knowledge and excellence of character. Here are some of these testimonies:

Waqidi says: "He was trustworthy, used to give his directions in religious questions to inquirers in the Prophet's Mosque, while still in his early twenties. He was of the eighth stratum of the Tabi'in (the Muslims who saw the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.) but not the Prophet himself) of the people of Madina."⁽¹²²⁾

Imam Musa ibn Ja'far, to whose high position we already referred, advises his sons to refer to their brother Ali, and says:

"Here is your brother Ali ibn Musa, the learned of the family of Muhammad. Ask him about your creeds and keep in your mind what he tells you."⁽¹²³⁾

When Imam al-Ridha was poisoned by a jealous Ma'mun, the mantle of Imamate passed to his son Muhammad ibn Ali, known by his epithets of *al-Jawad* (generous) and *al-Taqi* (pious).

Sibt ibn Jawzi in his 'Tadhkirat al-Khwas', writes:

“Muhammad al-Jawad: He is Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Husain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, his *kunya* was Abu Abdulla or Abu Ja'far. Born in the year 195 and died in the year 220. He was like his father in his knowledge, piety, abstinence and generosity.”⁽¹²⁴⁾

Muhammad ibn Ammar narrates in ‘Madinat al-Ma’jaz’:

“I was visiting Ali ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad(*) in Madina I had kept his company for two years recording what he narrated from his brother – Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kadhim when there entered the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), where we were sitting, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali al-Ridha. Ali ibn Ja'far at once sprang up, barefoot and without cloak, to receive him and kissed his hand with great respect.

“Abu Ja'far told him: ‘O uncle, sit down, may Allah have mercy on you.’

He said: ‘O my Lord, how could I sit while you are still standing?’

“When Ali ibn Ja'far returned to his seat, his friends chided him for his too humble behaviour, telling him: How could you do this, while you are his father's uncle?

“‘Stop it’. He said, ‘if Allah the Exalted did not endow this old man– siezing his own beard – but endowed this youth and placed him where he is, could I deny his merit? May Allah protect me from what you say! Nay, I am just a servant to him.’”⁽¹²⁵⁾

“Mahmud ibn Wahaiyib Baghdadi Hanafi says:

(*) Ali ibn Ja'far ibn al-Sadiq, the younger brother of the 9th Imam Musa al-Kadhim is the great uncle of the 9th Imam Muhammad al-Jawad. He is a reliable narrator.

“Muhammad al-Jawad ibn Ali al-Ridha, surnamed Abu Ja'far, ...inherited his father's knowledge and merits, excelled his brother in greatness and perfection.”

The tenth Imam, Ali al-Hadi (a.s.) like his illustrious forefathers, was known for his great merits, profound knowledge, lofty prestige and piety. His *kunya* was Abul Hasan. He and his son the eleventh Imam were also called *al-Askari* or its collective form *al-Askarain*, because the Abbassid Caliph had forcibly kept them under house arrest in Samirra, which in those days was a military encampment *al-Muaskar*, Mu'min Shablanji says about the tenth Imam:

“His supplications were numerous. In 'al-Sawa'iq' it is said that he inherited his father's knowledge and generosity.”⁽¹²⁶⁾

Abdul-Hai ibn Imad Hanbali says:

“Abul Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Ridha ibn Musa al-Kadhim ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq, al-Alawi, al-Husaini, known as *al-Hadi*, was a jurist, an Imam and a devout.”⁽¹²⁷⁾

Hafidh Imaduddin Abu Fida' Ismael ibn Umar ibn Kathir says:

“Abul Hasan Ali al-Hadi is the son of Muhammad al-Jawad ibn Ali al-Ridha ibn Musa al-Kadhim ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq ibn Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali Zain al-Abidin ibn al-Husain, the martyr, ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib. One of the twelve Imams, he is the father of al-Hasan ibn Ali, al-Askari. He was a devout abstinent. Mutawakkil – moved him to the town of Samirra', where he stayed for some twenty odd years, and died (poisoned) there in this year – the year 254.”⁽¹²⁸⁾

Yahya ibn Harthama, who was sent by Mutawakkil, to

tetch the Imam from Madina to Samirra, has been quoted as saying:

“...I went to Madina. When I entered it, there was a great tumult amongst the people unheard of before, for fear of what might happen to Ali. The world seemed to be on its feet, as he was a benevolent man who spent most of his time in the mosque, and had no inclination towards wordly matters. I calmed them down, swearing to them that I had not been ordered to harm him, and he would be all right. I then searched his house, but found nothing but the Qur’an, invocation books and books of knowledge. So, I greatly respected him.”⁽¹²⁹⁾

The 11th Imam, Hasan al-Askari, was also known for his profound knowledge, learning, piety and struggle against injustice, as scholars and biographers have testified.

1. Sibt ibn Jawzi, says:

“He was a trustworthy scholar, and narrated the *hadith* quoting his father and grandfather.”⁽¹³⁰⁾

2. Ali ibn Sabbagh Maliki says:

“The merits of our Lord, Abi Muhammad al-Hasan al-Askari are proof that he is the saint and the son of a saint. No one has any doubt about his Imamate. If there were favours to be offered, he would be the giver and the others would be the receivers. He was unique in his time without any rival, the incomparable without a par, the master of his contemporaries and the Imam of his time. His words are wise and his deeds are praiseworthy.”⁽¹³¹⁾

AL-MAHDI OF THE AHLUL-BAIT:

A famous tradition of the Prophet says:

“Not many days and nights might pass before Allah would raise a man of my progeny, whose name is like mine, who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny.”⁽¹³²⁾

Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), quotes the Prophet as saying:

“If there remained but a single day of the (end of) time, Allah would still send a man of my Household to fill the world with justice as it had been filled with injustice.”

Both Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi have stated in their respective ‘Sunan’, on the authority of Abu Sa’id Khidri: I heard the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) say:

“Al-Mahdi is of me, (has) a resplendent forehead, an aquiline nose, and will fill the earth with equity and justice as it had been filled with tyranny and oppression.”

Abu Dawud confirming the authenticity of this narration, adds: “He would rule for seven years”⁽¹³³⁾.

The *hadiths* about the Mahdi has reached us through chains of reliable narrators of various schools of thought, all of whom confirm that al-Mahdi’s name is ‘Muhammad’ and that he is a member of the Prophet’s *Ahlul-Bait*, though some of them differ in defining his person. But in the light of authentic narrations and historical facts Imam Muhammad is the son of Hasan al-Askari, the son of Ali al-Hadi, the son of Muhammad al-Jawad, the son of Ali al-Ridha the son of Musa al-Kadhim, the son of Ja’far al-Sadiq, the son of Muhammad al-Baqir, the son of Ali Zain al-Abidin, the son of Husain the martyr, the son of Ali, the son of Abi Talib. As testified by scholars, he was born in the middle of the month *Sha’ban* in the year 255 A.H. in Samirra, and, by Allah’s will,

is still alive, in occultation, and will reappear when Allah wills to fill the world with equity and justice. It is also stated that the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) will also reappear and perform his prayers behind him.

This was a brief account of the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait*, their position and their status.

MONOTHEISM (TAWHID) ACCORDING TO THE SCHOOL OF AHLUL-BAIT

Imam Ali (a.s.) in Nahj al-Balagha says:

“The foremost in religion is the knowing of Him, the perfection of knowing Him is to believe in His Oneness, and the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to be sincere to Him.”

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) says:

“Accept not deeds without knowledge, and there is no knowledge except with action. So, whoever knows, his knowledge leads him to action, and whoever acts not has no knowledge. Yet faith is indeed made up of parts.”

Monotheism is the foundation stone of Islam, the basis of thinking and understanding, and the axis around which knowledge and action revolves. It is also the source of legislation, values, morals and way of constructive thinking.

The concept of monothesis originally starts from building a distinguished Islamic culture purely monotheistic in colour:

“(We take our) colour from Allah, and who is better than Allah at colouring? We are His worshippers.”

Holy Qur'an (2:138)

It is the monotheistic colour which stands apart from the cultures of ignorance in any age or time, and has well defined apostolic attributes. It is what gives to the conduct and thought of the Muslim their distinct way of life.

The Glorious Qur'an and the pristine *sunna* of the Prophet are the source of the ideology proving the existence of Allah, the Great Creator, defining His attributes of perfection, and expounding the essence of Monotheism and His Oneness, which no creed has ever done.

The early faithful Muslims believed in monotheism as explained by the Prophet and as they read it in the final revelation to mankind.

Gradually Islam spread and as the realm of the Muslims expanded, different peoples of various cultural and philosophical denominations, however imperfect such as the fire-worshipping Persians, the hellinized Christians of the Levant and Egypt, the idolators of India, the Shanamist Turks and several other races came into the Islamic fold.

Islam was also accepted by the Jews and myriad of the Christian sects of the eastern and southern Mediterranean, always at loggerheads with each other due to their peculiar dogmatic philosophies.

Consequently, there were arguments and doubts, and there arose superstitions and strange ideas that ran counter to the original doctrine of monotheism and its pure and pristine form.

This chaotic social state coupled with the seizure of political power by the corrupt Umayyads and later by the equally godless Abbassids, all whom masqueraded as the Caliphs of Muslims, resulted in absurd ideological disputes and weird philosophical arguments, such as Fatalism and Free Will concerning man's conduct, Incarnation, the interpretation of the ascent of the Prophet (s.a.w.) to the Heavens, and the like. There was a total disorder in their ideas, and controversy in the sects, groups and ideologies

which mushroomed in those day, all of whom were far from the Islam preached by the Almighty's last Messenger to mankind. At times this led to arbitrary decisions imposed by the temporal Caliphs, who themselves were in the dark about Islam, in selecting and limiting the number of schools of jurisprudents in vogue.

Amid these turbulent waters of deviation, the *Ahlul-Bait*, untainted by the corruption around, blazed like beacons of light, guiding the seekers of truth to the pristine unsullied *sunna* of the Prophet, and the original concept of monotheism. Despite the oppression of the rulers of the day, who greatly feared the claims of the descendants of the Prophet to the leadership of the Muslims, and spared no crime to keep them away from the masses, including the tragic martyrdom of Imam Husain in Karbala, and imprisonment of other Imams, the *Ahlul-Bait* strived hard to deliver the Muslims from deviated thought and schools.

The Imams and their devoted companions had to wade through adverse cultural and intellectual currents to successfully preserve the lofty concept of monotheism.

Although, today many of those deviated and perverse groups have disappeared, they have left the stains of their deviated thoughts, on the concept of *Tawhid* of several Muslims.

The Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* who understood the Book of Allah and the Traditions of their ancestor by the Prophet; better than anyone, played a prominent role in clearing the doubts, countering deviated and erring currents, and defending the purity and originality of the concept of monotheism.

We still have at hand the discussions and arguments of the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait*, and their explanations of the

Qur'anic verses, which enlighten us about monotheism in its true form and Islam original as taught and practiced by the Prophet.

Monotheism *Tawhid*, as taught by the *Ahlul-Bait* revolves around the focal point of monotheism, which means fundamental belief in the absolute Unity and Perfection of Allah the Exalted, a Perfection that is without the least imaginable deficiency, and a Unity so absolute that He, the Magnificent Creator has no partner or associate, and is far above any attributes that he has bestowed on His Creation. Unlike the beliefs of other so-called monotheistic creeds, monotheism, according to the School of the *Ahlul-Bait* does not stop at that, but goes on to say that the Almighty has no shape or form to anything imaginable, nor is, He, the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, confined to a particular place or time.

Imam Ali says in the *Nahjul-Balagha*:

“Tawhid’ means that you do not subject Him to the limitations of your imagination, and justice means that you do not lay any blame on Him.”

Tawhid, in its true sense, as expounded by the *Ahlul-Bait*, was instrumental in laying bare, the forgeries of the imposters, and the retarded views of the Atheists, the Fatalists, the Determinists, and the like.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), quoting the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.), says:

“Recognize Allah through Allah Himself, and the Messenger of Allah through his message, and those who have been invested with divine authority through their righteous commands, their justice and good deeds.”⁽¹³⁴⁾

Fath ibn Yazid, asked Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha, says:

“As to what is the least necessary knowledge (of Allah)? He replied, ‘It is the acknowledgement that there is no god other than He. Nothing resembles Him, and He is peerless. He is eternal and established. He is an entity not a nihility and verily nothing is like Him’”. ⁽¹³⁵⁾

Nafi’ ibn Azraq inquired of the fifth Imam:

“Inform me about Allah. Since when has He been in existence?”
The Imam replied, ‘(tell me) when did Allah not exist, so that I may tell you since when He has been in existence. Glorified is He Who has existed eternally and Who will exist eternally – the One and Unique, the Eternal, Absolute. Never has He taken to Himself either a consort or a son.’” ⁽¹³⁶⁾

Once, a Jewish rabbis came to Imam Ali and asked him that ‘since when Allah has been in existence?’ The Commander of the Faithful replied:

“Woe unto you! ‘since when’ applies to one who (first) did not exist (and then come into being). But ‘since when’ cannot be applied to the One Who has eternally been in existence. He has been before every ‘before’ and after every ‘after’ without there being any ‘after’. His limit has no end so that His end could reach any limit.” ⁽¹³⁷⁾

Imam al-Baqir is quoted to have said:

“Beware of pondering over the entity of Allah. If you want to ponder over the loftiness of Allah, then look at His great and wonderful creation” ⁽¹³⁸⁾

Imam al-Baqir says:

“Talk about everything, but never talk about the entity of Allah.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) was asked: “Where was our Lord before the creation of the heavens and the earth?” Amir al-Mu’minin replied: ***“The ‘where’ applies to space. But Allah has been there since there was no ‘space’.”*** ⁽¹³⁹⁾

He was also asked:

“‘O Commander of the Faithful, while worshipping our Lord do you see Him?’ He replied: *‘Woe unto you, I am not the one to worship a Lord whom I do not see.’* ‘How do you see Him,’ he was asked. *‘Woe unto you! eyes perceive Him not with the faculty of sight, but hearts see Him through the realities of belief’*”⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

Abdul-Rahman ibn Utaik Qasir says: I wrote a letter and sent it through Abdul-Malik ibn A'yun to Abi Abdulla al-Sadiq (a.s.) telling him:

“‘A group of people IN Iraq who attribute to Allah a specific form and shape^(*)So, if it pleases you – may Allah make me your ransom – you may write me back about the correct doctrine of monotheism.’ The Imam wrote back to me: *‘You – may Allah be merciful to you – asked me about monotheism and what that group of people believe in. Exalted is Allah, the like of whom there is naught, and He is All-hearing and All-seeing: Allah is above what is attributed to Him by those describers who liken Allah to His creatures, those who are slanderous upon Allah. Know you – may Allah be merciful to you – that in respect to monotheism, the true doctrine is what is revealed in the Qur’an about the attributes of Allah, the Almighty, the Exalted. Keep away from Allah, the sublime, all ideas of nihilism and*

(*) The annotater comments on this text by saying: ‘The Imam (a.s.) enjoined negation of nihilism and anthropomorphism, because a group of people wanted to place Allah above all likeness with His creatures, but they committed nihilism and destitution, while others tried to describe Him so as to know Him, but they assigned to Him attributes unbecoming of Him – they likened Him to His creatures. So, they either took to destitution or to comparison. A Muslim should not deny attributes altogether, nor confirm them in similitude. The Imam’s saying: ‘Allah is the Established, the Existent’ is an allusion to that.

similitude. Neither should His existence be negated nor should He be likened (to anything). He is Allah, the Established, the Existent. Exalted is He far above what the false interpreters attribute to Him. Exceed not the Qur'an or you will go astray after the clear exposition of Truth.^{”(141)}

Concerning Allah's Unity and denying His likeness to His creatures, Hamza ibn Muhammad says that he wrote to Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.) regarding the body and form of Allah. He wrote (in reply):

“Glorified is He – like Him there is naught. Neither has He any body nor form.^{”(142)}

From the above cited narrations it should be clear to our readers the true meaning of monotheism as expounded by Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* on the basis of the Qur'an and in the light of the Message of their illustrious ancestor Prophet Muhammad. Even today, after so many centuries, their discourses, act as guidelines for us and prevent us from falling into the pitfalls of perversions, doubts and disbelief.

Therefore, this book is a decisive answer against those deviated groups; among them are *Ghulat** (the Exaggerators) and others (who claimed attachment to *Ahlul-Bait*) and also a clear explanation to those who had mistakenly mixed between the School of *Ahlul-Bait*, which is free from such superstitions and the followers of these deviated and perverted groups because it happens through history that such groups in order to achieve their goals and distort the *umma* (Muslim community) try to misguide simple and naive people.

We shall, by Allah's will, talk in the following chapter of this book, about these perverter groups who assigned to *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) Allah's attributes and hence were cursed and dismissed by *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.).

DIVINE JUSTICE AND THE EXPLANATION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

“Allah (Himself) is witness that there is no god save Him, and (so do) the angels and the men of learning, maintaining His creation in justice. There is no god save Him, the Almighty, the Wise”.

Holy Qur’an (3:18)

Justice is one of the attributes of Allah the Exalted. Its effects are discerned at all levels of existence. Justice is seen in the world of creation, in nature, man, animals, plants and etc. It is manifest in the divine legislation and laws as well.

“Allah enjoins justice and kindness...”

Holy Qur’an (16:90)

Divine justice is embodied in what He determines and ordains for His creatures as fate and destiny. It is reflected in His laws and messages and in the Afterlife, and the Judgement Day, when He rewards the doers of good, and punishes the evil-doers.

“...and your Lord wrongs no one.”

Holy Qur’an (18:49)

“...then every soul will be paid in full that which it has earned...”

Holy Qur’an (2:281)

“...for it (is only) that which it has earned, and against it (only) that which it has deserved...”

Holy Qur’an (2:286)

On this course proceeded the early Muslims in under-

standing their connection to Allah the Exalted, and in explaining man's behaviour and actions. But with the rise of different philosophical and theological schools of thought, as a result of the spread of Islam to other lands and the weak ideological base of those that styled themselves as Caliphs, confusions arose and there appeared three opinions explaining man's conduct and his connection to Allah's volition. These were:

1. Fatalism.
2. Self-determination or Free Will.
3. Neither Fatalism nor Self-determination.

Some Qur'anic verses, like,

“Allah verily sends whom He will astray, and guides whom He will,”

Holy Qur'an (35:8)

Caused some people to believe in Fatalism. The gist of this belief is that man has no free will and no option of his own, but he is subjected to incidents pre-determined by Allah the Exalted. Therefore, man is forced to do what he does, and has no choice whatsoever. This is the belief of the Fatalists.

The second belief says that man has full choice to do whatever he wills, as his will is separate from Allah's will, and Allah, it says, is actually incapable of stopping man from doing what he wills, be it an evil deed, such as murder, injustice, ...etc., or a good deed, such as benevolence, praying etc. Accordingly, man is separate from Allah the Exalted. This was the opinion of the *Mu'tazilites* (the dissenters).

The Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* refuted both these beliefs, as being contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an and to the foundations on which the belief of monotheism is based. Their

belief that man was forced to do what he did, is in direct contracts with rationality and the concept of divine justice. Such an erroneous belief means that Allah compelled man to evil, and then He punished him for that; and that He forced man to do good, therefore man does not deserve any reward.

The Imam's of the *Ahlul-Bait*, rejected all which a number of Muslims behaved on, because of their incomplete understanding of the apparant meanings of some verses, as:

“Allah verily sends whom He will astray, and guides whom He will.”

We shall refer to the narrations received from the *Imams* of the *Ahlul-Bait* (peace be upon them) which explain this belief. Yet before doing so, we have first to state the principles of Divine Justice as taught by the *Ahlul-Bait* which differ from those of the followers of other schools. These can be classified as follows:

1- Man possesses the will and the ability to choose any action, good and bad, to do it or to refuse doing it. He may kill, steal, wrong, lie, with his complete will. He similarly may spread justice, do good deeds, perform prayers and avoid forbidden acts, with his complete free will and choice.

Allah the Exalted is able to prevent man from any act, as He is able to make him do any act, without the interference of man's choice, but Allah the Exalted does not compel anybody to do good or bad. For instance, Allah, owing to His kindness and mercy, may prevent the person who deserves divine care from committing unlawful deeds, as a token of His blessings to the deserving man. He may, as well, help him in doing good deeds, if the person deserves that.

2- As a result of divine justice, Allah the Exalted awards each person on the Resurrection Day according to his deeds, punishing him for evil deeds. and rewarding him for good

deeds. Some Muslims erroneously said that Allah may throw the doer of good into Hell, and the evil-doer to Paradise, because they misinterpreted the Qur'anic verse:

“He will not be questioned as to that which He does, but they will be questioned.”

Holy Qur'an (21:23)

Some other Muslim, depending on this same mistakenly interpreted verse, say that Allah is not obliged to fulfill His promise of awards on the Resurrection Day. The Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) refuted this obligation by saying that it was contrary to Allah's truthfulness and justice, because the doer of good and the evil-doer, according to this allegation, are equal, and there will be no value for imposing obligations and legislating laws. The truth is that there is not act without a payment or responsibility, as the Qur'an says:

“And whoever does good an atom's weight will see it then. And whoever does ill an atom's weight will see it then.”

Holy Qur'an (99:7-8)

3. Some Muslims had the opinion that Allah the Exalted may impose on His servants to do things exceeding their capacity. They had got this false opinion from the misinterpretation of the verse:

“O Lord! impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear!”^(*)

Holy Qur'an (2:286)

(*) Allama Tabataba'i, commenting on this verse, says: 'that which we have not the strength to bear' does not mean the primary duties as not to be bearable, as this, rationally, is not permissible at all. Allah's words, that is to say, the retelling 'We heard and obeyed', proves the contrary. So, what is meant by 'that which we have not the strength to bear', is the punishments of their evils, which befall them, such as difficult duties which cannot usually be endured, or a torment that hit them, such as a metamorphosis and the like

The Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* also refused this interpretation, saying that it was quite contrary to Allah's justice, and to the clear text of the Qur'an which says:

"Allah tasks not a soul beyond its capacity."

Holy Qur'an (2:286)

Hereunder we relate some narrations and arguments which had been quoted from *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), in which they explain these basic principles, interpret human conduct, connection between man's will and Allah's, and relate this interpretation to the principle of Divine Justice, confirming the unity of understanding, thought and ideology in the message of Islam, and nullifying the two theories of Fatalism and Self-determinism, as they did nullify other false beliefs alien to the manner of the Qur'an.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) is quoted to have said:

"Allah created the creatures, knowing what their destinies would be. He bade and forbade them. That which He forbade them to do, He provided them with the way of leaving it. They would not be taking or leaving (something) except by Allah's will."⁽¹⁴³⁾

We read a conversation between the Commander of the Faithful Ali (a.s.) and a man of his companions on the occasion of their march to Siffin War against Mu'awiya. The man inquired from him:

"Was our going to fight against the Syrians destined by Allah? The Commander of the Faithful (a.s.) gave a detailed reply. A selection from which is hereunder:

'Yes, O Shaikh. By Allah you may mount no hill and descent no valley except according to a pre-destined ordinance'. The man said: 'I shall, then, debit my toil to Allah, O the Commander of the Faithful.' The Imam said to him: ***'Woe to you! you take it a final and an avoidable destiny! If it were so, there would have***

been no question of reward or punishment, and there would have been no sense in Allah's promises or warnings. Allah, the Glorified, has ordered His servants to act by free will and has cautioned them as a warning. He has placed easy obligations. He gives much in return for little. He is disobeyed not because He is overpowered. He is obeyed but not per force. He did not send prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the servants without purpose. He did not create the skies and the earth and that which is in between them in vain: That is the imagination of those who disbelieve, then woe to those who disbelieve – because of the Fire.”⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (a.s.) is quoted to have said, after ‘Compulsion and Delegation of Power’ being mentioned before him:

He said:

“... Allah the Most High is not obeyed per force, nor can be overcome with disobedience. He does not neglect his servants in His realm. He is the owner of what He gave them, and He is capable of what He made capable of...So, if His servants obeyed His commands, He would not stop them (from obedience). But if they chose to commit sins, He might stop them from that deed, if He so willed, and if he did not, they would commit it. Thus it is not he Who led them in it.”⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

It is clear from the Imam's saying that divine grace could stop us from erring, but if man is so wretched as to go ahead with his sinful intention, then it is not the Almighty to be blamed, because man did it out of his own free will.

Mufid, in ‘Sharh al-Aqa'id’, says: That Imam Ali al-Rida was asked about the actions of the people, whether they were directed by Allah. He said:

“If they had been directed by Him, he would not have disowned them. He, the Glorious, said: ‘...Allah is free from obligations to the idolators.’ He means to say that He is not to blame for their acts such

as idolatory and ugly doing'.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

Muhammad ibn Ajlan, in 'Kitab al-Tawhid' says that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): 'Did Allah leave His creatures to their affairs?' He said: **"Allah is more generous to leave their affairs to them,"** I asked: 'Then did He impose on them their actions?' He replied: **"Allah is more just to comple a servant to do something, then torture him of that"**⁽¹⁴⁷⁾

In the book 'Uyun akhbar al-Rida', it is said, concerning the interpretation of the verse:

"...and leave them in darkness where they cannot see' (2:17). Allah cannot be said to have left His creatures. But as He knew that they would turn away from their disbelief and perversion, He would deny them His help and kindness and would leave them to their own choice"⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

In the same book, concerning the interpretation of:

"Allah has sealed their hearts..." it is said:

"To seal is to close up the hearts of the disbelievers as a punishment against their disbelief, is evident by Allah's saying:

"Nay, but Allah has set a seal upon them (their hearts) for their disbelief, so that they believe not save a few."

Thus, in the light of teachings of the *Ahlul-Bait* it is clear that Allah did not create people as guided or misled. In fact, they are left to their own choice, according to the will power granted to them. He showed them the path of bliss, and warned them against the pitfalls of evil and temptation, saying:

"We have shown him the way whether he be grateful or disbelieving"

Holy Qur'an (76:3)

And also:

“And pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways”.

Holy Qur’an (90:10)

The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) explained this by saying:

“Verily they are two ways: a way of good and a way of evil. Do not let the way of evil be more dearer to you than the way of good”⁽¹⁴⁹⁾

In other words, the Almighty neither decreed absolute determinism nor granted absolute free will, but a way in between.”

Asked whether there was a wide distance between determinism and free will, one of the Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) said:

“Yes, and vaster than the distance between the heaven and the earth”.

AHLUL-BAIT AND THE PERVERTED GROUPS

The opponents of Islam realized that the *Ahlul-Bait* were the very embodiment of originality and purity and acted as refuge for Muslims in times of distress and calamities. In their bid to prevent the message of Islam, certain subversive elements pretending love for the *Ahlul-Bait*, tried to infiltrate the ranks of the followers of the very source of purity. These groups falsely raised the slogan of attachment to the *Ahlul-Bait*, who in fact had cursed and denied them. This was part of an elaborately designed treachery aimed at distorting belief in Monotheism, which is the essence of Islam.

To carry out their mischivous plots – they fabricated perverse ideas and deviated philosophies. These elements alleged that Allah the Most Glorified, had transmigrated into the bodies of the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait*. They even went to the extent of difying the Imams of the Prophet's household. These movements were backed by the idolatrous Arabs, the Magis, the Manichaeans, the Mazdakis: and the like, who had outwardly embraced Islam to deceive the Muslims. Jewish and Christian thought also participated in this treacherous campaign against Islam, in order to spllet the Muslims into new factions. In this way they were able to

cause much intellectual confusion by implanting doubts, coining misleading narrations and concepts and allegedly ascribing them to the *Ahlul-Bait*. To counter the plot a number of learned scholars wrote research-books on 'Rijal' (Who-is-who) and managed to expose the imposters, the liars, the fabricaters and the coiners of perversive ideologies, ever since the days of the Prophet. They sifted truth from falsehood on the basis of the authentic traditions, uncovering every mischief monger and scrutinizing each and every narrator, as was done by Najashi in his famous book 'Rijal al-Najashi', and by Shaikh Tusi in his 'al-Fihrist' and 'Rijal al-Tusi'

Deviated groups who claimed attachment to the *Ahlul-Bait*, such as 'the Exaggerators' were strongly repudiated, cursed and dismissed by the Imams.

Nawbakhti⁽¹⁾, in his book 'Firaq al-Shi'a' (Shi'a Sects), classifies such groups and relates the attitude of the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* towards them. Hereunder we refer to some of them:

"As to the companions of Abi Khattab Muhammad ibn Abi Zainab Ajda' Asadi and those who follow them, they had disputes when they heard that Abu Abdulla Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) had cursed him (Abi Khattab) and renounced him and his followers: Nawbakhti then says:

"A group of them had said that Abu Abdulla Ja'far ibn Muhammad (al-Sadiq) was Allah – the Elevated, the Great, Who is too far above these things – and that Abi Khattab was

(1) Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn Musa Nawbakhti, one of the most known *Imami* scholars of the third century A H.

a prophet.

“Another group said Ja’far ibn Muhammad was Allah – the Great, the Mighty, the Elevated too far above all that. He is a light that enters the bodies of the vicegerents. That light was Ja’far ibn Muhammad (al–Sadiq), then it left him and entered into Abu Khattab....”⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

Nawbakhti adds,

“These perverse groups were the ‘Exaggerators’ who styled themselves as *Shi’a*. They, may Allah curse them all, (actually) belonged to such groups as the *Khurramdins*, the *Mazdakis*(^{*}), the *Heretics*(^{**}) and the *Atheists*(^{***}) All of them denied Allah’s divinity – Blessed is He and Elevated far above all they ascribe and admitted it in a creature’s body, alleging that the body was the dwelling–place of Allah, and Allah was a light, a soul, that moved into those bodies – Elevated is He above all they ascribe. But they differed in respect to their leaders whom they were attached to, each group denouncing the other, and cursing one another.”⁽¹⁵¹⁾

Continuing his reports about the perverse groups who feigned themselves as lovers of *Ahlul–Bait*, Nawbakhti narrates, that one of those groups claimed that Muhammad ibn Hanafiya, son of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) was al–Mahdi

(^{*}) The *Mazdakis* were the followers of Mazdak, who appeared in the days of the Persian Emperor Qubad. Anowshirwan’s father. His Book was called ‘Distaw’. Their belief was similar to the Manichaeans (an old Persian religion) in respect to the two principles of Light and Darkness. (Refer to ‘al–Fihrist’ by Ibn Nadim. The *Mazdakis* were those who allowed the unlawful advocating the sharing of everything including wealth and women.

(^{**}) The *Zindikis* denied all divine religions on the pretext of being free thinkers.

(^{***}) The *Dahriyun* (Atheists) believed that the world existed from pre–eternity and would remain without end, and has no Creator. They were actually, a group of infidel disbelievers.

who did not die and would never die, had only gone into occultation. Nobody knows where he is. But he would come back and possess the earth, and there would be no Imam after his occultation till his return to his companions, who are the companions of Ibn Karb.”⁽¹⁵²⁾.

“Among holders of such deviated beliefs, Nawbakhti lists Hamza ibn Amara Barbari of Madina, who in his wild fantasy claimed himself a prophet, and said that Muhammad ibn Hanafiya was Allah – far Elevated is He from what they ascribe – and He himself was his prophet, and that seven means would come down to him from Heaven, by which he would conquer the earth and possess it. A number of people of Madina and of Kufa followed him. Thus, Abu Ja’far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husain (Imam al-Baqir), and his Shi’a cursed him and renounced him.”⁽¹⁵³⁾

Sa’ed al-Nahdi who belonged to a perverted group, was also cursed by Imam al-Sadiq, who regarded him among those miscreants who fabricated lies and ascribed them to the *Ahlul-Bait*⁽¹⁵⁴⁾.

Hereunder we state what had been related by the Shi’a scholars, quoting Imam al-Sadiq about his attitude towards exaggeraters and their deviated beliefs.

Regarding Abu Jarud and his group, Ibn Nadim, in his ‘al-Fihrist’, says:

“Imam al-Sadiq cursed him and said: ‘He is blind in his heart, and blind in his sight’. Kishshi relates identical narrations which prove this.”⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

Al-Sadiq also cursed Abu Mansur Ijli thrice, as stated by Kishshi in his ‘Rijal’.

‘Bazee’ ibn Musa Ha’ik was cursed by Imam al-Sadiq

(a.s.), as were some others, like Mughira ibn Sa'id, Sirri, Abi Khattab Muhammad ibn Abi Zainab Ajda', Mu'ammara, Bashshar Sha'iri, Hamza Barbari and Sa'ed Nahdi. According to Kishshi's text, the Imam says:

"May Allah curse them. We never went without there being some liar to lie against us, or someone with crippled opinion. May Allah rid us of all liars and make them taste burning iron".⁽¹⁵⁶⁾

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) is cited to have renounced the 'Exaggeraters' in the following speech:

"O Shi'a community – the Shi'a of the family of Muhammad (s.a.w.) be like the cushion in the middle (as between a rider and his saddle). The exaggerator should turn back to you, and the one who lags behind should catch up with you". When a man called Sa'ed inquired about the exaggerator, the Imam replied: ***"Those who say about us, what we do not say ourselves, are not of us, and we are not of them."*** The man further asked as to who are those who lag behind. The Imam answered: ***"The wanderers who intend good, and they get it and get rewarded for it"***.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

On learning of Abi Khattab's exaggeration, Imam al-Sadiq wept and invoking Allah as his witness, renounced Abi Khattab.

It is written in 'al-Kafi' that once Sadir informed Imam al-Sadiq that some people regard the Imams of *Ahlul-Bait* as gods, he said:

"O Sadir, my hearing, my sight, my skin, my flesh, my blood, and my hair do renounce them, and Allah has renounced them. They are not of my religion, nor of the religion of my ancestors..."⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

Similar lies were fabricated against the other Imams of the household of the Prophet, by charlatans masquerading as shi'a, but whose real intention was to pollute the cause of the *Ahlul-Bait*, and to empty the message of Islam, of its true

contents.

There was a time, in the history of Islam, when every discontented political aspirant, no matter how ignorant he was of Islam and the *Ahlul-Bait*, tried to give Shi'a colours to his deviated ambitions in a bid to attract simple people to his cause.

By doing so these rebels, of all shades and colouring, ranging from Iranian infidels to religious interpolaters, did a great disservice to the human society, the scars of which can still be discerned on the body-politic of Islam.

It was a great blessing that the majority of such deviationists who tried in vain to defame the Shi'a, died out, and it was no ordinary task for the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* to pilot the ship of Islam through these troubled waters. The sickly hearts withered away from the history, and only their record of infamy remains in books, which, quite unfortunately certain ignorant modernists have confused with the Shi'a cause.

Regretably, even today some Islamic sects believe in fatalism and incarnation. In their ignorance they ascribe a body to Allah (far glorious is He from what they say), and weave up all sorts of silly yarns. These retarded minds say that the Almighty sits on a chair, whose width is seven spans, and that on the Resurrection Day, He puts His leg into Hell to satiate its thirst for more sinners, and that He descends to the lower sky on a white donkey, and many other absurdities. To a rational mind, it is clear this is all heresy and falsehood, and these poor creatures have been unable to comprehend and have failed in understanding the Greatness of the Power that created them. As discussed earlier, He, the Creator is not bound by time and place and has neither physique nor

form. As a matter of fact, such absurd notions, which run contrary to monothism are soundly condemned by Islam.

THE AHLUL-BAIT'S METHOD IN EDUCATING THEIR COMPANIONS.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) is reported to have said:

“I dislike for a man to die while there is still a habit of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) which he has not yet practised.”⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

The *Ahlul-Bait* took great care to educate the Muslims in accordance with the Book of Allah and the traditions of the Prophet, with the objective of building sound Islamic personalities that would hold aloft the torch of guidance.

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) tried to efface the doubts stirred by some of his contemporaries who, had some mischievous intentions behind. They used to say that it suffices a Muslim to love the *Ahlul-Bait* and to regard them as leaders, and in such a case there is no need to keep up the other obligatory duties and what had been commanded by Allah. The Imam explained that the path of the *Ahlul-Bait* means putting into practice all that had been brought by the Qur'an, and shown by the Prophet.

“...by Allah, we have no absolution from Allah, nor are we relatives of Allah, and nor have we any argument against Allah. Allah cannot be nearer except through obedience. So, whoever is obedient (to Allah) will be benefitted by our friendship, and whoever is disobedient (to Him), our friendship will benefit him naught.”⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

Amr ibn Sa'id ibn Hilal narrates:

“I said to Abu Ja’far (a.s.): ‘May I be your ransom, I only see you very rarely, after years. Please give me a piece of advice which I may follow.’ Imam al-Baqir replied:

“I advise you to fear Allah, to be pious and assiduous. Do know that there can be no piety without assiduity....”⁽¹⁶¹⁾

He also advised one of his followers, named Abu Usma, and told him to convey it to his friends. Here is an extract of the said advice:

“...fear Allah and be good, and do not be bad. direct toward us every affection, and ward off from us every abomination, for we are not as they say. We have our rights in the Book of Allah, are related to the Messenger of Allah and had been purified by Allah. Our birth is so noble that anybody other than us claiming its like, is a liar.^(*) Increase your remembrance of Allah, of death, of reciting the Qur’an and of sending blessings upon the Prophet (s.a.w.) as sending blessings on him is reward ten fold.”⁽¹⁶²⁾

Imam al-Sadiq instructed one of his companions, Ismail bin Ammar, as follows:

“I advise you to fear Allah, to be pious, to be truthful to pay your trusts, to be good to your neighbours and to be frequent in your prostration (prayers). Such were the orders of Muhammad (s.a.w.) to us.”⁽¹⁶³⁾

Hisham ibn Salim says that he heard Imam al-Sadiq tell a man called Hamran:

“Look at the one who is lower than you (in position) and do not look at the one who is higher than you, as in this way you will be more satisfied with what is your lot, and more deserving of Allah’s bounty. Do know that (good) routine deeds even if little are worthier

(*) refers to their noble relations to the Prophet (s.a.w.) through their mother, Fatima al-Zahra’ (a.s.), the Prophet’s daughter.

than a regular deed lacking certainty. Do know that no piety is more benefitting than avoiding what Allah has forbidden and refraining from wronging the people. Nothing is more pleasing than good temper. No wealth is better than being content with the little which suffices. No ignorance is more bitter than conceit!”⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) also cites the Messenger of Allah as describing the believers:

“Whoever is displeased with his own evil deed and is pleased with his own good deed, is a faithful man.”⁽¹⁶⁵⁾

**THE POLITICAL ROLE
OF THE AHLUL-BAIT**

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The Muslim mind knew very well the status of the *Ahlul-Bait*, their rights upon the Muslims and their political position – the mantle of Imamate as explained clearly by the Prophet. A glance at the political history of Islam reveals that the Prophet's illustrious Household were always at the apex of the pyramid of reform and opposition to tyranny and un-Islamic practices. They campaigned for the establishment of peace and justice and the application of Divine laws.

It is a major catastrophe of the political history of Islam that administration of the affairs of the umma, after the martyrdom of Imam Ali was usurped by the Ummayyads with their tendency after despotism, the seizure of state wealth and its abuses, which hindered the enactment of religious precepts and even led to innovations. Such fraudulent toying with religion and the interests of the Muslim communities led to revolts, uprisings and bitter internecine warfare. There was much bloodshed, disputes and riots, and there appeared time to time dangerous controversies, schism and theories, unfortunately some of which justified the rulers' tyranny and despotism, and call to servility and surrender. Court scholars, sold their souls for the paltry pleasures of worldly life, and to please their despotic mentors, coined absurd narra-

tives, disapproving any opposition, however justified, against the rule of the person who styled himself, Caliph. Contrary to the injunctions of the Holy Qur'an, they twisted verses, and made obedience to even the most openly deviant ruler, an obligation. With healthy criticism effectively stifled, the state propaganda machinery at times, tried to revive the perverse practices of the days of ignorance, by sanctioning the forbidden.

To the misfortune of the Muslims, political opportunists, were quick to cash in on these 'official deviations'. Heretical groups such as the *Carmathians*, the *Mazdakites*, the *Khurramdinis* and the like, ever intent to strike a blow against Islam, rose up here and there, advocating nihilism in wealth and women, and the neglecting of religious duties. Some like the *Khawarij* even advocated anarchism, disorder and bloodshed, accusing the devout Muslims of disbelief. Chaos reigned supreme, with the common man wedged between the self-styled Caliphal rule of the Umayyads and the Abbasids, and the apostasy of the secessionists. With political bankruptcy and civil wars, raising their ugly heads everywhere, it was left to the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* to save the Muslim nation of their illustrious ancestor.

At this crucial juncture, the Imams and their companions, admirably shouldered their responsibility, and hereunder we will briefly discuss the political course of the *Ahlul-Bait*:

(1) Educating the Muslims to Hate Injustice: By concentrating on the concept of justice and Imamate, in order to enlighten the Muslims on the principles of government in Islam, they (Imams) developed political awareness against

the despotic hold of unjust rulers and petty tyrants. Their narratives galore with the responsibilities of the Muslim ruler, the rights of the people and the rejection of tyranny and injustice.

“A man who once served as governor under the notorious tyrant Hajjaj ibn Yousuf approached Imam al-Baqir and asked him whether Allah will accept his repentance. He says: The Imam did not reply.’ The Imam repeated his question. He answered:

“No, unless you return back all due rights to their owners.”⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

Abi Hamza Thamali quotes Imam al-Baqir as saying:

“When the fourth Imam, Zain al-Abidin was in his last moments to life, he embaraced me and said: ‘Son, I advise you as my father (a.s.) had advised me when he was meaning his end, as he himself had been advised by his father. O son, beware of doing wrong to whoever has no helper against you except Allah’”⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

Imam al-Sadiq says:

“No injustice is harder than that whose victim can find no helper to face it except Allah the Great, the Almighty.”⁽¹⁶⁸⁾

He also quotes his illustrious grandfather, Prophet Muhammad, as saying:

“Beware of injustice, as it is the darkness of the Resurrection Day.”⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

On the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.), it is said:

“Allah the Great, the Almighty, enjoined one of His prophets living in a country under the rule of a tyrant: ‘Go to this tyrant and tell him that I did not make use of you (grant authority) to shed the blood (of the people) and gather wealth. I made use of you to soothe the cries of the wronged, because neglect not their plight even if they were disbelievers’”⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Imam al-Sadiq also says:

“The one who does injustice, the one who assists him and the one

who approves it, all three of them are accomplices.”⁽¹⁷¹⁾

“Whoever tries to find excuses for the tyranny of a tyrant, Allah would instigate somebody to tyrannize him, will not respond to his supplication and will not reward him for his being wronged.”⁽¹⁷²⁾

Abu Basir says:

“Once two men called upon Imam al-Sadiq concerning a deal between them. After hearing them both, the Imam said”:

***“Verily nobody would gain any good from doing injustice. Verily the wronged would take from the faith of the unjust more than the unjust would take from the property of the wronged’. Then he added: ‘The one who wrongs people should not complain if he (in turn) is wronged. Verily the son of Adam would reap nothing save that which he had sown. Nobody would certainly reap the sweet from the bitter, nor the bitter from the sweet. The two men came to a reconciliation before leaving the place’”.*⁽¹⁷³⁾**

It is also narrated by the *Ahlul-Bait* that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) said:

***“Whoever walks with a wrongdoer to help him, knowing that he was a wrongdoer, will be quitting Islam”.*⁽¹⁷⁴⁾**

The following sayings from the Prophet, convey the rewards of justice and the torment for ignoring it:

***“To be just for a single hour equals the worship of seventy years, will their nights spent in prayers and their days spent in fasting. To spend an hour in despotic rule is harder to Allah than to sin sixty years.”*⁽¹⁷⁵⁾**

Jabir ibn Abdulla Ansari quotes the Prophet as saying:

***“Whoever pleased a ruler by displeasing Allah, was quitting Allah’s religion.”*⁽¹⁷⁶⁾**

***“Whoever ruled over ten (people) without justice, would be raised on the Resurrection Day with his hands, legs and head in the hole of an axe.”*⁽¹⁷⁷⁾**

“Whenever a man gets authority over some public affairs, but he closes his door in their faces and lowers his curtains, he will remain subject to Allah’s detestation and curse until he reopens his door and receive in the needy and those who have complaints of injustice.”⁽¹⁷⁸⁾

2. Repudiation: This was another method of political education taught by the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), whenever despotism and deviation of thought prevailed in the society.

Majlisi narrates in ‘Bihar al-Anwar’ that:

“On the Day of Judgement a caller will call: Where are the wrongdoers and their helpers – those who prepared for them their inkpots, or fastened a bag, or sharpened for them a pen? Gather them all with the wrongdoers!”⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

An example of such repudation is the attitudes of *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) towards the Umayyads and the Abbassids rulers.

The *Ahlul-Bait* shunned the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers, who had usurped the Caliphate and imposed their tyrannous rule on the Muslims. This was a period of repudiation, when the Imams suffered imprisonment, torture and even martyrdom at the hands of the unjust rulers, but not for a single moment, did they allow the torch of guidance to be extinguished.

An example is the attitude of Imam al-Sadiq towards the Abbassid Caliph Abi Ja’far al-Mansur who was known for his cruelty, bloodshed and maltreating of the descendants of Imam Ali (a.s.). Historians say that Mansur sent a letter to Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) requesting his companionship, in an attempt to confine him to his court as one of the learned attendants. The Imam, notwithstanding the cruel and terrorising circumstances, turned down Mansur’s request with a

decisive reply, saying:

“We have nothing for which we may be afraid of you, nor do you have anything of the hereafter (that we may) turn to you, nor are you in a state of blessing that we may congratulate you, nor do we see it a calamity to console you...” Mansur wrote back requesting the Imam’s company to advise him. Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) replied: **‘Whoever wants this world will not advise you, and whoever wants the other world will not accompany you’**”.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾

Such was his attitude and reply to the ruler who did not apply the precepts of the religion and who did not adhere to its principles.

It was this method – the method of repudiating the rulers who practiced injustice, and who did not enact the precepts of the religion – which had been followed by the jurists of the school of the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.). They decreed that it is prohibited to help a despot, or to accept from him a governmental post. These instructions had been written down by all the jurists in their books, in chapters titled ‘Prohibited Earnings’, such as stated by the Martyr Muhammad ibn Jamal al-Makki al-Aamili(*), may Allah have mercy on him (known as ‘The First Martyr’). Counting the prohibited earnings, he said:

“...and helping the unjust (rulers) with their injustice’. The commentator explained this by saying: ‘Such as keeping their books or fetching the wronged subjects to them, and the like’”.⁽¹⁸¹⁾

(*) One of the great jurist of the school of *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), lived during the years 734–786 A.H.

The jurists prohibited accepting jobs from the unjust rulers in any capacity, except in case of obtaining power to serve Islam and ward off injustice.

3. Revolution and Support for Revolutionary Forces:

The idea of revolting against injustice, and disapproving wrongdoing, however deceptively disguised, is an Islamic principle called 'al-amr bil Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy an al-Munkar' (Bidding the right and forbidding the wrong). This is a compulsory duty imposed on all Muslims, as the Prophet is quoted to have said:

“The master of the martyrs was Hamza, and he who stood against a despotic ruler and bade him (right) and forbade him (the wrong), and was killed (for that).”

The *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) rejected the concept of despotic rule, imposed on the Muslims by Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan and his son, Yazid. When got worse during Yazid's tyranny, Imam Husain ibn Ali (a.s.) had but to revolt, leaving his home in Madina for Iraq. And there, in Karbala, the decisive battle took place in which the Imam suffered tragic martyrdom. It was the starting point of the revolution.

The shedding of the sacred blood and the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) shook the conscience of the Muslims. The martyrdom of Imam Husain and his followers was the first revolution in the history of Islam against a despotic ruler who tried to exort allegiance to his illegitimate rule from the Muslims. It was a revolution against the calls for stifling public opinion, raised by the 'Court Ulema', who used to advocate the slogan of 'remain loyal to the ruler', no matter what he does." in stark contrast of the saying of the Prophet that:

“No oath (is acceptable) from a sinner”.

And also:

“None should be obeyed against Allah’s command”.

And Allah the Almighty says:

“And incline not toward those who do wrong lest the Fire touch you.”

Holy Qur’an (11:113)

Imam Husain ibn Ali who courted martyrdom on the 10th of the month of *Muharram*, in the year of 61 A.H., in Karbala, thus, tore into shreds all those slogans and misleading theories. The voice of blood and martyrdom triumphed the voice of greed and servility, and to this day inspires generations of Muslims against injustice and tyranny.

Imam Husain did define for the Muslims his motives and the course of his revolution, by saying:

“...I did not revolt as a hater of the truth, self-conceited mischief-maker, or a wrongdoer, but I revolted wanting reformation among my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah’s (s.a.w.) (umma) want to bid the right and forbid the wrong, and to follow the path of my grandfather and father.”⁽¹⁸²⁾

Then Imam Husain went on to defend the Imam and the leader who should lead the Muslims, and the necessity of revolting against the ruler who deviates from divine principles.

In a letter to the Kufans he wrote:

“Verily the Imam is but the ruler who acts justly, believes in the right religion and devotes himself to the entity of Allah.”⁽¹⁸³⁾

To the notables of Basra he wrote:

“...and I invite you to the Book of Allah and the Traditions of His Messenger (s.a.w.), since Tradition has been discarded, and sheresy started. If you heard me and obeyed me, I will guide you to the way of righteousness. Peace be upon you and mercy from Allah.”⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

Thus Imam Husain (a.s.) showed the legitimacy of revolt-

ing against the tyrant ruler, and proclaimed against him the sacred struggle *Jihad*.

In the biography of the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) we read about their support for the *Alawite* revolutions which lasted for more than two centuries, spread over the vast expanse of the Islamic lands after the blessed revolution of Imam Husain.

There was the revolution of Zaid, son of Imam Zain al-Abidin. in the year 121 A.H., which took place during the days of Imam al-Sadiq who supported his revolution and grieved at his martyrdom^(*).

Fudail Rasan, in this respect, says:

“I called upon Abi Abdulla (Imam al-Sadiq) after Zaid ibn Ali was killed. I was led to a room inside another one. He inquired: ‘O Fudail, was my uncle Zaid killed?’ I replied, ‘may I be your ransom. May Allah have mercy on him’, he said, ‘he was faithful, knowing, learned and truthful. Had he triumphed, he would have kept his promise. Verily had he seized (authority), he would have known where to put it.’”⁽¹⁸⁵⁾

Such was the support for the revolutions and the revolutionaries, and such was the understanding between the Imams of the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) and the *Alawite* revolutionaries.

Another wonderful example of such political activities was the attitude of Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.) towards Husain ibn Ali who led the ‘al-Fakh’ revolution – in Madina in 169 A.H.

(*) It is worthy to recall that Abu Hanifa, the Imam of the *Hanafite*, had backed the revolution of Zaid, and decreed that the *zakat* (alms) may be allotted to him

Historical statements and documents confirm the Imam's approval of the principle of revolting against tyrants, and hence, his backing of the revolutionaries, despite the fact that he predicted the failure of that revolt owing to lack of sufficient means required for its success. Seeing the leader of the revolution determined to carry it out, he said:

“You are going to be killed, so fight fiercely, as they are corrupt. They begin belief, while harbouring hypocrisy and disbelief. We belong to Allah and to Him we return...”⁽¹⁸⁶⁾

Afterwards, when Husain and his companions were martyred, and their heads were brought before the Abbassid rulers, and the Imam was told that that was Husain's head, he said:

“Yes. We belong to Allah and to Him we return. He, by Allah, passed away as a good Muslim, a fasting man, bidding right and forbidding wrong. There was none like him among his household.”⁽¹⁸⁷⁾

It was clear that this *Alawite* revolutionary was obviously in favour of the accepted person among the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) fit for the Caliphate. Most probably he was propagating on behalf of Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.) himself, like Zaid and the declaration of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) before him and Zaid tried to put things into their own places, that is, he intended to hand over the Caliphate to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.).

The Abbassid Caliph knew about Imam al-Kadhim's support for the revolution of Husain called 'The Battle of Fakh'(*).

(*) The Revolution of Fakh occurred in 169 A.H., under the leadership of al-Hussain bin Ali bin Hassan bin Imam Hassan bin Imam Ali bin Abi Talib. He was eventually martyred by the Abbassids near Mecca, rose up against Caliph al-Hadi in Medina, after a solemn vow at the shrine of his ancestor the Prophet. After Karbala, Fakh is considered the second tragedy for the *Ahlul-Bait*.

Allama Majlisi relates the attitude of the Abbassid Caliph below:

“He started to abuse the *Talibiyin* (the descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib), and when Musa ibn Ja’far (a.s.) was mentioned, he abused him and said: ‘By Allah, Husain did not revolt but at his order, and did not follow but his love, because he (the Imam) is the one with whom rests the will of the members of this Household. May Allah kill me if I spare him.’”⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

Imam Jawad, said about the Fakh Revolution:

“After ‘*Taf*’ (the battle of Karbala) we had no major persecution severer than (*Fakh*) (battle)”.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾

4. Political Resistance: This had its important role in the political life of the Muslims whenever there appeared a tyrant ruler. Every one of the Imams undertook the role of political leadership in his time, and was the symbol of opposition for the oppressed masses as well as the leaders and callers for reformation. The existence of the Imam was the rallying point for the opposition and gave them legitimacy. The Ummayyad and Abbassid Caliphs – who are known in history for their treason against Islam knew the position of the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.) and their place in the hearts and minds of the Muslims. Therefore, they tried to get rid of them, and to take the public opinion away from them, using for this purpose different means, such as terrorism, bribery, killing, imprisonment and even by offering high governmental posts.

Under this light one may look at the situation between Mu’awiya and Imam Ali (a.s.) and the former’s revolt against the latter’s legitimate sovereignty.

Similarly the usurper Mu’awiya’s attitude towards Imam Hasan’s legitimate rule, and finally his killing of the Imam

through poison in the year 50 A.H., should be taken into account.

Then followed the tragic martyrdom of Imam Hussain at Karbala at the orders of Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, and the taking as captives of the progeny of the Prophet, almost all of whom were women and children.

After Imam Husain, the Muslims regarded Ali ibn al-Husain Zain al-Abidin as an exemplary leader of the *Ahlul-Bait*. The revolutionaries, consequently, used to ask his permission, as several revolutions took place in his days, for the cause of Islam, such as the revolutions of Madina, of Mecca, of Mukhtar ibn Abi Obeida Thaqafi, and of the *Tawwabin*, to avenge the martyrdom of Imam Husain.

Imam Zain al-Abidin's attitude towards Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, Marwan ibn Hakam, Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan and other Umayyad rulers was that of silent resistance and unannounced support for the revolutionaries. He invoked Allah's mercy on Mukhtar, who took vengeance upon the killers of Imam Husain, and praised his revolution. His supplications to the Almighty are a clear expression of his political and ideological(*) opposition to the rulers of his time.

Imam al-Baqir carried on his father's role and suffered much at the hands of the Umayyads, especially Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik who showed great enmity and hatred towards the Prophet's Household.

During Hisham's days there was an *Alawite* movement, in which Zaid ibn Ali ibn al-Husain (a.s.), the brother of the

(*) Imam al-Sajjad's invocations are collected in a volume under the title of 'al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiya'.

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.), was the most brilliant face.

The Ummayyad Caliph knew well that the source of the political awareness and movement was Imam Baqir and his son, Ja'far al-Sadiq. He summoned them together from Madina to his capital in Damascus. Entering the Caliph's assembly, the Imam greeted those who were present with a gesture of his hand. He did not salute the Caliph with the customary salutation. He sat down without waiting for the Caliph's permission. This enraged Hisham more and more. Addressing the Imam, he said:

“O Muhammad ibn Ali, none of you stops revolting, calling (people) to himself and claiming to be the Imam out of foolishness and scarcity of knowledge.”

He went on rebuking him. When he stopped, the others also started to rebuke him, according to Hisham's plan. Hearing them, the Imam stood up and said:

“O people, where are you headed? Where are you being taken to? Through us Allah guided your first, and through us He will end your last. If you have no immediate sovereignty, we do have our immediate sovereignty, and there is no sovereignty beyond ours, as ours will be the last”.

Allah, the Almighty, the Great, says:

“...and the end will belong to those who ward off evil”.

Hisham, then, ordered him to be imprisoned.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾

The Imam (a.s.) utilized his imprisonment and continued his struggle by teaching, preaching and politically educating the prisoners. The prison warden went to Hisham and informed him about the Imam's influence on the prisoners, and how he was causing commotion in the prison. Hisham, fearing the result, gave orders that Imam al-Baqir and his companions be returned to Madina an official the govern-

ment escort.⁽¹⁹¹⁾

The historian Ibn Jarir Tabari says that the reason for sending the Imam back to Madina was the spread of his intellectual influence on the people of Syria, as a result of a dialogue which took place between the Imam and the head of the Christians.⁽¹⁹²⁾

In an exchange of words between Hisham ibn Abdul-Malik and Zaid, concerning Imam al-Baqir being informed about Zaid's political activities, Hisham told Zaid:

“I am told that you mention the Caliphate and you desire it, while you are not fit for it, as you are the son of a bondmaid.”

Zaid reported that the Prophet Ishmael was the son of a bondmaid, too, but Allah endowed him with prophethood.

Hisham, however, started abusing the Imam and asked Zaid:

“(What about) your brother ‘al-Baqara’^(*) Zaid replied: “The Messenger of Allah named him al-Baqir (cleaver of knowledge)^(**) and you call him ‘al-baqara’(cow)! How greatly you differ from him (the Prophet)! You will differ from him in the hereafter as you differed from him in this world – he will go to Paradise, while you will go to Hell!”.

Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq silently led the

(*) *Al-baqara* means ‘the cow’, while ‘al-Baqir’ was an epithet given to the Imam, denoting his unmatched knowledge.

(**) This is a reference to the tradition saying that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) told his honourable companion, Jabir ibn Abdulla Ansari: ‘You will survive to see one of al-Husain’s sons, who will ‘cleave the knowledge’ *yabqur al-’Ilm*, so, convey to him my greetings’. Thus, he was called *al-Baqir* (the cleaver).

political resistance, despite his apparent refrain from interfering openly with the authorities. The revolutionaries used to consult him, and ask him to undertake their leadership, as did Abu Muslim Khurasani who offered to pledge allegiance to him. The Imam refused, because he knew that the movement lacked the necessary conditions.

The Abbassid Abul-Abbas Saffah knew the role of the Imam, and tried to kill him on many an occasion, but Allah did not permit this to happen, although he summoned him from Madina to Hira (in Iraq) and was hard upon him and spied upon him.

Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, who succeeded Saffah, was no less afraid of the Imam's leadership. He summoned him from Madina to Iraq several times, and used to describe the political strength of the Imam's personality and its influence among the opposition circles, by saying:

"...this sorrow which is shaking the thoughts of the Caliphs, and which can neither be exiled, nor can it be suppressed... I heard about his severe condemnation and ill speaking of us."⁽¹⁹³⁾

Next was the turn of Imam Musa al-Kadhim who decisively faced the Abbassid rulers despite their awesome wealth and power.

Imam Musa al-Kadhim was placed under strict observation and spied on in the days of Mansur who went far in exerting injustice against the *Alawites*, confiscated their properties, interned them alive inside the pillars of castles and bridges, and tortured them in his dungeons.

Muhammad Mahdi, the next abbassid Caliph, was more afraid of the personality of Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.). So, he summoned him from Madina to Baghdad, and imprisoned

him. One day the Caliph saw Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) in his dream, reciting to him the Qura'nic verse:

“Would you then, if you were given the command, work corruption in the land and sever your ties of kinship?”

Holy Qur'an (47.22)

He woke up frightened and ordered the release of the Imam from prison.

In the days of the next Abbassid Caliph, Hadi, the situation worsened against the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), as he started persecuting them especially after Husain ibn Ali's famous revolution called 'al-Fakh' in Madina. Imam al-Kadhim (a.s.) endured a great deal of hardship, in as much as Hadi threatened to kill him, and began to prepare for it. Hadi, however was unable to carry out his evil plans, and died shortly after.

After him came Harun al-Rashid, commencing a new stage of tyranny against the *Ahlul-Biat* especially against Imam Musa Ja'far (a.s.). He summoned the Imam from Madina to Iraq and imprisoned and tortured him by claspng him in heavy fetters and moving him from prison to prison for many years. At last the Imam was martyred through poison administered by Sindi ibn Shahak, the police Chief of Harun Rashid, on the 25th of the month of Rajab, in the year 183 A.H, upon the orders of the Caliph.

Then Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) succeeded his martyred father to the Imamate of the Muslims, and soon began soon to assert his political and religious prominence. The Caliph Ma'mun, as a ruse, was forced to appoint the Imam as his crown prince. The Imam, however, accepted that reluctantly on condition that he would not be asked to interfere in the affairs of state for the present, and that the Caliphate should

be turned over to him after the death of Ma'mun. But it was all part of Ma'mun's stratagem and the Caliph, learning the Imam's growing influence on the Muslims, poisoned him in 203 A.H.

The next leader of the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), was Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s.), whom Ma'mun treated with respect and married him to his daughter, Umm Fadhl, in order to lull the Muslim nation and the opposition. Nevertheless, he could not change any of the Imam's attitude to his favour. The Imam left Baghdad and returned to Madina. After the death of Ma'mun, his son, Mu'tasim, succeeded to the Caliphate. He felt danger in the Imam's staying in Madina and forced him to come to Baghdad.

The historians state that the ninth Imam was later poisoned by the Caliph and died in the year 225 A.H. and was laid to rest beside his grandfather Imam al-Kadhim in Baghdad.

Caliph Mutawakkil, known for his debauchery and enmity with the *Ahlul-Bait* (a.s.), was filled with fright and horror of the next Imam, Ali al-Hadi (a.s.), that was why he summoned him from Madina to Samirra his new capital in Iraq. He placed the Imam under house-arrest and subjected him to severe harrassment, lest he should continue his political role among the Muslims and attract their attention.

Historians relate many reasons behind Mutawakkil's action. Sibt ibn Jawzi says:

“Biographers say that Mutawakkil's aim in ordering him (Imam al-Hadi) to be brought from the city of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) to Baghdad was his hatred of Ali ibn Abi Talib and his descendents. he was informed about the high position of Ali al-Hadi and people's inclination towards him.

He, therefore, was afraid of him...”(194)

After the martyrdom of Imam al-Hadi (a.s.) through poison administered by the Caliph, in Samirra in 254 A.H., his son, Imam Hasan ibn Ali al-Askari took over as the 11th Imam.

He had accompanied his father to Samirra. He, also, suffered at the hands of his contemporary rulers as his forefathers did. He was oppressed, tortured and imprisoned in Samirra by al-Muhtadi, son of the Caliph Wathiq. He gave charge of the Imam to merciless Turkish person wardens, who, however, on coming into contact with the Imam's immaculate personality, were greatly influenced and became reformed men.

History has preserved parts of the hardship endured by the Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad narrates:

“When al-Muhtadi started killing the *Muwali* (the followers of *Ahlul-Bait* , I wrote to Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), saying: Praise be to Allah, Who, had him too preoccupied from turning towards you, as I had heard him threatening you, saying: By Allah, I will dismiss them from all the new land'. Abu Muhammad replied in his own handwriting: That would futher shorten his days.”(195)

It is narrated that one day the Caliph asked that Imam al-Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) be brought from prison to solve a problem which arose with some some Christian monks, concerning a case of irrigation. The Imam (a.s.) resolved the issue, and as a result, was released from prison, and moreover on his demand, several of his imprisoned companions were also released. But shortly afterwards, the Abbassid Caliph once again placed the eleventh Imam under house-arrest in Samirra, and in the year 260, had him poisoned to

death, a tragic event which led to the long occultation of the twelfth Imam.

That was a brief account of the history of the *Ahlul-Bait* concerning their political struggle against the contemporary tyrants. It is necessary that one should carefully contemplate the lives of the *Ahlul-Bait*, and how the *Imams*, every one of them, was the leader and the immaculate personality of his age. This helps us to recognize their pre-eminent position, and their ideological and political role in the shaping of the Muslim community.

A LOOK AT THE ISLAMIC SCHOOL, JURISPRUDENCE

During the days of Prophet, Muslims used to receive the regulations and precepts concerning prayers, family, heritage, trade, *Jihad* (holy struggle), *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), land, and all other social issues, from Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) himself, as he was the conveyor of the Almighty's last revelation to mankind. After his passing away, people used to refer to the Book of Allah and the Traditions of His Prophet, deriving from them precepts, laws and religious situations, on the authority of the Prophet's and *Ahlu-Bait* and those of the companions who preserved the Traditions and comprehended the Qur'an.

It was natural, however, that with the course of time, the affairs of the Muslims should expand, and there should appear novel questions, events and incidents regarding various aspects of life, which need to be interpreted according to the teachings of Islam. Consequently, Islamic jurisprudence and legislation developed and expanded by the end of the first century A.H., coinciding with the time of the 5th Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali ibn al-Husain (a.s.). Imam al-Baqir, according to the jurists, the traditionalists and the narrators, was the supreme scholar of Madína, to whom all other scholars referred as the final authority for the rules of Islam.

During the days of his son, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, Islamic learning and jurisprudence witnessed its flourishing period. He was the

teacher of some of the leaders of the various Islamic schools. The two Imams, al-Baqir and al-Sadiq were not inferring personal religious verdicts. They were, actually, narrators of the Traditions of their ancestor, the Prophet, and interpreters of the contents of the Book of Allah. In the days of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) certain schools of thought began to appear, such as the school of 'Opinion and Analogy', which was the school of the Persian Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit, who used to attend the lectures of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.). Other schools of jurisprudence, which were later on limited to the four Sunni schools *Hanafiya*, *Malikiya*, *Hanbaliya* and *Shafi'iyah*, soon popped up using different methods of inference and induction, besides the 'School of Text', headed by Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) which depended on 'The Book and the Traditions', as the only two sources of the Islamic laws and legislation. It rejects the Hanafite method of 'opinion and analogy'. It also rejects authorizing other sources of legislation. The other four schools accepted other sources of legislation, besides the Qur'an and the Traditions, which they utilized in their inductions and inferences. Their main sources are:

1. Analogy.^(*)
2. Approval.
3. Simple Interests.
4. The Opening and Closing of Pretexts.

The four sects – The *Hanafi*, The *Maliki*, The *Hanbali* and The *Shafi'i* – differed in respect to accepting or rejecting the above-mentioned sources. They never came to an agreement about them; some accepting certain sources, while

(*) The analogy which is rejected by the School of the *Ahlul-Bait* is analogizing the precept of a 'part' with a precept of another 'part' which the logicians call 'the analogous syllogism'. But it confirmed the scientific syllogism, which means referring the branches to their roots, or applying the universal rule to its parts.

others rejecting them.

Because of this partial acceptance, or non-acceptance of those sources by the four sects, there appeared differences and the diversities in their points of view, in contrast to the School of Text led by the *Ahlul-Bait*. The reason of this dispute is mainly due to two main causes:

1. Adoption of some of the sources of legislation, besides the Qur'an and the Traditions, and the rejection of some others.

2. Disagreement in the acceptance and rejection of narrations, in accordance with the conditions of acceptance, with an emphasis on the reliability of the narrators.

Thus, it is obvious that the dispute among the schools of jurisprudence is but a scientific one, which unfortunately has fragmented today's Muslims.

A scientific dispute should never be a cause for disunity and separation among the sons of a single Muslim nation, because a juristic dispute can easily be settled through arguments and scholarly researches based on objective foundations and indisputable bases unanimously agreeable to all Muslims, and by opening the door of *Ijtihad*^(*) which some Islamic sects erred in declaring closed. It must be noted here that this difference is not a dispute between the Sunnis and the Shi'a. In fact, it is a dispute among juristic schools and sects, which are six in number in today's world:

The *Hanafis*, the *Malikis*, the *Hanbalis*, the *Shafi'is*, and the *Ja'faris* and the *Zaidis*, in addition to fragmenary opinions of some other jurisprudents. By opening the door of

(*) *Ijtihad* is to strive hard in the process of deriving secondary religious precepts from their detailed proofs.

Ijtihad among all Muslims, and allowing the jurists to freely practice their scholarly function, the principles of inference, and the sources of legislation could be properly defined according to the Book and the Traditions. By scrutinising the traditions and the narrations, and by discarding the false and irrational ones, without personal desires and inclinations on the basis of scientific proof, the Muslim scholars can do away with a good deal of controversy, discover the ultimate truth and unite their ranks and opinions. Difference in the points of view of the jurists and the scholars will, however, remain, as they are common among the jurists of the different Muslim sects. This is a fact discernable in all fields of science and knowledge, and the field of *Ijtihad* and inference is no exception, because the jurists cannot discover all the real precepts.

Hereunder are examples of the juristic opinions, showing their meeting and parting points.

Both the *Imamia* and the *Hanbalis* say that the 'First Testimony (in the prayer) is compulsory, where as the *Hanafis*, the *Shafi'is* and the *Malikis* say that it is recommended, not compulsory.

The 'Last Testimony' is said by the *Shafi'is*, the *Imamia* and the *Hanbalis* to be compulsory, whereas the *Malikis* and the *Hanafis* say that it is recommended, not compulsory.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾

The *Shafi'is*, the *Malikis* and the *Hanbalis* say: The *Taslim* (submission in the prayer) is compulsory; the *Hanafis* say: It is not compulsory, while the *Imamia* differ among themselves, some say: it is compulsory whereas some say: it is recommended. Among those who regard it recommended was Shaikh Mufid, Shaikh Tusi and Allama Hilli.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

In respect to collective prayer, the *Hanbalis* say: it is compulsory on every able person, and if one left it and prayed as an individual, one would be a sinner, although his prayer is correct. On the other hand the *Imamia* the *Hanafis*, the *Malikis* and the majority of the *Shafi'is* regard it as not compulsory on everyone, nor on a few, but nonetheless highly recommended.

Concerning those who deserve poor-rate, the *Shafi'is* and the *Hanbalis* say that whoever got half of his requirements is not regarded as poor, and deserves not *zakat* (poor-rate or alms.). The *Imamia* and the *Malikis* say that the poor, according to the religion, is the one who does not have a year's provisions for himself and his household; so, whoever had a farm, a property or cattle, that were insufficient to sustain him and his family for a whole year, deserved receiving a portion of the *zakat*. The *Imamia*, the *Shafi'is* and the *Hanbalis* say that whoever was able to earn his bread is not allowed to receive the *zakat*, whereas the *Hanafis* and the *Malikis* say: he is eligible to receive the *zakat*.

Concerning staying overnight in Muzdalifa during the *hajj* rites, the *Hanafis*, the *Shafi'is* and the *Hanbalis* say that it is compulsory, and whoever does not stay there will have to offer a sacrifice – as in 'Al-Mughni', whereas the *Imamia* and the *Malikis* say it is not compulsory but recommended.

The *Shafi'is* and the *Malikis* say that the guardian is the sole authority who has the right of consent to the marriage of a mentally sane grown up girl if she is virgin, but if she is a widow, he shares in her marriage, consent, and neither of them has the sole right of consent, and moreover it is he who concludes the marriage contract, as it can never be concluded by the girl's words alone, although her consent is necessary.

The *Hanafis* say that a grown up sane girl has the right to choose her husband and to conduct the marriage contract herself, irrespective of whether she is virgin or widow, and nobody has authority upon her, nor the right to object, provided that she chooses the worthy.

Most of the *Imamia* jurist say that the grown up and sane girl has the right to conduct all kinds of procedures and deals, including marriage contracts, both as virgin and widow. She has, thus, the right to conclude contracts, on her own behalf and on behalf of other than herself, both directly and through agency, in consent and acceptance, similar to the man, without the least difference.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

Concerning divorce, Abu Zuhra in 'Al-Ahwal al-Shakhsiya', p. 283, says

"According to the *Hanafi* sect, the divorce of everybody is valid, except of the child, the insane and the idiot. So, the divorce is legal even if done jokingly, or by a drunkard, or unwillingly and by the one wearing the *ahram* (pilgrim robes) for *hajj* rites."

He adds:

"According to the *Hanafi* sect, that the divorce even by mistake and unintentional and by the forgetful is valid."

Of the same books he says:

"Malik and Shafi' agreed with Abu Hanifa and his followers in respect to the validity of divorce even in jest, while Ahmad (ibn Hanbal) did not agree, regarding such a divorce as incorrect."

The *Imamia*, on the authority of *Ahlul-Bait*, say:

"No divorce (is valid) except for the one who wants it".

Moreover divorce is discouraged except as a last resort,

when all efforts to reconcile the spoures have failed.

These were some examples of comparative jurisprudence, selected to show the reader the real scientific controversy in the Islamic sects, and how these sects meet in some instances and differ in some other matters, regardless of their *Shi'ism* or *Sunnism*. We have already seen the *Hanafi* and the *Shafi'i* agreeing in some cases with the *Imamia*, and differing from the *Hanbali*, and the *Maliki*, or the *Maliki* agreeing with the *Imamia* and differing from other Sunni sects. This is an explicit fact observed in all the subjects of jurisprudence and its different branches. The intellectual dispute cannot be termed a discord between the *Shi'ites* and the *Sunnites*. It is a scientific, methodical dispute among the five schools of jurisprudence. We have to look for the legal religious proofs, and commence a scientific discussion until we get to the core of the truth regarding the correctness of the school, as Allah has only a single practical verdict for every case.

Those who try to illustrate the dispute between the *Shi'ites* and the *Sunnis* as if they were against one another, or two contradictory sects, are but falsifying the truth, getting away from the method of sound scientific objectivity, and attempting to serve the enemies of the Muslims, by sowing the seeds of disunity.

**MUSLIMS
ARE
ONE NATION**

MUSLIMS ARE ONE NATION

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the covenant of Allah and do not be disunited. And remember Allah’s favour on you: when you were enemies, then He made friendships between your hearts so that you became brethren by His favour, and (how) you were on the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it. Thus Allah makes clear His revelations to you that you may be guided. And from among you there should a party who invite to good, and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; and those it is who are successful. And you be not as those who became divided and disagreed after the clear proofs had come unto them; and these it is that shall have a grievous punishment.”

Holy Qur’an (3:103–105)

“So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) upright for religion in the right state – the nature (framed) by Allah in which He has created mankind. There is no altering (of the laws of) Allah’s creation. That is the right religion, but most people know not. Turning unto Him (only), and be careful of your duty unto Him, and establish worship, and be not of those who ascribe sects, (unto Him): Of those who split up their religion and became schematics, each sect exulting in what they had with them.”

Holy Qur’an (30:30–32)

“And in whatever thing you disagree, the verdict therein belongs to Allah. Such is my Lord, in Whom I put my trust, and to Whom I turn.”

Holy Qur’an (42:10)

“O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you, then if you quarrel concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.”

Holy Qur'an (4:59)

“And surely this your religion is one religion, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty unto Me.”

Holy Qur'an (23:52)

“And obey Allah and His Messenger and do not quarrel lest lest you falter and your strength departs from you, and be patient; surely Allah is with the patient.”

Holy Qur'an (8:46)

Eversince the resurgence of Islam under its final Prophet, all its enemies – the idolaters, the Jews, the hypocrites, the crusaders and other retarded malicious minds – have effort in spreading discord and disunity among its ranks.

The Islamic *da'wa* (call) and its leader, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), faced this intrigues and plotting of the jews, the idolaters and the hypocrites, and triumphed over them, thanks to the blessings of the Almighty and the steadfastness of the righteous companions.

The early history of struggle between Islam and its arch-enemies is full of events and happenings which show how the opponents of Islam made use of the weapon of hypocrisy and controversy.

Going through the Glorious Qur'an, the pure *sunna* (Traditions) of the Prophet and the history of Islamic *da'wa*, one realizes the stratagems of the plotters.

The Qur'an warns the Muslims against disunity and dicord, and invites them to fraternity, drawing for them the picture of the tragedy resulting from controversy and frat-

ricide.

It warns them of the painful fate of weakness, cowardice, divisions, loss of power, and other dangers as is the case with the idolaters and those who distorted the Word of Allah although the proofs had been clarified to them.

The Qur'an directs this nation to gather around the word of monotheism *Tawhid*, as is evident by the verses mentioned above:

The elements of a unified nation, as taught by the Qur'an are:

1. The Almighty is One, and that the aim is to worship Him in His Pristine Unity.

2. The objective of religion is the straight unwavering path and conformity with the good nature created in man by Allah.

3. The nation has to direct its energies to the call of Islam, to be a nation that invites toward goodness, bids the right and forbids the wrong, and carries the message of Allah to all humankind:

Holy Qur'an (3:104)

The Qur'an draws our attention to the main causes of discord, and guides us to the principal solution. It says that:

1. Any legislative and intellectual dispute should be referred to the Book of Allah and the Tradition of His Messenger:

It warns us lest we should turn the legislative and intellectual disputes into a problem which causes division, controversy, hostility among the Muslims.

2. The questions that are of political and social nature, are practiced by the lawful godfearing ruler who should be obeyed and referred to, so that the mass opinion and attitude may not differ.

That is, as long as the ruler keeps adhering to the precepts of religion, and pursues the interests of the Muslims.

Proved Traditions, as the Prophet (s.a.w.) had placed them on the White path, and showed them the way. He had said:

“I leave you on the white path, whose night is like its day. Anyone deviates from it will surely perish.”

Today, the Muslim nation is passing through a critical stage of history, and a cultural turning point. This Muslim nation is being subjected to a spiteful crusading invasion that is unprecedented ever since the Crusades.

These enemies, including crusaders, zionists and their lackeys have been for the past two centuries, assulting the Muslim nation, tearing off its limbs, spreading them political, ideological, ethnic, sectarian, racial, and regional jealousies. Their atheist and materialistic ideas of Communism, Existentialism, Western Capitalism, Socialism and the like, have been imposed on lackeys, they have propped up to rule Muslim countries and to suppress the pure pristine Islam of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). Whenever the devout sons of the Muslims attempt to unify their ranks and to apply the divine laws and regulations, there appear the agents, the spies, the opportunists some of whom are even disguised as scholars, in order to tarnish the glowing visage of Islam. These evil elements support the despots and enable them to suppress the poor, suck the Muslim nation's wealth, and spread the influence of Zionism, Capitalism, Communism and other abused theories.

The Muslims have to arm themselves with knowledge and comprehension. They have to recognize the intentions of those who spread the poison of discord by way of intrigues, or

through forged narrations found in some Islamic books. All Muslims know that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) had referred to these dangers during his 'Farewell pilgrimage' by saying:

“Those who attribute lies to me are many, and they will be more. Whoever purposely misquotes me, let him have his place in Hell. So, whenever you receive a narration compare it with the Book of Allah and my Tradition whichever agree with the Book of Allah take it, and whichever contradicts the Book of Allah and my Tradition do not accept it.”⁽¹⁹⁹⁾

Since we all aware of these facts, then for whose interest, in the present critical situation, do these subversive writers write books and periodicals which generate discord and controversy among the Muslims, charging some with disbelief, and sowing the seeds of hatred and spite in their souls. The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) says:

“You may not enter paradise unless you believe; and you may not believe unless you love one another: Let me tell you something if you do it you will love one another: Let peace spread among you.”⁽²⁰⁰⁾

Such intrigues are, no doubt, motivated by the world imperialistic powers who are frightened of the march of the Islamic Nation and and of the vast human, natural and ideological potential it possesses.

Muslim intellectuals, scholars, writers, orators, poets, statesmen and all those who hold Islam dear, should firmly stand up against such plots.

Here we relate some examples of sincere scientific arguments from the pages of Islamic history, for the benefit of our readers.

Ibn Shahr Ashub, in his book 'Manaqib Aal Abi Talib',

says:

“A woman willed a third of her wealth to be spent on her behalf, on charity, pilgrimage and freeing a slave. The money was insufficient to fulfil all these demands. Abu Hanifa and Sufyan Thawri were asked about that. They said: Look for somebody who went to *hajj*, but could not accomplish it and give him support; find someone who is to free a slave but is short of enough money and give him the balance, and then spend the remainder on charity. Then, Mu’awiya ibn Ammar (a companion of Imam al-Sadiq) asked the Imam’s opinion about the ruling. He said: ‘Begin with the *hajj* because it is a compulsory duty, then add the balance to the non-compulsory services. When Abu Hanifa was informed about that, he changed his (former) mind.’⁽²⁰¹⁾

Abul-Qasim Baghghar, in the ‘al-Musnad’ of Abu Hanifa, states that Hasan ibn Ziyad said:

“I heard Abu Hanifa, when asked about the most well-versed man in the religious sciences he ever saw, say: ‘Ja’far ibn Muhammad. When al-Mansur (the Abbassid caliph) sent for him, he sent for me and said: ‘O Abu Hanifa, people are being attracted towards Ja’far ibn Muhammad. You are to prepare some complicated questions.’ So, I prepared forty problems. Then, Abu Ja’far al-Mansur, while at Hira (in Iraq) sent for me. I came in. Imam Ja’far was sitting next to his right. When I saw him I was more filled with awe at his sight than by the Caliph. I greeted him. He returned my greeting. I sat down. Then I turned to him. The Caliph said to him: ‘O Abu Abdulla, this is Abu Hanifa.’ ‘Yes, I know him,’ he said. The Caliph turned to me and said: ‘O Abu Hanifa, ask Abu Abdulla your questions.’ I started asking

and he answered me, saying: 'You say so those in Madina say so, we say so. We may agree with you, or agree with them, or we may disagree with both, I asked all the forty questions. He answered them all without leaving any single thing.' Then Abu Hanifa said: 'The most learned man is the most well-versed in the differences among the people.'"⁽²⁰²⁾

These two incidents help us realize the objective, scientific and methodical argument of the cases.

Such a doctrinal method is agreeable to Islam because it leads to the facts. So, the scholars and researchers ought to follow this method and to adhere to it, instead of indulging mud-slinging.

Shaikh Mahmud Shaltut, the rector of al-Azhar University (Cairo) had issued a verdict allowing the followers of different Islamic sects – the *Hanafis*, the *Hanbalis*, the *Malikis* and the *Shafi'is* – to act according to the *Imamia*(Shi'a) sect, as well as according to other Islamic sects, as this, he said, was lawful and correct. He was followed, in his opinion, by the next Rector of al-Azhar, Dr. Muhammad Muhammad Fahham.

It is worthwhile to state the texts of the verdicts issued by them in this respect.

Sheikh shaltut was asked that:

“Some people say that if a Muslim is to conduct his worship and other deals correctly, he must follow one of the four Islamic sects, among which are not the sects of the *Imamia Shi'a* nor the *Zaidi Shi'a*. So, do your Honour accept this idea in its generality, and forbid following, for example, the *Twelvers* (*Imamia Shi'ites*)?”

The Sheikh replied:

“1. Islam does not compel any of its followers to follow a

particular sect, but we say: Every Muslim has the right to 'Imitate', first and foremost, any sect that has correctly been quoted and whose relevant precepts have been recorded in its particular books. Whoever followed one of these sects may move to any other one of these sects, whichever of them, without any restrictions".

"2. The Ja'far school known as the Imamia school of Twelvers Shi'ites, is a school according to which it is lawful to worship, the same as the other *Sunnite* sects. It is necessary for the Muslims to know that, and to get rid of unjust prejudice towards particular sects..."

Mahmud Shaltut

The late Dr. Muhammad Muhammad Fahham, the Rector of al-Azhar commenting on Shaltut's verdict, said:

"May Allah have mercy on Shaikh Shaltut who perceived this significance, and in his explicit verdict, displayed courage, as he allowed acting according to the *Imamia Shi'a* school, considering it an Islamic juristic school, founded on the Book, the *sunna* and the most correct proof. I pray to Allah to grant success to those who act upon this sound course of introduction among the brethren."

"And say: Act! Allah will behold your actions, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers."

Holy Qur'an (9:105)

"Our last invocation is: Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds."

Muhammad Muhammad Fahham

It is obvious, then, that the road to the unification of the nation is wide open before the faithful sons of Islam. They have to unite their ranks, to discard their petty controversies and prejudices, to uproot the causes of division, and to sub-

ject the scientific points of view to research and discussion.

We ask Muslims everywhere to comprehend the critical, political and social situation through which the *umma* is passing, and to look at one another with affection and brotherhood, and to identify those who instigate bigotry.

Finally, we implore Allah, the High, the Omnipotent, for His help to unify the ranks of this nation, to keep away the elements who agitate commotion amongst the Muslims and who prevent the application of divine laws. Weakening the ranks of the Muslims, and causing division among them, cannot be but a support to the enemies of Allah, and a service to the tyrants.

“And say: Act! Allah will behold your action, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers.”

Holy Qur'an (9:105)

Prasie be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.



FOOTNOTES

(1) Narrated by Tirmidhi in 'Manaqib Ahlul-Bait', vol. 2, p. 308, citing Umar ibn Abi Salama, the Prophet's adopted son, who said: "The verse, 'Allah only wants to remove uncleanness far from you, o people of *Ahlul-Bait*, and purify you a thorough purifying' was revealed in the house of Umm Salama. Then the Prophet (s.a.w) called Fatima, Hasan Husain and Ali, behind himself, covered them with a cover and said: 'O Allah! this is my household, so remove uncleanness from them and purify them a thorough purifying. Umm Salama said: 'Am I with them, o Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'You are at your place. You are all right.'"

(2) This is stated in 'Ghayat al-Maram', quoting Abdulla ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal, through three narrators quoting Umm Salama, also as in al-Tha'labi's Tafsir, whenever ibn Mardawaya and Khatib, citing Abi Sa'id Khidri, relate the same afore-mentioned meaning, with some verbal differences. The same was also narrated in 'Ghayat al-Maram' quoting Abdulla ibn Ahmad, on the authority of his father who cited Umm Salama (see Tabatab'i's 'al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an', al-Tathir verse).

(3) This narration was quoted by ibn Jarir Tabari, ibn Abi Hatam, and Tabarani, citing Abu Sa'id Khidri. It was also stated in 'Ghayat al-Maram' citing Tha'alibi in his Tafsir, ibn Mardawaya and Baihaqi in his 'sunan', on the authority of Umm Salama.

(4) This is agreed upon in 'al-Sahihain' on the authority of Bukhari and Muslim; quoting Aa'isha, 'Ghayat al-Maram'. It is also stated by Zamakhshari in 'al-Tafsir al-Kashshaf', in interpretation of *al-Mubahala* verse.

(5) Ibn Mardawaya, on the authority of ibn Abi Shaiba, Ahmad and Tirmidhi Also Tabarani and Hakim, corrected; For more details look up 'al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an'.

(6) 'Jami' al-Usul', vol. 9, p.156, quoted from Tirmidhi's 'Sahih', on the authority of Anas ibn Malik, who said The Messenger of Allah used to pass Fatima's house when going out to dawn prayer after the revelation of this verse, for about six months, he (used) say: 'To prayer, o Folk of *Ahlul-Bait*. 'Allah only wants to

remove uncleanness far from you, o Folk of *Ahlul-Bait*, and purify you a thorough purifying'. Also narrated by Hakim in his 'al-Mustadrak', vol.3, p.58, corrected.

(7) Taqiyuddin Ahmad ibn Ali Miqrizi (died 845 H., 'Fadhil Aal al-Bait', p.21.

(8) Fakhruddin Razi, 'al-Tafsir al-Kabir', interpretation of *Shura* Chapter, verse no.23

(9) 'Ghayat al-Maram', interpretation of the verse.

(10) Fakhruddin Razi, 'al-Tafsir al-Kabir', interpretation of *Shura* Chapter, verse no 23.

(11) Muhibuddin Tabari, 'Dhakha'ir al-Uqba fi Manaqib dhawi al-Qurba', p.25.

(12) (13) Ibn Sabagh Maliki, 'al-Fusul al-Muhimma', author's Preface

(14) Zamakhshari; 'al-Tafsir al-Kashshaf', interpretation of *Aal Imran* chapter, verse no.61.

(15) 'Al-Tafsir al-Kashshaf', interpretation of *Aal Imran*. The same is stated in 'Tafsir al-Tha'alibi, quoting Mujahid and kalbi.

(16) 'Al-Tafsir al-Kabir', interpretation of *Ahzab* chapter, verse no.56.

(17) Fakhruddin Razi, 'al-Tafsir al-Kabir', *al-Mubahal* verse.

(18) 'Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an'.

(19) 'Al-Tafsir al-Kashshaf', *al-Ma'ida* chapter, verse no. 55

(20) Wahidi; 'Asbab al-Nozool', *al-Ma'ida* chapter, verse no 55.

(21) 'Shawahid al-Tanzil', vol.1, p 190. Also by Wahidi in 'Asbab al-Nozool' p 135.. Suyuti in 'Dur al-Manthur', vol.2, p.198.

(22) Hakim Hasakani in 'Shawahid al-Tanzil', vol.1, p.191; Ibn Kathir, vol.5,p 209

(23) For more details on historic events of Ghadir Khum refers to such famous books as Musnad Ahmad vol 1, p.118-119 ; vol.4 p.281,270,272,273; vol.5 p 347,370, Mustadrak al-Hakim vol.3, p.109, Sunan ibn Majah and Hakim Hasakani, vol 1, p.190 & 191; Tarikh ibn kathir vol.5, p.209,210,213

(24) For more details on the historic event of *Ghadir Khum* refer to such famous books as: 'Sunan' ibn Maja, Chap. 'Merits of Ah'. Ibn Kathir's History, vol.5, pp 210-213-209.

(25) 'Al-Kashshaf', interpretation of Sura 'al-Insan'. Fakhr Razi states the same narration in 'al-Tafsir al-Kabir', quoting 'al-Kashshaf'. Wahidi has also given an identical narration.

(26) 'Mustadrak Al-Sahihayan', vol.3, P 129., 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol 6, p.157 Besides, Tabari in his *Tafsir*, Fakhruddin Razi in his 'Tafsir al-Karir', and Suyuti in his 'Dur al-Manthur' have also given a similar narration in their interpretation of the said verse

(27) Stated by Ibn Jarir Tabari, Suyuti in 'Dur al-Manthur', Zamakhshari in 'Kashshaf', Wahidi in 'Asbab Al-Nuzul', p.263, 'Tarikh Baghdad' and 'al-Riyadh al-Nadira'.

(28) Suyuti in 'Dur al-Manthur', Fakhruddin Razi in 'Tafsir al-Kabir', interpretation of the above-mentioned verse and also by Muttaqi Hindi in 'Kanz al-Ummal' vol.1, p.251.

(29) 'Dur al-Manthur', 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.1, p.237, Ibn Hajr Asqalani in 'Fath al-Bari', vol. 13, p.27, and Haythami in his 'Majma', vol 9, p 194.

(30) Stated by Ibn Jarir Tabari in his interpretation of the verse. Also Zamakhshari in his 'Kashshaf', Haithami in his 'Majma', Sayuti in 'Dur al-Manthur', 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.6, p 408, and Wahidi in 'Asbab al-Nuzul'.

(31) Zamakhshari in 'Kashshaf', Suyuti in 'Dur-al-Manthur', Haithami in 'al-Majma' vol.9, p 125, 'Riyadh al-Nadira', vol.2, p.207, and Ibn Hajar in 'al-Sawa'iq', p.102.

(32) Narrated by Ibn Jarir Tabari, in his 'Tafsir', Suyuti in 'Dur al-Manthur' adds that whenever Ali came across the Prophet's companions, they used to say 'the best of men has come', also in 'al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa', p.96, and by Shablanji in 'Nur al-Absar', pp.70&101.

(33) 'Asbab al-Nuzul' and 'al-Dur al-Manthur'

(34) Narrated by Tabarani in 'al-Mu'jam al-Kabir', (the *Musnad* of Imam al-Hasan (a.s), vol 1, p.125. (a Manuscript kept at al-Dhahiriyah library in Damascus) Quoted, in its exact text from Tabarani by al-Haithami in his 'Majma' al-Sawa'id', vol.9, p.168. Also stated by Tabari in 'al-Manaqib', p.25, saying: It was stated by Ahmad in 'al-Manaqib'. Suyuti in 'Ihy' al-Mayit' after interpreting the verse; the Prophet identified his near relatives as: Fatima and their two sons. ' Also stated in 'al-Fusul al-Muhimma fi Ahwal al-A'imma', p.29.

(35) Muhibuddin Tabari 'Dhakhi'ir al-qba fi Manaqib dhawi al-Qurba', p.30.

(36) Abdulla ibn Muhammd ibn Aamir Shabrawi Shafi, 'al-Ithaf Bihub al-Ashraf', p.21, printed in al-Adabiya press, Egypt.

(37) 'Dhakha'ir al-Uqba fi Manaqib Dhawi al-Qurba', p.30.

(38) Ibid., p.67.

(39) This narration, with a slight difference, in wording, was stated by Tabarani in 'al-Mu'jam al-Kabir', vol 1, p.24 (MSS). It is also stated by Muttaqi Hindi in 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.6, p.220, and also in 'Dhakha'ir al-Uqba'. Tabarani, quoting Umar, says: the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: The agnation of the sons of a female return to their father, except the two sons of Fatima, as their agnation returns to me and I am their father.

(40) *Hadith al-Thaqalain* as stated by Tirmidhi in his 'Sahih-Manaqib Ahlul-

Bait', vol.2, p.380, quoting Zaid ibn Arqam. He adds: This is a good and strange narration, referred to by Hakim in 'Mustadrak al-Sahihain', vol.3, p.109, on the authority of Zaid ibn Arqam, too. It is told by Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Masnad*, on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khidri, vol.3, p.17. Also narrated by Tabarani in 'al-Mu'jam al-Kabir', vol.1.p.129. (Miss), quoted by Muhibuddin Tabari in his 'Dhakha'ir', p.16, citing Ahmad.

(41) Shabrawi Shafi'i, 'al-Ithaf bihub al-Ashraf', p.22.

(42) Ibid.

(43) Balaghi, 'Aala' al-Rahman', p.44, 2nd ed.

(44) Ibid.

(45) Balaghi, 'Aala' al-Rahman', p.43, 2nd ed.

(46) Shabrawi Shafi, 'al-Ithaf bi Hub al-Ashraf', the auther's preface, p.26.

(47) Abu Na'im, Hulyat Awliya, vol.4, p.306, quoted by Firuzabadi in 'Fadha'il al-Khamsa min al-Sihah al-Sitta', vol.2, p.64. Stated by Ibn Hijr in 'Zawa'id Musnad al-Bazza', ch. 'Ahlul-Bait' from ibn Bazzaz in 'Majma' al-Zawa'id', vol.9, p.63. It is also narrated by Tabarani in 'al-Mu'jam al-Kabir', vol.1, p.125 (*Masnad* of Imam Hasan (a.s.) in al-Dhahiriya Library, Damascus. It is narrated by Muhibuddin Tabari in 'al-Dhakh'ir', p.20. It is also stated by Hakim in 'al-Mustadrak' with some additions in its wardings, vol.2, p.343, quoted by Muttaqi in 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.6, p.216.

(48) Firuzabadi, 'Fada'il Khamsa min al-Sihah al-Sitta', vol2, p.61.

(49) Ibid, p.65.

(50) Ibid.

(51) Ibid.

(52) Shabrawi Shafi'i, 'al-Ithaf bi Hub al-Ashraf', p.20, narrated by Hakim in 'Mustadrak al-Sahihayn', vol.3, p.149, who says it is an authenticated hadith. Also stated by Baihaqi and Ibn Hajr in his 'al-Sawa'iq'.

(53) Firuzabadi, ibid, p.68.

(54) Ibn Sabbagh Maliki in 'al-Fusul al-Muhimma fi Ahwal al-A'imma', pp.25&26.

(55) Shabrawi Shafi'i, 'al-Ithaf bi Hub al-Ashraf', pp.17&18.

(56) Ibn Sabbagh Maliki, 'Fusul al-Muhimma fi Ahwal al-A'imma', p.29.

(57) Stated by Suyuti in 'Ihya al-Mayit' quoting Tabarani, on the authority of Ibn Umar, p.20. It is also stated by Haithami in 'Majma' al-Zawa'id', vol.9, p.163, and also by Ibn Hajar in 'Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa', p.90.

(58) Stated by Suyuti in 'Ihya al-Mayit' quoting Tabarani, on the authority of Jabir ibn Abdulla, p.22. It is also satated by Haithami in 'Majma al-Zawa'id', vol.9, p.172, quoting Tabarani in his 'al-Awsat'

- (59) Khatib Baghdadi in his 'Tarikh', vol.2, p.146, with an added text. It was also narrated by Muttaqi in 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.6 p.217, under No.3800. Suyuti, in 'Ihya' al-Mayit fi Fadha'il Ahlul-Bait', p.37 has also stated it.
- (60) Tabari, 'Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba', p.17.
- (61) Ibid, p.17.
- (62) Cited by Suyuti in 'Ihya' al-Mayit', quoting Dailami on the authority of Abu Sa'id, p.43; also stated by Manawi in 'Faiz al-Qadir', vol 1, p.515, referring to Dailami's 'al-Firdawa'.
- (63) Narrated by Suyuti in 'Ihya' al-Mayit', p.40&41, who refers to Dailami's narration on the authority of Ali (a.s.). It is also stated by Muttaqi in 'Kanz al-Ummal', vol.8, p.278, and by Ibn Hijr in his 'Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa', p.103.
- (64) Narrated by Suyuti in 'Ihya' al-Mayit', p.39, from Tabarani on the authority of Abdulla Ibn Abbas, and also stated by Haithami in 'Majma' al-Zawa'id', vol.10, p.346, and by Tabari in 'al-Kabir' and in 'al-Awsat'.
- (65) Narrated by Suyuti in 'Ihya' al-Mayit', quoting Tabarani, on the authority of Muttalib ibn Abdulla, quoting his father, p.38, by Haithami in 'Majma' al-Zawa'id', vol.5, p.195; by Ibn Athir in 'Asad al-Ghaba', vol.3, p.137, and by Ibn Na'im in 'Hilyat al-Awliya', vol.9, p.64, quoting Ali (a.s.).
- (66) Shaikh Tabrisi 'Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran', the Preface, Ch. 'The Fifth Art.'
- (67) Ibid.
- (68) Shaikh Lutf Allah Safi, 'Ma' Khatib fi Khututih al-Aridha', p.42.
- (69) Shaikh Tusi, 'Tafsir al-Bayan', vol.1, p.3, Najaf ed.
- (70) Shaikh Balaghi, 'Aala' Ar Rahman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an', vol.1, p.18, 2nd ed.,
- (71) Shaikh Balaghi, 'Aala' al-Rahman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an', the Preface.
- (72) Allama Majlisi, 'Bihar al-Anwar', vol.47, p.270, 2nd ed.
- (73) Raghhib Isfahani, 'Mu'jam Mufradat alfad al-Quran', *Mashaf*.
- (74) Tabrasi, 'Ma'jam al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an'.
- (75) Kulaini, 'al-Usul min al-Kafi', vol.2, Kitab 'Fadhl al-Qur'an', p.598, 3rd ed.
- (76) Ibid, vol.2, p.603.
- (77) Ibid, vol.2, p.605.
- (78) Ibid, vol.2, p.606.
- (79) ibid, p.607
- (80) ibid, p.609.
- (81) ibid, p.613.
- (82) 'Nahjul-Balagha', Sermon No.198 English translation by Syed Ali Reza.
- (83) Tabrasi, 'Majma' al-Bayan', Preface, p.13.

- (84) Turaihi, 'Majma' al-Bahrani', under 'Fasara'.
- (85) Tabrasi, 'Majma' al-Bayan', Preface, p.13.
- (86) Tabrasi, 'Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an', The Preface, p 13.
- (87) Ibid.
- (88) Ibid.
- (89) Balaghi, 'Sahih al-Kafi', vol.1, p.5.
- (90) Zainuddin Aamili, 'al-Diraya', p.113
- (91) Muhammad al-Baqir Bihbudi, 'Sahih al-Kafi', vol.1, p.8. of 1401 A.H ed.
- (92) Ibid, p.9
- (93) Ibid, p.11.
- (94) Ibid.
- (95) Ibid.
- (96) Tabrasi, 'Mishkat al-Anwar' . Ch. 'al-Akhadh bil Sunna'
- (97) Ibid.
- (98) Ibid.
- (99) Ibid.
- (100) Ibid.
- (101) Tabrasi, 'Mishkat al-Anwar', ch. 'al-AKhidh bil al-Sunna
- (102) Mentioned by Allama Sayid Muhsin Aamili, 'A'yan al-Shi'a' ' vol.3, p. 34
3rd ed.
- (103) Kulaini Razi, 'al-Usul min al-Kafi', vol.1, p 58. In the margin of the book it is said: As he wanted to ask: 'Tell me about the opinion which you prefer by guessing and by inferring, the Imam (a.s.) prohibited him from this guessing, telling him that they say nothing but out of determination and conviction, and according to what they had received from the Master of the Messengers (s.a.w.)
- (104) Shaikh Baha'i (died 1030 A.H.), 'al-Wajiza' (General Principles of the science of *hadith*) p.22.
- (105) Shaikh Mufid, 'Al-Irshad', ch. 'Merits of Imam Ali ibn Husan'.
- (106) Abu Alam, 'Ahlul-Bait'.
- (107) Ibn Jawzi, 'Tadhkirat al-Khawas' Ch. on Ali ibn Husain (a.s.).
- (108) Tabrasi, 'I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda', Texts proving his *Imamate*, p 252. 'Manaqib Aal Abi Talib', vol.3
- (109) Stated by Shaikh Mufid in 'al-Irshad', by Ibn Sabbagh Maliki in 'al-Fusul al-Muhimma' by Ya'qubi in his 'History', by Shablanji in 'Nur al-Absar', and by Ibn Jawzi in 'Tadhkirat al-Khawas'.
- (110) Asad Haidar, 'al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhahib al-Arba'a', vol.2, quoting from 'Shadharat al-Dhahab', vol.1, p.149.
- (111) Hashim Ma'ruf Husaini, 'The Biography of the Twelve Imams', vol 2, p.

198, 1st ed.

(112) Allama Sayyid Muhsin Amin, 'A'yan al-Shi'a', vol.3, p.34, 3rd ed.

(113) Ibn Shahr Ashub, 'Manaqib Aal Abi Talib', Ecologies of the descendents of Abi Talib, vol.4, p.248.

(114) Muhammad Abu Zuhra, 'Imam al-Sadiq', p.3.

(115) Dar -al-Tawhid, 'Imam al-Sadiq'.

(116) Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qub ibn Ja'far ibn Wahab, Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol.2, p.381.

(117) Allama Majlisi, 'Bihar al-Anwar', vol. 11, p.24 and vol.48, quoting ibn Shahr Ashub's Manaqib, vol.3, p.411

(118) Hafiz Razi, 'al-Jurh wa al-Ta'dil', vol.4, ch J

(119) Muhammad ibn Ahmad Dhahabi, 'Mizan al-I'tidal', vol 3, p.209

(120) Kamal Din Muhammad ibn Talha Shafi'i, 'Mutalib al-Sa'ul', p.18, quoted from Muhammad Ali Dakhil, 'A'immatuna'

(121) Mu'min Shablanji, 'Nur al-Absar', p.218, quoted from Ali Dakhil, 'A'immatuna'.

(122) Ibn Jawzi, 'Tadhkirat al-Khawas', p.198

(123) Shaikh Mufid, 'al-Irshad'

(124) Ibn Jawzi, 'Tadhkirat al-Khawas', p 202.

(125) 'Madina al-Ma'ajiz', p 450.

(126) 'Nur al-Absar', p.149

(127) 'Shadharat al-Dhahab', vol 2, p.129.

(128) 'Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya', vol.11, p.15.

(129) Ibn Jawzi, 'Tadhkirat al-Khawas', p 202.

(130) Ibid , p.203.

(131) 'Al-Fusul al-Muhimma fi Ahwal al-A'mma', p.290

(132) Narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Musnad*, vol.4, p.104, *hadith* no.4282, published by Dar Ihya' al-Sunna al-Nabawiya.

(133) Ibid.

(134) Kulami, 'Usul al-Kafi', vol. 'The Book of Tawhid' p.216 (English Translation printed by Wofis - Tehran)

(135) Ibid.

(136) Ibid.

(137) Ibid

(138) Ibid.

(139) Ibid.

(140) Ibid

(141) Ibid.

- (142) Ibid.
- (143) Bahbudi, *Sahih al-Kafi*, vol.1, on 'Compulsion and Delegation'.
- (144) Imam Ali (a.s.), '*Nahjul-Balagha*', saying No.78.
- (145) Shaikh Saduq, '*Kitab al-Tawhid*' wa '*Uyun Akbar al-Rida*' and *Tabataba'i*, '*Tafsir al-Mizan*', vol.1, on 'Compulsion and Delegation'.
- (146) *Tabataba'i*, '*Tafsir al-Mizan*', vol.1, on 'Compulsion and Delegation'.
- (147) Ibid.
- (148) Ibid.
- (149) Tabrasi, '*Majma al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*', in the interpretation of the above verse.
- (150) Nawbakhti, '*Firaq al-Shi'a*', p.59, ed. 1388 H.
- (151) Ibid., p.60. (152) Ibid. p.44.
- (153) Ibid. p.45.
- (154) Ibid.
- (155) Ibid. p.21.
- (156) Ibid. p.43.
- (157) Tabrasi, '*Mishkat al-Anwar fi Ghurar al-Akhbar*', p.66, 2nd ed.
- (158) Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.47, p.378, 3rd edition.
- (159) Tabrasi, '*Makarim al-Akhlaq*', p.39, al-A'jami Foundation Publication.
- (160) Tabrasi, *ibid.*, p:67.
- (161) Ibid, p.66.
- (162) Ibid.
- (163) Ibid.
- (164) Ibid, p.72.
- (165) Ibid, p.77.
- (166) Kulaini, '*Al- Usul min al-Kafi*', vol.2, Ch. on 'Injustice .
- (167) Ibid.
- (168) Ibid.
- (169) Ibid
- (170) Ibid.
- (171) Ibid.
- (172) Ibid.
- (173) Ibid.
- (174) Tabrasi, '*Mishkat al-Anwar*'. p.315
- (175) Ibid, p.316.
- (176) Ibid, p.318.
- (177) Ibid, p.316.
- (178) Ibid, p.316

- (179) Majlisi, 'Bihar al-Anwar', vol.75, p.372.
- (180) Mahmud Abu Zuhra, 'Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) p.139.
- (181) The second Martyr, 'al-Rawda al-Bahiya fi Sharh al-Lum'a al-Dimishqiya' by the First Martyr, vol.3, p.213, 2nd ed.
- (182) Khuwarzmi, 'Maqtal al-Husain', vol.1, p.88.
- (183) Shaikh Mufid, 'al-Irshad', p.204.
- (184) Abdul-Razzaq Muqarram, 'Maqtal al-Husain', pp.141&142.
- (185) Allama Majlisi, 'Bihar al-Anwar', vol.47, p.325, 3rd ed.
- (186) Abu Faraj Isfahani, 'Maqatil al-Talibiyin', p.447.
- (187) Ibid, p.455.
- (188) Allama Majlisi, 'Bihar al-Anwar', vol.48, p.151.
- (189) Ibid, p.165.
- (190) Ibn Shahr Ashub, 'al-Manaqib', vol.4, Ch. 'Haml al-Imam al-Baqir Ila al-Sham'.
- (191) Ibid.
- (192) Muhammad ibn Jarir Tabari, 'Dala'il al-Imama', Ch. 'Hayat al-Imam al-Baqir' (a.s.).
- (193) Mahmud Abu Zuhra, 'al-Imam al-Sadiq', p.138.
- (194) Sibt ibn Jawzi, 'Tadhkirat al-Khawas', p.359.
- (195) Ibn Sabagh Maliki, 'al-Fusul al-Muhima, Life of Imam Hasan al-Askari'.
- (196) 'Bidayat Mujtahid', vol.1, p.125, quoted from 'al-Fiqh ala al-Madhahib al-Khamsa', by Muhammad Jawad Mughniya.
- (197) Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Mughniya, 'al-Fiqh ala al-Madhahib al-Khamsa'.
- (198) Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Mughniya, 'al-Fiqh ala al-Madhahib al-Khamsa'.
- (199) Shaikh Abbas Qummi, 'Safinat al-Bihar', Bab al-Kadhi, p.474.
- (200) Abu Dawud, 'Sunan' Abi Dawud, vol.4, Bab Ifsha' al-Salam, p.350.
- (201) Khawarzami, 'al-Manaqib', vol.5, quoted from 'al-Haqa'iq fi al-Jawami' wa al-Fawariq', vol.1, p. 123, ed. 1356 A.H.
- (202) Ibid, p.122.
