

Muslim's Guide – Guidance and Ethics

By Ayatollah al-Uthmah as-Sayyed Muhammad Saeed al-Hakeem (ha)

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Although this book includes laws and advices addressed to the expatriates by His Eminence, the grand authority Sayyid Al-Hakeem from the Hawza of the holy city of Najaf in Iraq, but its content in general applies to the Muslim minorities worldwide.

It has been translated originally by Dr. Yasin Al-Jibouri. Because of the importance of its content, it has been revised and corrected by Sheikh Naseer Al-Sa'adawi and Sheikh Ali Abbas. They have exerted great efforts in correcting and editing the translation and ensuring that the content of the book is according to the edicts of the religious authority Sayyid Al-Hakeem (May Allah prolong his life).

We hope that the material of this book benefits all Muslims.

THE AUTHOR

Introduction:

The Ahl al-Bayt School of thought is characterized by the phenomena of creativity in energizing movement of the Islamic thought in its different branches and various fields of beliefs, Quran, education, jurisprudence and other issues where it is described with depth, clearness, originality and vitality which in reality represents the genuine approach of Islam and its live culture.

The school of Shia *Ijtihad* has tried to reflect the reality of Islam from the purest sources by depending on the teachings of the pure Imams (peace be upon them) who directed their followers to refer to the righteous scholars in the matters of religion and life and to know their high status, because of their expertise in the matters of religion.

When we refer to the contemporary history of the holy city of Najaf which has had a dominant presence in the religious leadership and grand authority for Shi'ism, and what it contributed in this field, we can see that despite its harsh suffering, it has generated for the *Marja'iyya* and *Ijtihad* new figureheads and leaders, which indicates the depth of its originality, vigor of its scientific entity and its fulfillment of the true principles for which the infallible Ahl al-Bayt sacrificed.

Amongst the bearers of this leadership is the author, His Eminence, the religious authority, the Grand Ayatollah Al-Sayyid Al-Hakeem.

He is Sayyid Mohamed Saeed, the son of Ayatollah Sayyid Mohamed Ali, the son of Sayyid Ahmed, the son of Sayyid Mohsin, the son of Sayyid Ahmed, the son of Sayyid Mahmood, the son of Sayyid Ibrahim (the Doctor), the son of Ameer Sayyid Ali Al-Hakeem, the son of Ameer Morad al-Tabatabai. His noble lineage reaches Ibrahim Tabataba, the son of Ismaeel Al-Dibaj, the son of Ibrahim Al-Ghamr, the son of Hassan Al-Muthanna, the son of Imam Hassan (peace be upon him).

He is the oldest grandson of the master of Shi'ism and their religious authority, the Grand Ayatollah Al-Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakeem and He (may Allah have mercy on his soul) is also his father's maternal uncle.

His Birth:

He was born in the holy city of Najaf on 8th Thul-Qa'dah in the year 1354 which corresponds to 1934.

His father (may Allah have mercy on his soul) raised and took a special care of him as he noticed his eldest son's special capability and distinction in learning the religious sciences. Under the

guidance and direction of his father he began his religious studies before he reached the age of ten years. At the same time, he taught him various moral and noble values that became obvious characteristics in his personality.

His Teachers:

He studied under the following teachers in this sequence:

1. His great father, His Eminence Ayatollah Sayyid Mohamed Ali al-Tabatabai Al-Hakeem (May Allah have mercy on his soul). He started teaching him from the introductory subjects like the Arabic language, grammar, logic, eloquence, jurisprudence and its fundamentals, until he finished most of his intermediate studies of the *Hawza* (known as the level of *Al-Sutooh*).
2. His maternal grandfather, the Shia religious authority, the Grand Ayatollah, the late Sayyid Mohsin Al-Tabatabai Al-Hakeem (may Allah have mercy on his soul), where he attended a great deal of his studies in jurisprudence and wrote his dictations.
3. The teacher of jurists and *Mujtahids*, the Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Hussein al Hilli (may Allah have mercy on his soul) where he attended his studies in the sciences of religious jurisprudence and the fundamentals of jurisprudence.
4. The late Shia religious authority, the Grand Ayatollah, Al-Sayyid Al-Khoi (may Allah have mercy on his soul), in whose classes of the fundamentals of jurisprudence he attended for two years.

His Teachings and Students:

After he finished teaching several sessions in the *Sotooh* level in the *Hawza*, he started in the year 1388 to teach the level of *Bahth al-Kharij* – the highest level of *Hawza* classes – until he finished his first course in the fundamentals of the jurisprudence in year 1399, and then started another one. He continued to teach and write despite the harsh conditions of detention that took place from 1403 until 1411.

In the subject of jurisprudence, he started teaching *Bahth al-Kharij* in 1390 and he is still teaching despite the difficult circumstances for years. He graduated many respected scholars in the *Hawza* and they are now amongst elite teachers in the *Hawzas* of Najaf and Qom and elsewhere.

His Works:

In addition to his writings during his studies at the level of *Sutooh*, which were characteristic in their investigative vigor and depth, the following particular books have emerged:

1. *Al-Mukam* in the fundamentals of jurisprudence, comprising of a detailed full course in the fundamentals of the jurisprudence in six volumes.
2. *Misbah al-Minhaj*, an expanded deductive work on jurisprudence. To date sixteen volumes have been published.
3. *Minhaj al-Saliheen*, his treatise on the practical laws of Islam according to his edicts (i.e. his *Risalah Amaliyyah*), printed in three volumes.
4. *Al-Manasik*, the *Hajj* and *Umrah* guide as per his edicts.
5. *Fee Rihab al-Aqeeda*, a detailed dialogue of a Jordanian personality with His Eminence on the issues of beliefs, in three volumes
6. *Hiwar fil-Marja'iyah*, a dialogue with His Eminence about the issues of religious authority.
7. *Murshid al-Mughtarib*, translated into English as "Muslims' Guide in non-Muslim Countries" the book which is before you.
8. *Al-Hiwariyat*, a treatise presented in a form of dialogue in which the edicts of His Eminence are presented in easy-to-understand format.
9. The *Fiqh* of Computers and the Internet, also translated into English.
10. The *Fiqh* of Human Cloning, also translated into English.
11. A message to the expatriate Muslims.
12. A message to the religious preachers, scholars and the *Hawza* students, also translated into Persian and Urdu.
13. A message to the believers in Azerbaijan, translated into the Azeri language.
14. A message to the pilgrims of the Holy House of God.

...and many more.

His Detention (1983-1991)

After Saddam Al-Tikriti's seizure of power and the removal of his predecessor, Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, in June 17th, 1979, intensive pressure and hardship of the regime against Iraqis was

increased, especially against the scholars of *Hawza* in Najaf. His Eminence decided to stay in the *Hawza* and not leave the country, and to tolerate the mentioned pressures and dangers, in order to contribute to the maintenance of this scientific and cultural entity and at the same time not to grant the government its wish in evacuating the *Hawza* from its scholars in its bid to control it.

The pressure reached its peak during the Iran-Iraq war after the plot of Saddam failed to bring down the young Islamic revolution in Iran by a quick war. When the Iranian military attacks increased in the battlefields, Saddam convened a conference of “Muslim Clergymen” in Baghdad with the hope that it will be attended by Muslim scholars from inside Iraq as well as from other countries and he named it as “The Public Islamic Conference”, in order to pressurize the Iranians to stop the war

It was natural that he pressured the scholars of the *Hawza* to participate in this conference; he paid special attention to the Al-Hakeem family because of its respected scientific and public rank inside and outside Iraq. This intensive pressure had been in various ways of threats and intimidation. When the family refused to participate, Saddam ordered the arrest of the family two weeks later after the end of the conference, as an act of revenge against their noble position which became a symbol in the history of modern Iraq, especially when there was no clear religious scientific entity in the Arabic *Hawza* in Iraq at that time.

It was His Eminence and his father, Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Ali Al-Hakeem (may Allah have mercy on his soul), as well as his brothers and their sons, were among the detainees. The government focused on their interrogation of some of the Al-Hakeem family in the General Directorate of Security, one of them being His Eminence himself; but Almighty Allah mercifully saved him from the evil of the oppressors.

Isolation in the prison of Abu Ghraib:

In March 1985, the regime transferred the detainees of the Al-Hakeem family from the detention facility of the General Directorate of Security in Baghdad to the isolated sections of Abu Ghraib prison, after the executions of sixteen martyrs in two sessions. Despite the harsh living conditions in these isolated sections, it had opened a relatively big opportunity of scientific and educational activities for the prisoners of the Al-Hakeem family, because of the large number of prisoners and their religious and educational interests. All of this gave His Eminence the chance for further scientific, educational and social activities inside the prison.

1. Scientific and cultural activities:

His Eminence was active in teaching his family members – especially as many of the detainees from the Al-Hakeem family were his students before the detention – so he started two classes of *Bahth al-Kharij* in the sciences of the *Hawza*: one of them in jurisprudence and the other in the fundamentals of jurisprudence.

He also paid attention to the revival of the religious events by giving general cultural lectures that have had significant impact during the harsh circumstances. He also answered questions in various issues.

2. Social and educational activities:

The poor conditions of the prison, the spread of deadly diseases and disconnection of the prisoners from their families – as they were not allowed to see their families and their families did not know their fate – called for the need to someone that can reflect parental care and attention, which was represented by His Eminence (may Allah prolong his life) who undertook this responsibility and played this role for thousands of detainees who were staying in these cells.

He said, during the peak of hardship in the isolated sections in the prison of Abu Ghraib, to one of his sons: “If there were no benefits in our plight, i.e. the plight of the Al-Hakeem family, except to decrease the suffering of the prisoners, then it is sufficient”.

3. Withstanding in the interrogations:

Detainees and prisoners in Iraq usually faced various types of severe torture which made it difficult to withstand and endure. His Eminence personally encountered various kinds of bloody and harsh torture, such as being beating with batons and given electric shocks, but he faced the tragedy with rare spirit and solid patience and he was urging the rest of the detainees to be patient and withstand the hardships and to depend on Almighty Allah.

After his release on 5th Thul-Qa’dah, 1411, along with the rest of the members of the Al-Hakeem family, after the execution of some of them, the regime pressured His Eminence in many various ways to accept the official religious leadership (*Marja’iyyah*) but he strongly refused while insisting on the independency of the Shi’ite religious leadership from the political regimes. Despite that, he remained insistent on taking charge of supporting the *Hawza* in the holy city of Najaf and helping thousands of needy families in Iraq including many of the families of martyrs and detainees. He was also supporting religious propagation secretly away from the surveillance of the tyrant’s supporters.

When His Eminence traveled for medical treatment outside Iraq, many believers urged him not to go back to Iraq especially when the war was expected in the near future but he refused and insisted on returning to the trench of the religious *Hawza* in Najaf to be closer to the Iraqi believers in their long plight.

His Religious Leadership:

After the death of Ayatollah Sayyid al-Khoie (may Allah have mercy on his soul), many people started to follow him in *Taqlid*. Lots of believers and the *Hawza* scholars from inside and outside Iraq, including some leading scholars and religious authorities, were insisting on His Eminence

to announce his religious leadership. So, he assumed the responsibility in a critical and complex set of circumstances experienced by believers in various parts of the globe.

The concerns of His Eminence are characterized within the following themes:

(A) Within the boundaries of the religious *Hawza* – this religious institute that is undergoing a heavy responsibility in facing various situations and diverse enemies' plans – his eminence was concerned with upbringing a generation of students characterized by piety along with various Islamic sciences. His eminence addressed the students of the *Hawza* with a message where he focused on a range of important points that students supposed to be committed to them.

(B) He paid great attention to the Shiite communities, especially those who live away from the religious centers and suffer difficult circumstances; his directives were received by the people in the West and his message to support them and guide them in facing various problems in living in non-Muslim countries.

(C) He saw the importance of the connection with the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet and his family (peace be upon them) which was reflected in his personal lifestyle, as he is committed to reciting daily and repeatedly the Holy Qur'an and he – in an answer to a question addressed to His Eminence – stressed on the importance of considering the Qur'an, the authentic books of narrations, *Nahj al-Balagha* and *Saheefa al-Sajjadiyya* as key references for scholars and preachers and speakers.

(D) He holds a deep bond with the household of the Prophet (peace be upon them) and the dedication to their love. This is clearly shown through his repeated guidance and in various occasions to pay great attention to the rituals related to Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) and other Islamic events. And this is clearly shown by his yearly lectures in the month of Muharram and his interest in reciting the story of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) personally.

(E) He emphasizes the close relationship with the nation and the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). His Eminence does not waste any chance to give advice and guidance through lectures or speeches in the holy city of Najaf and elsewhere.

(F) He pays great attention to supporting the needy families, which is clearly shown by his various support for them and by establishing monthly stipends to thousands of needy families in Iraq.

(G) His office oversaw the reconstruction and renovation of various dilapidated holy sites, like the project of the renovation the huge *Sahla* mosque in Kufah and the building of many mosques in various cities of Iraq and Syria.

(H) He supports religious preaching, sending religious preachers and supporting the preaching activities in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, newly independent republics in central Asia, Syrian

cities, northern Iraq and Iraqi refugee camps in Iran, and other areas of Iran. He also supports the establishment of educational and religious centers in various places, as well as the spread of the teachings of the Ahl Al-Bayt in the Muslim countries, especially the republics of central Asia.

(I) His office has established relationships with Islamic centers and institutes in the United States and Europe through direct contact, sending various Islamic books, and answering their various questions. The website of His Eminence's office provides Islamic material in the Arabic, English and Urdu languages in an attempt to deliver the Islamic teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) across to different parts of the globe, as well as answering the questions raised by believers and others in various topics of jurisprudence, beliefs, etc.

(J) He follows the events of interest to the Islamic world and the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and the challenges they face, and to take the appropriate steps, such as the oppression that is taking place against the Muslims in Palestine, Lebanon, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Pakistan, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds; peace and blessings be upon our master, Muhammad, and his good and pure Progeny, and may the curse of Allah be on all their enemies until Resurrection Day.

Allah Almighty has decreed and destined that many believers from various nations and countries are suddenly forced, during successive periods, to part with their peoples and societies, migrate from their homelands, leaving them behind. Many of them have settled in foreign lands which they made home and lived among societies that differ from their religion and creed, ideals and ethics, norms of conduct and companionship, methods of life and of making a living.

It is only natural that their problems and difficulties were renewed with which they were never familiar so that they would be able to come out of them and get over them. But the reality imposes itself on many of them, forcing them to treatments and solutions which they loved or hated and which they had to accept and to which they surrender in order to acclimate with the societies in which they live and the conditions in which they found themselves.

The most complex and serious of these problems are those of creed, religion, principles, ethics, norms of conduct and companionship which are the greatest assets a believer has and the most precious thing earned by man because in them lie his worldly happiness and salvation from eternal perdition in the Hereafter. They are, after all, the foundations of his humanity and the perfection of his character. If he is stripped of them, he will be counted among freely grazing animals whose concern is their feed and their business is to look for it in the garbage. Nay! He may be lower than them and more beastly.

The longer the period lasts and the more their number grows, the more the problems aggravate, becoming complicated in serious repercussions, the extent of which is known only by Allah Almighty; so, we belong to Allah, and to Him shall we return. Praise to Allah, which nobody besides whom is praised for what we disliked; surely He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy, the Master of the faithful.

Leaving matters to the reality that exists there, to the nature of interaction between it and the incoming belief-based presence, may lead in the end to the believers being assimilated into these societies, getting lost in them, their identity and personality diminishing, by being stripped off their religion, principles and ethics, which all result

in a great calamity equivalent to none at all, one which requires all efforts to repel and to take precautions against.

Then complaints, pleas for help, questions and inquiries about edicts started reaching us in order to treat these problems and to come out with suitable solutions for them in order to safeguard the religious measures, and to cling to the honorable principles and lofty morals, which all make up the mission of Islam – actually of all divinely-revealed creeds – and what they care for greatly and emphasize.

We had sent a written message to our believing expatriate brothers in which we dealt with some of these problems, and the message was published at the time, then we followed it with issuing a number of edicts related to expatriates and to the reality in which they live, explaining the ruling of the Sharia relevant to those realities.

But the matter seems to be more serious and complicated than what the above suffices for, and a wider effort and more comprehensive work became a necessity due to those problems branching out and getting all the time more and more complicated, because of the passing of much time, the seriousness of repercussions and the negative outcomes of the sharp contrast between non-Muslim societies [on one hand] and the believer's concern about religious teachings and the Sharia laws which incorporate all aspects of life, the lofty concepts in morals, ethics and conduct [on the other].

The said effort is represented in collecting a greater number of edicts and issues that concern expatriates, limiting the answers to explaining what the Sharia rules in their regard, or providing guidance and a direction as the situation demanded then, classifying them into the various areas of Islamic law, and some general chapters that are suitable for the environment surrounding expatriates. All this is to be presented through addressing the expatriates, providing them with pieces of advice and general directions that suit their situation in an attempt to prevent perils from reaching them, to safeguard their character and entity when it comes to creed and religion, to lofty principles, ethics and exemplary conduct. In doing so, we have sometimes followed the same outlines which we had stated in our message to the expatriates to which we referred above.

PIECES OF ADVICE AND DIRECTIVES

To our believing expatriates wherever they are in the east of the earth or in the west:

The peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be with you all

It is not easy for us to address you, with the distance that separates us from you, finding visiting you to be impossible, so we may console you in your dilemma and share your grief in your affliction. You parted with your peoples and loved ones, leaving behind the companions with whom you lived and felt comfortable about, abandoning your homes and lands which you loved and which loved you, leaving behind your environments and societies with which you were familiar and which found you as such, suffering the loneliness of estrangement and the problems of dispersion and absence of home.

But you have solace in your great Prophet and his pure Progeny, peace and blessings of Allah be with them all, and in their sincere followers, who were targeted by the afflictions, trials and tribulations of this world:

*Homeless, they are, outcast from their abodes,
As if they committed an unforgivable sin.*

Such is the way Allah fares with life. He singled out His friends to be afflicted and to suffer, so much so that life turned into a prison for them as many traditions have stated. He, the most Exalted One, has said, "...Or do you think that you shall enter the garden (of bliss, Paradise) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and the believers who were with him cried out, 'When (will) God's help come?' Ah! Surely God's help is (always) near!" (Qur'an, 2:214).

Sacred traditions have consistently spoken of the believers' dilemma and their being subjected to trials and tribulations especially during the occultation period of the awaited last imam from among the Progeny of Muhammad (may Allah hasten his reappearance). In the tradition referring to a book revealed by Allah Almighty to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) containing the names of the Imams (peace be upon them), it says the following at the end of it when mentioning the status of the believers during the period of occultation: "They will be killed and burnt, and they will be terrified, scared and apprehensive; the earth will be colored with their blood, causing their women to weep and wail. Such, indeed, are My true friends. Through them do I repel every dark blind sedition. Through them do I disallow earthquakes and remove chains and shackles. Upon these blessings from their Lord and mercy descend, and it is they who are on the right guidance."^[i]

All this is not due to Allah Almighty taking them lightly or humiliating them or looking down at them; rather, it is due to their taking this worldly life lightly [as compared to the Hereafter] and to holding it in contempt, so much so that the Infallible One (peace be upon them all) have said,

“Had life in this world equaled with Allah the wing of a mosquito, He would not have given His enemy a sip of water to drink.”^[ii] This is so because His believing servants are capable of bearing responsibly, of remaining firm in their principles and preserving when facing misfortune.

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "We are patient and our Shi'ites (followers) are even more patient than we are." He was asked by someone, "May I be sacrificed for your sake! How can your Shi'ites be more patient than you?" He said, "We are patient about what we know, while our Shi'ites are patient about what they do not know."^[iii]

This is especially so in respect to the believers of the time of occultation, as many narrations have collectively praised them. In some of them it is mentioned that had Allah not have known that amongst the believers of the clear-sighted people are those who stand firm on the belief of the Imamate of the Twelfth Imam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during his occultation, He would not have taken him into occultation from them.

In a narrative by Abu Khalid al-Kabuli, Imam Zainul-Abidin (peace be upon him) is quoted as saying to him, "O Abu Khalid! The people of the time of his occultation, those who recognize his Imamate and wait for his reappearance are better than those of all times, because Allah Almighty granted them reason, comprehension and knowledge to the extent that the occultation for them is the same as though he never disappeared. He places them in that period of time in the position of those who perform *Jihad* with the sword in the way of Allah in the company of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny). They are the truly loyal ones and in all reality our followers, those who invite to the way of Allah both openly and secretly."^[iv] And there are many such traditions.

The Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have been quoted in many traditions as saying that those who are afflicted the most are the prophets, then their successors, the most exemplary after the most exemplary, and that Allah promises a believing servant of His to test him through trials and tribulations. If He loves one of His servants, He would pour affliction on him. Other lofty concepts are contained in such traditions.

All this is as such so that the Almighty may multiply the rewards of the believers, treasure for them the best of His rewards, wipe out their sins, elevate their status, so they may not become accustomed to live in ease and comfort in the life of this world and find pleasure in doing so and thus become deceived by its decoration, go to extremes in their straying and oblivion, forgetting what is awaiting them and behaving like loose and wandering animals or even more lowlier.

Yet Allah Almighty does not bestow grants on His servants in the Hereafter arbitrarily. Rather, He has made life in this world as an abode of trial and tribulation: Whoever remains firm on the path of righteousness, perseveres during the times of crises and performs his obligations, will win a great reward and a beautiful mention. Trial in his regard will turn into mercy and good examination. But whoever fails the test and does not stay firm on the path of righteousness, he will be the loser, and the trial and tribulation will turn to be a curse on him; surely we seek refuge with Allah Almighty against that.

So, praise to Allah Almighty for the goodness of His trial and beauty of His faring with His believing servants. We plead to Him, Praise is all due to Him, through His bounties and kindness, to enable us and yourselves to stay firm on the path of righteousness and to come out of these trials successfully, to lead people to success, to be neither disappointed nor losers, and that He does not count us among those whom He describes in this verse: "There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge: If good befalls them, they are well content with it; but if a trial comes to them, they turn upon their faces: They lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is a manifest loss!" (Qur'an, 22:11). We also plead to Him, the most Great, through His favors and mercy, to help you in your dilemma, to look after you in your estrangement, to surround you with His care and affection, to protect you from misleading seditions, to lead your steps towards what is most straightforward, to guide you to the most straight path; surely He is Compassionate with the believers, most Merciful.

From your side, you have to rely on Allah Almighty and resort to Him, then you should look at your affairs with awareness, consideration, insight and wise management. You should assess the size of your problem and crisis and become familiar with the risks and pitfalls along your path. You should come to know the extent of magnitude of the responsibility on your shoulders towards your own selves, families, religion and principles; then you should decide with determination and resolve to seriously work towards all of this; Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, is with you; He assists you with His mercy.

But if Allah Almighty sees that you do not care about all of the above, either because you do not care about the results due to your interest in only quick material gains, or because you take problems lightly and feel confident about overcoming them because of your excessive self-confidence and conceit, He, Praise and Exaltation are His, may render your affairs to your own selves and this dilemma may turn to be the reason for His turning away from you and His abandoning you. The believers are endangered by trials and tribulations especially during our times, the times of the occultation of the Imam (may Allah hasten his reappearance) as stated in many traditions of the Imams from among the Ahl al-Bayt (peace and blessings of Allah with them).

For example, in a tradition narrated by al-Mufaddal ibn Umar, the latter said, "I heard Abu Abdullah [Al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him) saying, 'By Allah, your Imam will be absent from you for years of your lifetimes, and you will be tested until it will be said: Has he died? Has he been killed? In which valley is he? And the eyes of the faithful will be tearful about that, and you will be capsized like ships tossed by sea waves: Nobody will be saved except one whose covenant was taken by Allah, one in whose heart faith is inscribed, one whom He supported with a spirit from Him.'" He (al-Mufaddal) said, "I, therefore, wept and said, 'What, then, should we do?' He (peace be upon him) looked at the sun as its rays entered the courtyard and said, 'O Abu Abdullah! Do you see this sun?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'By Allah, our matter [Imamate] is clearer than this sun.'"^[v]

In a tradition, Ali ibn Ja`far quotes his brother, Imam al-Kadhim (peace be upon him), as saying, "When the fifth in the series of offspring of the seventh [Imam] is missed, you should fear Allah with regard to your creeds; nobody should move you away from them. ... The holder of the

position of imamate has to disappear until those who believe in it abandon it. It is, by Allah, a trial from Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, with which He tests His creation..."^[vi]

Al-Hassan ibn Mahbub quotes Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him) as saying, "There is no avoiding a very, very severe sedition in which everyone having corteges and trustees shall fail. This will take place when the Shi'ites miss the third from among my offspring..."^[vii] There are other reports which warn about the seriousness of the matter and the complexity of the problem; so, seek refuge with Allah Almighty from seditions that mislead, and resort to Him so He may assist you, support you in your dilemma and get you out of this tough test as successful winners, not as disappointed nor as losers. Think well of Allah Almighty; rely on Him, strengthen your tie with Him, for He will not abandon you, by the will of Allah Almighty, because He reciprocates the sentiment towards Him of His believing servant; He is the most merciful of those who have mercy, the most generous of those asked, and He is the master of the believers.

Now, we must draw your attention to matters that concern your religion and life which, by the will of Allah Almighty, will help you in your affairs.

^[i]Al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 36, p. 197.

^[ii]Al-Kulaini, *Al-kafi*, Vol. 2, P 246.

^[iii]*Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 93. Al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 68, p. 80.

^[iv]*Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 36, p. 387.

^[v]*Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 336, and the wording is his. *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 51, p. 147.

^[vi]Al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 51, p. 150.

^[vii]*Ibid.*, Vol. 51, P. 152.

CHAPTER 1

Beware of anxiety, panic, the feeling of weakness, failure, disappointment and despair on account of the problems that surround you, for Allah Almighty has bestowed on you the greatest and the most honored of His blessings: the great religion of Islam and the straight path of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), which He has chosen for His creation, accepting none besides it. He, great are His signs, magnanimous are His blessings, says, "This Day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as your religion" (Qur'an, 5:3). He also said, "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be amongst the losers." (Qur'an, 3:85).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) has said, "The similitude of members of my household is the ark of Noah: Whoever boards it is saved, and whoever lags behind it is drowned."^[i] One tradition states that a man complained to Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about various day-to-day difficulties that he faced. The Imam (peace be upon him) said to him, "How would you value our – the Ahl al-Bayt's – *wilaya* (mastership)?" The man said, "I value it more than whole world and everything in it." The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "You leave this place holding in your hand more than the value of the world and all that is in it; then you complain?!"

The believers have always been subjected to trials and tribulations; so, once afflicted, a believer should increase his insight with regard to his religion and should be more firm in his conviction just as the Almighty has said: "When the believers saw the confederate forces, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us, and what Allah and His Messenger told us is true.' And it only increased their faith and zeal in obedience. Some of the believers have been true to their covenant with Allah, some of them have completed their vow to (the end), while some (still) wait: But they have never changed (their determination) in the least" (Qur'an, 33:22-23).

What increases the strength of your affairs, the solace in your ordeals, your knowledge of the greatness of this blessing of Allah Almighty on you, when He makes you acquainted with Him, with His religion and friends, is that you look deeply into the condition of other nations: Contemplate on their status of being so distant from Allah Almighty, so much distracted from His call, despicably throwing themselves after material things, running after their desires, putting modesty aside, letting their families disintegrate and become lost.

The greatness and strength of this religion can manifest itself when compared with other religions: Since it entered the land as a conqueror in past centuries, its natives became dazzled by it, so they abandoned their religions without regret and embraced it willingly, joining it in hordes, believing in it obediently and without being coerced. Through its right and reality, it absorbed the errors of those who disseminated it and their negativities as well as the bad behavior of rulers who ruled in its name.

When it came under its enemies' assaults, it did not dwarf before them, and it did not retreat, whether those were ideological attacks of skepticism or physical military assaults.

Since the first ages and up to the recent times, Islam was exposed to waves of infidelity, atheism, distortion, misrepresentation; yet it remained firm before them until they retreated in disappointment as failures and losers.

It was also exposed to hostile military attacks. Perhaps the most serious attack on it during the past centuries was the fierce attack by the Mongols who destroyed everything on their path with extreme savagery. But the matter did not last long before the Mongols themselves embraced this religion and became its bearers and supporters, and after that they had a great impact in serving it and spreading it throughout the world.

More serious and harsh than the previous attacks is the attack to which the religion is exposed in this modern age — after it was exhausted by ills and ailments—the attacks to which it has been subjected after lengthy study, plans and coordination, with its crushing armies and devastating advanced weapons, bearing in one hand its culture and dazzling technology and with the other shiny slogans in order to eradicate this religion at home, strip its followers of it and keep them away from it. This was succeeded from the East by Communism which openly and persistently rejects religion and values and does not recognize anything other than materialism, trying to improve its image with slogans of justice, equality, socialism and peace.

The critical period which we and our forefathers had seen before, living it in all its pains and tragedies, wherein the calls of skeptics, naïve people and their slogans rose to target this great religion and sacred principle and its followers with being ignorant, stagnant, backward and reactionary in an attempt to keep it distant from the reality and entity of the nation and vice versa.

It was not long before those calls died down and their glitter disappeared, the attacks receded, returning disappointed and lost, and it was obvious that those slogans were false. Masks fell down, colonizers and occupiers showed their reality of being liars and false, of being selfish, aggressive and savage, of violating human rights, of being empty, unmanly, having lost individuality, in being materialistic and bestial, in being shallow, in causing families to disintegrate, and in being licentious.

Adherents of this religion stood up proud of it, calling for it, defending it, tolerating for its sake hardships and calamities. Afflictions and perils did not turn them away from it. Here you are, believing expatriates, bearing your religion in their homelands, publicly declaring your call in their homes, observing your rituals among them, feeling proud of all of this in a way which nobody ever thought possible half a century ago or more.

The same applies to believing in the imamate of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and being loyal to them, by which one's belief in Islam becomes perfect and its blessing is then completed: Groups of misguidance allied themselves against it, forged coalitions in order to resist it from its first day and until this day of ours. They fought against such belief relentlessly, afflicting it with disasters and adversities, working hard to put out its light, undermine its foundations, extract its

origin, while it increases despite all of this in strength and firmness, in manifesting itself and spreading.

Allah, the most Great, has uttered the truth when He said, "They intend to extinguish God's light with their mouths, but Allah will complete (the Revelation of) His light, even though the unbelievers may detest (it)" (Qur'an, 61:8), and when He says, "As for the scum (of the earth), it likewise disappears; it is cast out, while what is for the good of mankind remains on the earth. Thus does Allah set forth parables" (Qur'an, 61:8) and also when He says, "Do you not see how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word is like a goodly tree whose root is firmly fixed and branches (reach) to the heavens; it brings forth its fruit at all times, by its Lord's permission. So Allah sets forth parables for men so they may receive admonishment. And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree. It is pulled up by the root from the surface of the earth: It has no stability. Allah will empower those who believe with the word that stands firm in this world and in the Hereafter" (Qur'an, 14:24-27).

So, thank Allah Almighty for His great blessings on you and how beautifully He has fared with you: He acquainted you with Himself and with His friends, making you the advocates of His call, the bearers of His religion, enabling you to hold on to His bond, to befriend those who befriend Him and to be the enemies of His enemies. So raise your morale as you feel proud of it.

[i] *Al-Mustadrak ala Al-Sahihain*, Vol. 2, p. 342, and this wording exists there; *Mujma` Al-Zawa'id*, Vol. 9, p. 168; *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir*, Vol. 3, p. 45; Vol. 12, p. 27; *Al-Mu`jam Al-Awsat*, Vol. 5, p. 355; *Al-Mu`jam Al-Saghir*, Vol. 2, p. 22; *Musnad Al-Shihab*, Vol. 2, p. 273; *Al-Jami` Al-Saghir*, Vol. 1, p. 373; *Kanz Al-Ummal*, Vol. 12, p. 94; *Fayd Al-Qadir*, Vol. 2, p. 658; *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 22, p. 408; Vol. 23, p. 120; *Wasa'il Al-Shi`a*, Vol. 18, p. 19.

CHAPTER 2

The Holy One Who brought about the Sharia, Islamic Legislation, has stressed that among the greatest obligations and the most emphasized is to study the religion and to learn its rulings with regard to the beliefs and to acting upon them. Allah Almighty says, "... so ask those who possess the message if you do not know" (Qur'an, 16:43). The most Exalted One has also said, "... Nor should all the believers go forth together: If a contingent from every expedition should go forth, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they returned to them (so) that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)" (Qur'an, 9:122).

Many texts indicate that seeking knowledge is an obligation on the Muslims. In the authenticated narration of Mas`adah ibn Ziyad, the latter says, "I heard Ja`far ibn Muhammed (peace be upon him) answering a question about the meaning of this verse of the Almighty: *The conclusive argument is with Allah* (Qur'an, 6:149). He said, 'On Judgment Day, Allah will ask His servant: 'Were you a learned man?' If he says, 'Yes', He will ask him, 'Did you act according to what you learned?' And if he says that he was ignorant, He will ask him, 'Why did you not learn so you would act according to your knowledge?' Allah will nail his argument down against him; such is the *conclusive argument*."^[i]

In a tradition narrated by al-Mufaddal, the latter says that he heard Abu Abdullah Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) saying, "Take to comprehending Allah's religion, and do not be like the Bedouin, for Allah will not look at those who do not exert themselves in comprehending Allah's religion, and He will not endorse any of their good deeds."^[ii]

In Aban ibn Taghlib's authenticated narration, he (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "I wished my companions' heads would have been whipped until they took to comprehending (the religion)."^[iii] There are numerous other such statements.

As for you, expatriates, this applies to you for two reasons:

1. The society in which you live is distant from religion, unfamiliar with its concepts; so, if you neglect to learn or if you take it lightly, your religion will be lost and its features will gradually become hidden from you until they eventually diminish.
2. You migrated from Islamic lands while having a measure of religious information. If this information slipped away from you and you forgot it, your travel to foreign lands will be regarded as assimilation after migration. Assimilation after migration means what a Muslim does when he moves to lands where his religious information decreases and his ignorance about his creed increases; this is one of the major sins, so much so that it is regarded among one of the five or seven major sins.

In a tradition narrated by Ibn Abi Omayr cited from one of his companions, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as saying, "We found stated in the book by [Imam] Ali (peace be upon him) that the major sins are five: polytheism, disobedience of parents, consumption of

usury even after evidence, fleeing from performing Jihad and assimilating after migrating.”^[iv] In the authenticated narration of Ubayd ibn Zurarah, the latter says that he asked Imam Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about the major sins. The Imam said that they are indicated as seven in the book of [Imam] Ali (peace be upon him): disbelieving in Allah, murder, disobedience of parents, consumption of usury after evidence is produced, unjust consumption of what belongs to orphans, fleeing from the battlefield and distancing yourself from religious knowledge after you were close to it.” Ubayd ibn Zurarah asked the Imam (peace be upon him), "Are these the greatest of sins?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Yes." He asked, "Is unjustly consuming one dirham that belongs to an orphan more serious or is it the abandonment of performing the daily prayers?" He (peace be upon him) said, "Abandoning the performing of daily prayers is more serious." He said, "But why then did you not count abandoning daily prayers among the major sins?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "What was the first thing that I told you?!" He said, "It was disbelieving in Allah." The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "So, one who abandons the performance of prayers is a non-believer."^[v]

Abu Baseer quotes the Imam (peace be upon him) as saying, "distancing yourself from religious knowledge and ascribing partners to Allah (*Shirk*) are one and the same.”^[vi]. There are numerous other texts that indicate its prohibition in a way in which there is no room for doubt.

So, you have to work hard to learn the doctrines and rulings of your religion, to become acquainted with what is permissible and what is prohibited. Beware of neglecting doing so or taking it lightly no matter what the cost may be, even if your time is too short, your engagements too many, for the danger of taking this lightly is great, and its losses cannot be recompensed. Surely Allah will assist you and ease your affairs because He always helps His servant if He knows that the latter cares about Him and is willing to tread the path of pleasing Him.

It would be great if all the above is done in a systematic way. You then ought to continue doing it and not neglect it because habit has a force of its own, unlike what is based on availability without any organized way. Your religion will then be subject to neglect due to the abundance of your engagements and distractions.

You ought to choose Friday, for Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "Woe on a Muslim man who does not give himself Friday from the whole week for his own religion so he may inquire during it about his creed."^[vii]

And it is best if this is attempted in a congregational way at centers that embrace you together, such as mosques and Husainiyyas or each other's homes, and no less when it is done with family members. Group knowledge has a wider range of benefit and information is focused in a better way; it is more prone to be adhered to. If this is not possible, do not abandon what you can do of it, each according to his ability without negligence or procrastination. You can exploit modern means of communication such as the Internet, for these means have opened the paths to learning and knowledge and made them easy. Wisdom is a believer's pursuit; wherever he finds it, he grabs it.

If there is a need, in addition to the above, one must try to obtain a practical guide of Islamic laws from an emulated religious authority, and study its contents so it may be a permanent reference in your home away from home.

Also, what you should strongly do is to become familiar with the largest number of traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (peace and blessings of Allah be with them all), for they contain variety of knowledge in beliefs, rulings, ethics, companionship and conduct. You should try to buy books which contain their biographies and traditions and frequent libraries where they are to be found. Utilize your spare time in doing so, for it is one of the best gains that help you during your estrangement and entertain you during your loneliness instead of killing time in doing trivial or harmful things.

[i] *Bihal Al-Anwar*, Vol. 1, pp. 177-78.

[ii] *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 31, and the wording is his; *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 1, p. 214.

[iii] *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, p. 31.

[iv] *Wasaail Al-Shi`a*, Vol. 11, p. 259.

[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 254.

[vi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 256.

[vii] *Wasaail Al-Shi`a*, Vol. 8, p. 252, according to his own wording; *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 86, p. 347.

CHAPTER 3

Nowadays, Shi'ism is subjected to a series of plots and attempts to suppress it such as campaigns aiming at distorting it, casting doubts about it, misrepresenting and defaming it. Such are unfair campaigns based on ignoring the facts and distorting information, without any limits or a sense of shame. They may be done by naïve persons who learn about a creed from what men say, because they trust their knowledge without referring to genuine references for such a creed, paying no attention to established facts.

Whatever the condition of those who stage these campaigns may be, you, expatriates, are their first targets, and they are more dangerous to you than they are to others for the following reasons:

(1) You are distant from religious communities; you do not interact with the concepts that are common in these communities.

(2) Many of you are unaware of the facts of the religion or are ignorant about their proofs even if you recognize them at first or as a whole, or because you think well of the scholars who mentioned the evidences and texts which contain them, but you are unfamiliar with their details.

(3) You are distant from the centers of genuine theological culture, so you do not know their position with regard to deviated ideologies and to claims made about them these days.

(4) These ideologies and claims are presented and propagated as being "corrective" and that they are appropriate for the current times – and they have been discovered after thorough examination and research to replace old and stagnant ideologies – and these presentations are issued by people who place themselves or are placed by hostile media in high or advanced levels of knowledge.

(5) You thirst for the religious concepts and you are anxious for the Islamic culture, because of being so distant from your homelands and due to your estrangement in these non-Muslim societies, so you grab whatever reaches you, and you interact with it instantly.

These matters as a whole make you a suitable ground for accepting those ideologies or to being influenced by them or to becoming confused because of them, especially since you do not have the media and publicity strength and the financial and political

support. This makes these matters spread in a relatively fast way in addition to the originally materially poor, contained and suppressed ideologies.

So, be cautious, believing expatriates, about your religion lest it should be stolen from you through these presentations and suspicious attempts, for your religion and loyalty to Ahl al-Bayt (the best of Allah's peace and blessings be with them) are the two precious jewels and the two greatest blessings with which Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, has blessed you and all believers out of His kindness and favor. You should not relinquish them and thus prove to be ingrates towards the blessing of Allah Almighty in their regard, for the penalty for it will be perdition, vengeance and perpetual loss, as the most Exalted and Great One has said: "Have you not considered those who have changed God's favor for ungratefulness and caused their people to fall to the abode of perdition: Into Hell, they shall burn in it, and an evil place to stay in!" Qur'an, 14:28-29).

Although we are fully aware of the soundness of our faith and what we take for granted, the strength of our argument, the harmony of our proofs, we still do not want you to hold on to them only by way of imitating our righteous ancestry and sticking to the inherited path, rejecting opposite ideologies and presentations without examining them, for we, Praise to Allah Almighty, do not have to do any of that.

Our Imams (Allah's blessings be with them) have, according to the Holy Qur'an and the judgment of sound reason, emphasized deliberation and research, and prohibited taking religion from the mouths of men without insight or evidence.

Rather, all what we want from you is to stand firmly before these ideologies and deviated presentations, to take your time in their regard and not immediately agree with them, run after them, interact with them and become oblivious of the reality of the matter, or by imagining that they were produced by researching people who enjoy self-respect and who do not purposefully go against the truth, ignore or distort it.

This can be done:

Firstly, by taking into consideration the circumstances and the suspicious motives of presenting such ideologies, the making of such statements, the sincerity of those who make them and their integrity. Whereas these calls and ideologies coincided with the rise of Islam and pro-active Shi'ism on the global field: These threatened the interests of the forces of evil, so these forces joined ranks against them, forged alliances in order to fight them with money and media and sometimes in an open way. This is so due to the freedom of movement enjoyed by owners of such ideologies and statements and the huge media power they have at their disposal, whereas we see the genuine

ideologies being poor when it comes to finance and media, so they are under a relative siege.

Secondly, by referring to the sources of knowledge, looking into our evidences subjectively and fairly, even though it may be through contacting centers of religious education and the honorable religious seminaries (the *hawzas*), and seeking assistance from researchers, in order to get to know such evidences and arrive at them so the truth may become clear, and so that the outcomewould be the strengthening of faith with full conviction and sufficient proof. Our faith, praise to Allah Almighty, is rich in all of this: "... And Allah will never grant the unbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers" (Qur'an, 4:141).

What will assist you best towards knowing the truth and its clarity is familiarity with traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and their biographies, for they reflect a clear picture about the reality which they lived, the straight path on which they treaded, the true concepts which they adopted and which their Shi'ites followed. In all of this, it is difficult to find distortion and misrepresentation. And thus we have already stressed this fact.

CHAPTER 4

We see how many followers of religions know nothing but belonging to their religion and being affiliated with its followers without this reflecting on their actions and conduct. The effect of religion does not appear in them except when they blindly insist on it and become fanatical about it. We have seen how some followers of other creeds oppose their children abandoning their religion and embracing Islam, standing strongly and severely against it, so much so that one may even kill his son for it. But he does not care about his son adhering to his own religion, nor does he exhaust himself for that; he does not even care if his son is practically outside the fold of his religion.

As for Islam – actually, for any divinely revealed faith – it has linked faith to action. The Holy Qur'an has stressed good deeds, linking them to belief in many verses; Allah Almighty has said, "By (the token of) time (through the ages), truly man is in loss, except those who have faith and do righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth and patience" (Qur'an, 103:1-3).

Statements made by the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them all) have stressed the above. In a tradition narrated by Muhammed ibn Abdullah ibn Tahir, the latter said, "I was waiting on my father who had in his company Abul-Salt al-Harawi, Ishaq ibn Rahawayh and Ahmed ibn Muhammed ibn Hanbal. My father said, 'Let each man among you narrate one tradition for me.' Abul-Salt al-Harawi said, 'Ali ibn Mousa al-Rida (peace be upon him) narrated a tradition to me – and he, by Allah, was the pleased one (al-Rida) just as he was named – citing his father Mousa ibn Ja`far, quoting his father Ja`far ibn Muhammed, quoting his father Muhammed ibn Ali, quoting his father Ali ibn al-Hussain, quoting his father al-Hussain, quoting his father Ali (peace be upon them) saying that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Faith (in Islam) is speech and action.' When we got out, Ahmed ibn Hanbal said, 'What is this chain of narrators?' My father said to him, 'this is the drug of madmen: If the madman takes this drug, he will awaken from his insanity.'"^[i]

In another tradition narrated by Abul-Salt al-Harawi, the narrator said, "I asked al-Rida (peace be upon him) about faith. He said, faith is belief in the heart, a speech of the tongue, and action by the limbs; faith is not but this."^[ii]

In a tradition narrated by Al-Mufaddal, the Imam Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, "Beware of lowly persons; the Shi'ites of Ali (peace be upon him) are those who safeguard their bellies and private parts, who intensify their jihad, who work for their Creator, who rest their hope on His rewards and who fear His punishment. If you see them as such, they are [also] the Shi'ites of Ja`far [al-Sadiq]."^[iii]

Such texts are numerous and famous, despite the differences in their contexts and expressions; rather, it is a self-evident matter which needs no textual support.

You must show keen interest in this aspect and emphasize it within your own selves, in your minds and senses, an emphasis which manifests itself on your actions, norms of conduct and companionship.

Although it does not fit well in the communities in which you reside and the circumstances in which you live, the significance of this matter imposes on you to sacrifice for its sake, to be firm in determination in its regard, no matter what the cost may be. In doing so, rely on Allah Almighty, derive from Him help and support; otherwise, you will be subdued and fused into societies that are suffering from their own loose and unrestricted personal liberty. You will then melt into them and thus lose your individuality, destroying your entity with no return, and this will be a cause for Allah Almighty to abandon you; He will then shun you and let you rely on your own selves: “If He forsakes you, who is there, after that, who can help you?” (Qur'an, 3:160).

If it is conjoined with good manners and companionship, though it may be a cause for discomfort in the beginning, persistence and continuation of religious commitment may compel the societies among which you reside to recognize your creed as being a reality which has to be accepted and has to be lived with, and they will deal with you on such a basis, thus lightening the burden from you. Rather, it will even raise your status in their hearts and impose on them respect for you because the hearts are inclined towards respecting those who espouse noble principles, who are strong in their will, and whose character is complete.

Above all, you will thus earn the pleasure of Allah Almighty Who holds all affairs in His hands and to Whom the ultimate destiny is rendered. Submitting to His will, to His commands and prohibitions, and firming the relationship with Him are among the most important causes of success, support and victory as the most Exalted One has said: “If Allah helps you, none can overcome you” (Qur'an, 3:160); He surely is the best supporter, Master of the believers.

[i] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 66, p. 65.

[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 66, p. 65.

[iii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 1, p. 64.

CHAPTER 5

There are some matters that have a special importance in your relationship with Allah Almighty, in correcting your personalities and determining your identities:

(1) Upholding obligations: One who abandons them perishes due to their Sharia-imposed significance, especially prayers which are the pillars of the creed and Islam's greatest ritual, so much so that Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, as recorded in the aforementioned authenticated narration of Ubayd ibn Zurarah, "One who abandons the performance of the prayers is a non-believer."^[i] This is so especially after prayer does not part from one at any time, being a cause for continuing his link with Allah Almighty, training him on self-restraint and commitment and to distance himself from inattention and negligence. It would be great if prayer services are held at public places such as mosques, Husainiyyas and the like where they are observed in the best manner. They will also be a reason for the Muslims to get to know each other, to forge strong ties among them, so each will ask about the other and get to know his conditions, and thus community members will help one another.

(2) Upholding the Great Qur'an which Allah Almighty entrusted to His creation. It is His Holy Book which He describes as: "No falsehood can approach it from before or behind: It is sent down by the All-Wise and the Praised." (Qur'an, 41:42). It is regarded as Islam's eternal miracle and clear subduing argument which Muslims have the right to raise their heads and be proud of. Also, all people should lower their heads in submission to it especially when compared with books of other religions. The difference will then be clear. Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, has said: "... If all mankind and jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they will not be able to produce the like of it, even if they back each other with help and support" (Qur'an, 17:88). A Muslim should commit himself to reciting it with a keen interest to comprehend and to contemplate on it and must try to act according to it and seek admonishment from it. Allah Almighty has said, "Truly this Qur'an guides to what is most right, and it gives glad tidings to the believers who do deeds of righteousness that they shall have a magnificent reward" (Qur'an, 17:9) and also: "We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that in which there is a healing and mercy to those who believe: To the unjust ones it causes nothing but loss after loss" (Qur'an, 17:82). The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has said, "Be informed that this Qur'an is the advisor that does not cheat, the guide that does not mislead and the narrator that does not tell a lie. Anyone who keeps this Qur'an company leaves it with either an increase or a decrease: an increase in guidance or a decrease in blindness; so, seek its healing from your ailments and seek help from it during your hardships, for in it there is healing from the most serious of all ailments: disbelief, hypocrisy, misguidance and straying. Allah, the most Praised One, did not admonish anyone as He did through this Qur'an, for it is Allah's strong bond, His secure cause. In it there is the spring of the heart, the wells of knowledge, and the heart cannot be polished any other way."^[ii]

(3) Adhere to the admonishments and directives reported from the Prophet and his pure Progeny (peace be upon them all), which are included in their traditions, sermons and biographies, as we pointed out above. Perhaps *Nahjul-Balagha* is distinctive in this regard due to

its comprehensiveness, as brief as it is, its ease of handling, the loftiness of its contexts and wisdom, so much so that it is regarded as the greatest Islamic book next only to the Holy Qur'an. You should become familiar with it, study it, contemplate on its contents and interact with them, for it is the best helper for you in the foreign lands; rather, it is a source of pride for you to boast of before others and the strongest in supporting your argument.

(4) Always remember Allah Almighty, supplicate to Him, resort to him, plead to him to forgive your sins and to conceal your faults, reform your souls, make up your shortcoming, assist you in your affairs, in attaining your public and private needs; to grant you victory over your enemies and repel affliction from you. Surely He is the Master of the believers and He is Merciful unto them. Qur'anic verses and narratives have been consistent in urging the faithful to do the above: The Almighty has said, "... Remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and do not be ungrateful." (Qur'an, 2:152). He, the most Praised One, has also said, "Their limbs forsake their beds of sleep while they call upon their Lord, in fear and in hope, and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed upon them. Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in store) for him as a reward for their (good) deeds" (Qur'an, 32:16-17). He, the most Exalted One, the most Great, also says, "Say (to the rejecters): 'My Lord would not have cared about you had you not supplicated to Him'" (Qur'an, 25:77) and also "And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me, I will respond to you; But those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell in humiliation!'" (Qur'an, 40:60).

In a letter by Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) to the Shi'ites, who used to post it at their mosques and study it, he says, "Take to supplication, for the Muslims did not attain their needs with their Lord through any method better than supplication. They plead to Allah whenever they are in need; so, desire what Allah would like to see you desiring, and respond to Allah's call so you may achieve success and be saved from Allah's punishment."^[iii]

In a tradition, al-Fudhayl asked the Imam (peace be upon him) to advise him, so he said, "I advise you to fear Allah, to say what is true, to give the entrusted items back, to be a good companion to those who accompany you. When the sun is about to rise or about to set, supplicate to Allah and be diligent about it; nothing prohibits you from asking your Lord for anything at all, and you should not say that you will not be granted this or that. Instead, plead, for Allah does whatever He pleases."^[iv]

There are many such texts which collectively inform us that supplication changes destiny and affliction in a firm and ascertained way.^[v]

You, therefore, must not neglect this great aspect which Allah Almighty bestowed on His servants out of His mercy towards them: It increases your connection with Allah Almighty, strengthens your relationship with Him, making you apt to receive His mercy and kindness. It also raises your morale, makes you feel strong and elevated, and increases your comfort, strength, determination and firmness. The Commander of the Faithful (Allah's peace and blessings with him) said the following in his will to his son Imam al-Hassan (peace with him): "What tie is stronger, if you adhere to it, than one between yourself and Allah?"^[vi]

Do not be inattentive to doing so in your nights and mornings especially during the well-known times and customary places such as after the prayers, during Fridays' days and nights, during the blessed month of Ramadan, during the religious festivals, in the night of mid-Sha'ban, etc.

The Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have precious treasures, invaluable jewels and arranged precious stones which their Shi'ites have quoted, kept, preserved and with which they are familiar, so much so that they are identified by them, becoming a source of pride for them, a medal of honor which testifies to their truly belonging to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), to boarding their ark, to sticking to them, to submitting to them and to being specifically known through them. Hence, the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) chose these followers to bestow on them the divine sciences which Allah Almighty entrusted to them, giving them their keys. Indeed, "Praise to Allah Who has guided us to this (felicity): We could never have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah" (Qur'an, 7:43).

What emphasizes this relationship with Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) is the fact that you are living in lands in which Allah Almighty is not known nor mentioned; so, exert yourselves in remembering Him so you may become the light in that darkness, the lanterns of Allah Almighty in these lands. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) had advised Abu Tharr (may Allah be pleased with him), "O Abu Tharr! One who mentions My Name among indifferent ones is like one who fights in the cause of Allah while others flee away."^[viii] Such texts are numerous.

It is recorded in the narrative of the Mu'ta military campaign that when Abdullah ibn Ruwahah bade the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) farewell, he said to him, "Command me to do something which I memorize about you." The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "You are going to a country where few people prostrate [to Allah]; therefore, increase your prostrations." Abdullah ibn Ruwahah said, "Give me more [advice], O Messenger of Allah!" He said, "Remember Allah, for He then shall assist you in whatever you pursue..."^[viii]

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 254.

[ii] *Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 2, pp. 91-95, and the wording is its own. *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 89, p. 24.

[iii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 4, p. 1089.

[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 1091.

[v] Refer to *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 4, p. 1093.

[vi] *Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 3, p. 38, and the wording is the same. *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 74, p. 199.

[vii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 4, p. 1190.

[viii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 21, p. 60.

CHAPTER 6

Take to maintaining close ties with each other, standing shoulder to shoulder, advising each other, being nice to each other, meeting and visiting each other, supporting each other, consoling each other. Each of you should love for his brother whatever he loves for himself. Fulfill the obligations imposed on you by being brethren in faith, which Allah Almighty mandated when He said: "The believers are but a single brotherhood" (Qur'an, 49:10).

Texts have emphasized this to such an extent that there is left no room for excuse. In the authenticated narration of Abu al-Ma'aza, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he does not oppress him, nor does he betray or deceive him. Muslims must endeavor to stay in touch with each other, be affectionate towards each other and console those who are in need..."^[i]

In the reliable narration of al-Sukuni, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as citing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) saying, "People are dependents of Allah; so, the one among people who is the most loved by Allah is the one who benefits Allah's dependents, bringing happiness into a home."^[ii] In a tradition narrated by Aban ibn Taghlib from Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), the latter said, "If one is always in touch with his brethren, either assisting in preventing loss or bringing about gain, Allah Almighty will keep his feet firm on the Day on which the feet will slip away [into Hell]."^[iii]

In a tradition narrated by Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, Imam Zain al-Abidin (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "One who takes care of his brother's need, he has actually started to do what Allah wishes from him, and Allah will reward him by taking care of a hundred of his needs in one of which lies Paradise."^[iv] And in his authenticated narration, he quotes Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) citing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) saying, "Whoever makes a believer happy, makes me happy, and whoever makes me happy, makes Allah Almighty happy."^[v] In the authenticated narration of al-Mufaddhal ibn Umar, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Nobody should think that when he pleases a Muslim, he did so only to him; rather, by Allah, he thus pleases us; rather, by Allah, he thus pleases the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny)."^[vi]

In an authenticated narration of Shu'ayb al-Aqarqafi, the latter says that he heard [Imam] Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him), as saying this to his followers:

"Fear Allah and be kind to your brethren, loving each other for the sake of Allah, remaining in touch with each other, enjoining mercy. Visit each other, meet with each other and remind each other of us and keep our message alive." [\[vii\]](#)

In a tradition narrated by Khaythamah, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as telling him the following: "Convey our greetings to our followers, and enjoin them to fear Allah and to do what is right: Their healthy ones should visit their sick; their rich should visit their poor; their living should attend the funeral of their dead; they should meet at their homes, teach each other the religion's sciences, for this is how our message remains alive; may Allah have mercy on a servant of Allah who keeps our message alive..." [\[viii\]](#) There are many such texts narrated in various words, all containing lofty meanings in encouraging people to uphold these teachings and prohibiting its abandonment, warning against the latter.

All the above should be done accompanied by good demeanor, ease and clemency and such requirements of good companionship. Islam has in its great Book emphasized it, and so has the Holy Prophet and his immaculate Progeny (peace be upon them all), all condoning good manners, leniency, good companionship and a beautiful way of socializing with non-Muslims, as will come later, in addition to the believers among each other.

All believers must pay attention to this aspect. They must awake the motivation of brotherhood in their souls; stimulate the attitude of affection among them. This is especially emphasized for you living in foreign lands, when you get together at the time of calamity and affliction. Wherever you go in these lands, you are a minority which cannot maintain its entity except by doing the above. It is through this that you remain together, united. Allah will assist you and support you.

[\[i\]](#) *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 8, p. 542.

[\[ii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 563.

[\[iii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 564.

[\[iv\]](#) *Ibid.*

[\[v\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 569.

[\[vi\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 570.

[\[vii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 411.

[\[viii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 400.

CHAPTER 7

Be forewarned against envy which is the sickness of any nation: People were prevented by their envy towards those favored by Allah from submitting to them. Further, they assaulted them, disobeying Allah in their regard, objecting to His will, violating His limits, so Cain killed his brother Able, Jacob's brothers expelled their brother, Joseph, and nations rebelled against their prophets and divinely-appointed guides out of their envy towards them, oppressing them... and so and so forth, until the end of the list of mankind's numerous tragedies.

Envy is a fire ignited by Satan among the losers, the deprived, those whose souls are weak, whose horizons are narrow, especially if a gathering entity gets them together with those whom they envy through a link such as that of the one and the same tribe, city, creed, class, or place of work. This fire is increased by need, bewilderment and emptiness with which many who live in foreign lands are afflicted.

Allah Almighty has denounced this strongly in this verse: "...Or do they envy mankind for what Allah has given them of His bounty? But We had already given the people of Abraham the Book and wisdom, and conferred a great kingdom on them. (Qur'an, 4:54-55).

Many statements by the Infallible Ones (peace be upon them) have warned about it, as we read in the authenticated narration of Muhammed ibn Muslim who quotes Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) as saying, "A man may commit the smallest sin, and thus commits an act of disbelief; envy consumes faith just like fire consumes firewood,"^[i] and there are many such statements.

Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, has divided sustenance among His servants, blessing them with His blessings as He pleases, not as they please; so, envy is rebellion against Him, and an objection to His judgment. In a tradition narrated by Dawood al-Raqqi, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "Allah Almighty said this to Moses son of Amram (Imran): 'O son of Amram! Do not envy people for what I have granted them out of My favor; do not [even] look at it, and do not desire it, for an envious person is one who is angry with My blessing, opposing how I divided [My favors] among My servants. Anyone who is like that is not of Me, and I am not of him.'^[ii]

There are, however, two precautions in this regard:

Firstly: Envy harms the envious person: He remains psycho-logically tormented, burning inwardly, sensing disappointment and loss. The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "I have never seen an unjust person more similar to the ill-treated than the envious person: He keeps sighing, his heart wandering, his grief does not part with him."^[iii] He (peace be upon him) has also said, "Suffices you for a sign of an envious person is that he is grieved when you are pleased. "^[iv] Rather, his envy may drag him into perdition in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, for it may blind his vision and mind, so he forgets the ties of brotherhood and of faith, loses his balance and goes to extremes in harming the one whom he

envies, trying to assault him, as the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has said, "The envious one is swift in leaping, slow in turning (to think about his actions)." [v] He does not care about bearing the crime originating from envy no matter how serious it may be, as took place when Cain killed Able and when Joseph was thrown into the well by his brothers, and such examples are numerous among people. He may even fail in his attempt which turns into a calamity against him, causing him to lose this life and the Hereafter. There are numerous incidents which, for the sake of brevity, cannot be accommodated here.

Secondly: It is a cause for repulsion, division and hostility. This harms people as a whole and harms you – dear readers who are now living in foreign lands – because you are people who most need companionship, harmony, unity and solidarity.

So, the envious person should suppress his outrage, control his nerves, hold himself accountable and pay attention to the following:

(1) The existence of a blessing with his brother in kinship or in faith, or one who shares with him the same country, for example, is better than its existence with a stranger. So, why should he envy him while not envying the stranger? If he wants to envy everyone, what should he do, where does he end, how will his condition be and how will he settle his affair?!

(2) Allah, the most Praised One, the most Exalted, does not equal people in the distribution of His blessings. The envious person may have a blessing which the person he envies does not have. Some people may have wealth or power while having no children or a suitable wife, or they may be afflicted with diseases or other visible or invisible calamities, or the opposite. The envious person may have a blessing which he does not accept to replace with one owned by the person whom he envies. Rather, if he ponders and discerns, he most likely does not accept that Allah Almighty would make him similar to the one whom he envies in all the blessings and afflictions which he knows and which he does not.

(3) Since the blessing enjoyed by the envied person came from Allah Almighty, this means that His gate is wide open for those willing to plead to Him, His good things made available for those who seek them. He is the most generous of those sought for their generosity, the most merciful of those who show mercy. So, let him plead for His favors instead of being unhappy about blessings that his companion possesses. This refers to the concept *ghibta* - i.e. wishing to receive the blessings which others have without wishing them to be deprived of them -, as Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) says: "A believer does *ghibta* but does not envy, while the hypocrite envies but does not do *ghibta*." [vi]

If Allah Almighty does not respond to his plea quickly, this is not due to the Almighty being miserly, but this haste may not be good for him as stated in the supplication of *al-Ifitah* : "Perhaps what is slow to reach me may be better for me due to Your knowledge of the outcome of matters." Texts from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have stressed the above. They also emphasized that Allah Almighty may store for the pleading person what is better than that which He did not haste to respond to.

One should have fear of Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, and accept His decree and surrender to Him: "And He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Allah. And He provides for him from (sources) which he can never imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, Allah suffices him, for Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: Truly, Allah has appointed a due proportion for all things" (Qur'an, 65:2-3).

The same applies in things other than envy which lead to hatred and bad manners and contemptible norms of behavior such as unduly stubborn persistence, insistence on a viewpoint in a futile way, interfering in others' affairs against their will, entering into any matter which is of no concern to him, in addition to other ill manners which he will often face when socializing with people. You should reject it in order to avoid problems and serious repercussions.

In fact some of these acts have been prohibited, such as slander, backbiting, cheating, revelation of his brothers' secrets which they entrusted to him, arrogance, conceit, oppression and other such bad norms of conduct some of which may later be discussed. They are recognized by any wise and intelligent person, by anyone who is religious and has faith, and by one who knows the rules of social interaction and is experienced in it. We plead to Allah, Praise to Him, to support you to attain whatever strengthens your companionship and inter-relationships; surely He is the most Merciful.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 292.

[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 293.

[iii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 70, p. 256; *Mustadrak Al-Wasaail*, Vol. 12, p. 17.

[iv] *Ibid.*

[v][v] *Ibid.*

[vi] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 293.

CHAPTER 8

Undoubtedly, you are suffering in these lands from the feeling of being strangers and lonely, having left behind your countries where you lived and in the laps of which you grew up, enjoying the blessing of being near your families, loved ones, acquaintances and peers who all are familiar with your norms of conduct, habits, gatherings and companionship. It is there that you were used to holding your rituals, frequenting your sacred places, visiting these revered sites and lofty stations which the souls of the believers seek and towards which people who are not their residents yearn, let alone those who grow up in them and spend the best years of their lives near them.

There is no blame on you in all of this especially since you are now in an environment which is distant from all of this and in a society whose doctrine and concepts, norms of conduct and companionship clash with yours.

Yet a wise person who has a strong and integral personality is the one who has good conduct and manages his problems, coexisting with them and acclimating according to the dictates of the conditions that surround him and the reality which he lives with peace, patience, wisdom and discretion, and does not dwarf before them, nor does he collapse. He does not become angered and it is difficult for him to find solutions, which complicates his problems. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "The believer is strong in his creed, firm while being kind... During the times of turbulences, he is dignified, and during times of difficulties, he preserves."^[i]

We do not want you to forget your homeland which you left behind, the reality which you lived and the good habits to which you were accustomed. Rather, you must emphasize your ties with your homeland, with its principles, beautiful customs, holy places and mausoleums which you picture in your hearts and bear their memories with your minds, seek them with your thoughts, cling to them as much as you can, for what is possible is not dropped by that which is difficult.

Then preserve your good habits and norms of conduct in order to create a community among yourselves which suits you, one with which you were familiar, and an atmosphere similar to the one which you knew before, so you may not be separated from the reality which you underwent and through which you lived.

There are two matters which you should observe regarding what you hold as sacred:

Firstly, you must commit to visiting these sacred places and revered sites and direct your hearts towards them despite the distance, with eagerness and passion, with affection and longing sorrow, remembering how the believers used to gather in them when you were in their company. Salute the Infallibles who are buried in them and all such places throughout the Islamic world. Address them like one who is in love and who is grieved, heart-broken, deprived. Salute them with whatever you can with your tongues, although it is better for you to choose the common addresses in the narrated *Ziyarats* from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). You must exert

effort to obtain these *Ziyarats*, become acquainted with them and absorb them. They have lofty content and truthful realities that strengthen your ties to the Infallible Ones (peace be upon them). They control your relationship with them, your loyalty and love for them, your hatred of their enemies and dissociation from them. This has its great religious significance as you will come to know, God willing.

When you perform the *Ziyarats* of your Imams (peace be upon them), you will thus prove your loyalty to the covenant round your necks. In a tradition narrated by al-Washa, the latter says that he heard Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him) saying, "For each Imam, there is a covenant round the necks of his followers and supporters, and the completion of this covenant is to visit their grave sites."[\[ii\]](#) Other traditions in wording close to this are numerous.

The Imams from among the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have been quoted emphatically urging the performing of *Ziyarat* from afar by those who cannot visit them. This is so in order to firm the relationship of loyalty to the visited personality, in order to safeguard the sense of being affiliated with him, to strengthen the tie to him and to renew the commitment to the pledge to follow his Imamate.

Lengthy and short *Ziyarats* have been narrated from the Imams (peace be upon them). Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "If distance becomes long for you, and if your home is far away [from the Imam's shrines], you must go the highest point in your home, perform two *Rak'ahs* (units) of prayer, and then face our graves sending your salutations, for your greeting will then reach us."[\[iii\]](#)

Imam al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) quotes his ancestors, peace be with them all, who cited the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying, "One who visits my grave after my demise will be like one who migrated to me during my lifetime. But if you cannot do so, send salutations to me, for they will reach me."[\[iv\]](#)

The Leader of all Women, Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her) is quoted as having said, "My father, here he is, told me that one who salutes him and salutes me for three days, Allah will allot Paradise for him." She was asked, "This salutation takes place during your own lifetime or during his?" She said, "Yes, as well as after our deaths."[\[v\]](#)

In a tradition narrated by Sadeer from Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), the Imam said to him, "O Sadeer! Do you visit al-Hussain's grave every day?" Sadeer said, "May I be sacrificed for your sake, No!" The Imam said, "How cold your heart is! Do you, then, visit it every Friday?" Sadeer answered in the negative. The Imam asked him, "Do you, then, visit it every month?" Sadeer again answered in the negative, whereupon the Imam asked him, "Do you, then, visit it every year?" Sadeer said, "Probably." The Imam said, "How cold your heart is about al-Hussain (peace be upon him)! Do you not know that Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, has two million angels, unkempt and dust-covered, visiting the grave of al-Hussain (peace be upon him) tearfully and incessantly, while you, O Sadeer, are not asked but to visit the grave of al-Hussain (peace be upon him) five times a week and once every day?" Sadeer said, "May I be sacrificed for your sake! Many miles separate us from it." He said, "Go to your rooftop. Turn right then left, then raise your head to the sky and direct your face towards the grave and say, Peace with

you, O Abu Abdullah! Peace be upon you, the blessings and mercy of Allah be with you!' and it will be written down for you as a *Ziyarat*, and this *Ziyarat* is equivalent to a *Hajj* (major pilgrimage) and an *Umrah* (minor pilgrimage)." Sadeer said that he might have done so more than twenty times a month.^[vi] And there are many narrations emphasizing on such.

They [the Ahl al-Bayt] are, besides the above, your means towards Allah Almighty and intercessors with Him; so, seek their intercession with regard to your needs of this world and of the hereafter, for resolving your problems, the removal of your worries, the ease of your distress and to help you in all your affairs. Resort to them (peace be upon them) so they may plead to Allah Almighty for the achievement of all of this so He may shower His mercy on you, to open His treasures, blessings, favors and boons for you, for they are more affectionate towards you than you are towards your own selves. They are not prevented by the distance of abode from doing so if your call reaches them, if your cry is heard by them. They do not fret about anything no matter how magnanimous it may be because their status with Allah Almighty is greater than that, their affairs with Him is loftier; their call is heard, their intercession is accepted.

So, thank Allah Almighty for having guided you to get to know them, to be loyal to them, to hold on to them, to resort to them, making you among those who stick to them, who are attributed to them.

You must emphasize your relationship with the Imam of the Time, the Awaited Authority, the one on whom hopes rest, Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, His peace and blessings with him and with his pure forefathers, for he is the direct master according to whom matters are affected through permission of Allah Almighty; so, remember him often, picture him in your hearts, sense him in your conscience, make it a habit to greet and perform *Ziyarat* to him, resort to him in your needs, seek his intervention in your tasks, seek to repel affliction through his blessing and affection. Do not be oblivious about him, about his status and the greatness of his dignity with Allah Almighty and the greatness of his obligation on you.

Secondly, you must work hard towards holding and keeping alive your religious occasions, such as the birth and martyrdom anniversaries of the Infallibles (peace be upon them), and to feed people on these occasions, in addition to other traditions to which you became accustomed in your homelands, for this deeply impacts the standing of your religious entity and its preservation, on your personalities, on your tie to your past and to staying always in touch with it.

Pay a special attention to the gatherings that commemorate the calamities which befell the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), how they were oppressed and what they had to go through at the hands of tyrants who changed the religion of Allah Almighty, who distorted His Book, terminated its injunctions, repealed its legislation, worked hard to put out the light of the Household of Mercy, tightening the noose round their necks, killing, displacing and sweeping their followers off the surface of earth..., up to the end of the lengthy list of tragedies and calamities which words cannot encompass fully, nor can speech entirely describe.

We emphasize the above particularly during the occasions that are filled with grief and bitterness, which are regarded as the starting point towards changing the path of calling for righteousness, such as the misfortunes of the Truthful one, Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her)

and related events. These events opened the doors to the afflictions on the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon him), altering the path of Islam. The tragedy of the Commander of the Faithful, (peace be upon him), who is the first oppressed person although he is the best of all people next to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) and it was through his sword that the religion could stand. And remember the misfortune of Imam al-Kadhim (peace be upon him), which reveals more of the oppressors' recklessness and disregard.

As for the misfortunes of al-Hussain, the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him) it is the greatest epic and tragedy of the creed which filled the world with sadness, distress, pain and bitterness, and it is remembered, due to its horror, when one faces his own calamities and afflictions. It is on it that the mill revolves and the matters continue.

Bringing to life these occasions, actually all religious occasions, has great fruits and magnanimous benefits:

Firstly: It will be solace for you in your misfortunes and crises. This solace raises your morale, strengthens your determination, increases your perseverance and firmness, strength and resolve. They, Allah's blessings with them, are the best role models for you, the highest examples and the best to emulate. Many texts have indicated that anyone who is afflicted with a calamity should remember his affliction of losing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), for it is the greatest of all calamities.[\[vii\]](#)

In a narrative by Abu Baseer, the latter quotes Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying, "Ismaeel was a messenger, a prophet, whose nation was empowered by Allah, they skinned his face and skull, so a messenger [angel] from the Lord of the World went to him and said, 'Your Lord greets you and says that He has seen what has been done to you and ordered me to obey you; so, order me whatever you please.' He said, 'I have set Al-Hussain (peace be upon him) as my role model.'" Indeed, the poet who composed the following line articulated the truth:

أنست رزيتكم رزايا التي سلفت و هونت الرزايا الآتية

Your calamity rendered past calamities a forgotten thing, making calamities to come so tolerable.

This is so especially if you look at the outcome of those calamities and the ordeals which Allah Almighty destined they would go through: They surrendered to them and persevered. You have seen how the ultimate outcome was in their favor, so Allah Almighty granted them victory over their enemy by keeping their own memory alive, their issue enduring, raising their status, elevating their light, so much so that their radiance filled the east of the earth and the west; whereas the oppressors failed miserably, their final outcome was awful, filled with disappointment, loss and eternal curse on them on earth and in the heavens. You remember the statement made by the wise lady of Banu Hashim, Zainab al-Kubra (peace be upon her) to Imam Zainul-Abidin (peace be upon him), as she was on the peak of the tragedy when they passed by the martyrs of Karbala and saw their parts scattered on the ground. She said, "Allah took a covenant from people from this nation, who are not known to the Pharaohs of this land whereas they are known to the people of the heavens: those who gather these scattered parts and bury

them and these bodies that are covered with blood. They will raise a sign above the grave of your father, the Master of Martyrs, the features of which shall never be obliterated, the shape of which shall never disappear, even as the nights pass and the days. The leaders of disbelief and the promoters of misguidance will work hard to obliterate and hide it, yet its marks will only increase in appearing more and more radiantly and in becoming loftier.”[\[viii\]](#)

To Yazid she said the following as she was a captive at his court: "Scheme and work hard and continue your effort, yet by Allah, you shall never obliterate our name, nor will you ever kill our inspiration or reach our levels, and its shame shall never be cleansed from you. Your view is nothing but nil, your days are counted, your gathering is destined to dispersal on the Day when a caller shall call: 'The curse of Allah be on the unjust'.[\[ix\]](#)

Allah has surely said the truth when He said, 'They desire to extinguish God's light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow but that His light should be perfected, even though the unbelievers may detest (it)' (Qur'an, 9:32) and also when He said, 'So be patient, for the good end is for those who are pious' (Qur'an, 11:49)."

Secondly: It increases your religious education and your strong attachment to your religion. It clearly shows for you the status of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), their merits and virtues, greatness of position, status with Allah Almighty, the strength of their connection with Him, their sacrifices for His sake and for His religion and their providing advice to His servants. It also shows you the intensity of the injustice to which they were exposed, the calamities which they suffered, the afflictions which were poured on them and on their followers in the process. All this increases your loyalty to them, love for them and clinging to them.

It also highlights the extent of meanness of the oppressors and their enmity to Allah Almighty, their ugliness and barbarism, their falling in the pits of crime, their extreme disregard of principles, and their psychological and behavioral shallowness. This increases your revulsion towards them, distance from them, hostility towards them, and your vision becomes stronger in dissociating yourselves from them, their friends and followers.

Through the above, your religion will be completed and conviction perfected as texts narrated about the Infallibles (peace be upon them) have consistently imparted this meaning. In the authenticated narration of Abu Ubaydah al-Haddha, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "One who loves for the sake of Allah, hates for the sake of Allah and gives [by way of charity] for the sake of Allah, is one whose faith is perfected.”[\[x\]](#) And in the authenticated narration of Sa'eed al-A`raj, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "One of the strongest ties of faith is that you love for the sake of Allah, hate for the sake of Allah, give for the sake of Allah and withhold for the sake of Allah.”[\[xi\]](#)

In a tradition narrated by Amr ibn Madrak al-Ta'i, the Imam (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as asking his companions the following: "Which pillar of faith is the strongest?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." Some of them said that it is offering prayers; some others said it is the payment of *Zakat* (the alms tax), others said: the fast, and others said: the *Hajj* and *Umrah* (the major and minor pilgrimage). Some of them said it is *Jihad* (holy war). The messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "Each of what you have stated has a merit, but it is not the one.

The strongest tie of faith is to love for the sake of Allah, to hate for the sake of Allah, to be loyal to those who are loyal to Allah, and dissociate from the enemies of Allah.”[\[xii\]](#) In a tradition narrated by Ishaq ibn Ammar, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "One who does not love for the sake of the creed and does not hate for the sake of the creed has no creed at all.”[\[xiii\]](#) And there are many other such texts.

All believers must know that this is one of the most important religious pillars which they must observe and safeguard. Beware of ignoring or neglecting them or taking them lightly, for such behavior may lead to tolerating oppressors and making compromises with them, even inclining to them and attempting to apologize to them. Thus, God forbid, the believer departs from his belief unintentionally; he is robbed of his faith while he is unaware of it. Allah, the most Praised and Exalted, has said: "You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the last Day loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they may be their fathers or sons, or brothers, or tribesmen” (Qur'an, 58:22). We seek refuge with Allah against being misguided after having received guidance, against becoming blind after having vision and insight.

As for you, dear expatriates, the matter is even harder, because you are in a society where freedom is practiced without restrictions, and there are in it those who cannot distinguish right from wrong, misguidance from guidance, whom Allah Almighty has forsaken and abandoned, so they do not care if the prophets of Allah Almighty and His friends are insulted and ridiculed or that the enemies of Allah from among the tyrants, sinners and licentious people are honored and emulated due to admiration of and respect for them.

If you do not fortify yourselves and cling to your principles and sanctities, Allah Almighty will turn away from you and leave you to your own selves. So, get to know the sanctity of Allah Almighty, observe His rights, remind yourselves of His presence at all times, hold on to His religion, befriend His friends and be the enemies of His enemies, and exert yourselves in these regards. Rely on your Lord and seek His protection. Resort to Him, the most Sublime, so He may look after you and help you, support you and keep you firm, through firm speech in the life of this world and in the Hereafter and increase your faith, conviction, submission and surrender to Him. He surely is the most Merciful of those who have mercy, the Helper of those who resort to Him, the Protector of those who seek His protection.

Thirdly: It is one of the strong pillars and solid foundations of the religion. It has throughout lengthy history, which is filled with tragedies and crises, proven to be effective in erecting the true sect, firming it, preserving, promoting, advocating, disseminating and demonstrating its soundness and truthfulness.

For this reason, the tyrants, oppressors and their supporters, since early Islamic centuries, have most severely opposed these occasions, these anniversaries, and worked hard to find fault with them, defame them, even prohibit and prevent them, scaring those who observe them and seeking revenge against them, in an attempt to put out the light of Allah Almighty Who has insisted to perfect this religion while they are averse to it.

Use these occasions as a slogan that unites your opinions, firms your unity, brings you life, rules over your companionship, a lighthouse that lights people's path towards you, as an invitation to the true religion of Allah, attracting their attention to it, sending them in its direction.

Try in a nice and careful way to mix with the people among whom you live when these rituals are held. Draw their attention to them, even involve them in these rituals through whatever means you have at your disposal. The great rewards and continuous blessings of these rituals will reach you. They will sense them in such a way that they shall recognize them and surrender to their truth, finding their origins and sources to be right.

It may happen that through these rituals one may reach this upright religion and revered sect, as has been the case in many nations of the world. This is so due to the spiritual vacuum in the societies in which you live: This may be the reason for their thirsting for spirituality, for their grabbing this pure genuine reality which is backed by Allah Almighty with support, with sacred verses and dazzling miracles.

Thus, you would become among those who invite others to the religion of Allah Almighty and its supporters; you will thus proudly win and receive great rewards: "(As to) those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to Our paths, for truly Allah is with those who do right" (Qur'an, 29:69). Do not regard anything to be too far-fetched, nor should you take anything lightly, for Allah does whatever He pleases; He decrees whatever He wants.

In order to underscore the importance of organizing these occasions and the continual remembrance of the Ahl al-Bayt (Allah's blessings be with them) and expressing their merits and the calamities to which they were exposed and the great effects of such remembrance, they (peace be upon them), have urged - in an amazing way - doing so by word and by action which we cannot fully present here. Therefore, we should mention examples of these narrations that light the path for us and provide us with guidance:

It has been narrated from the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) that he said, "Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, cast a look at the earth and chose us, and He chose for us followers (Shi'ites) who support us, who feel happy when we are happy and feel sad when we are sad; they spend their wealth and sacrifice their lives for our sake; these are from us and [are rendered] to us."[\[xiv\]](#)

In the authenticated narration of Yazid ibn Abdul-Malik, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said [to his followers], "Visit each other, for your visits bring life to your hearts and keep our mention alive. Our traditions bring about affection between you. If you follow them, you will be rightly guided and thus saved, but if you abandon them, you will stray and thus perish; so, do follow them, and I guarantee your salvation."[\[xv\]](#)

In the authenticated narration of Maysar, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said the following to Maysar, "Do you [Shi'ites] meet and say whatever you please?" Maysar said, "Yes, by Allah, we gather together and say whatever we please." The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "By Allah, I wish I were with you in some of those occasions. By Allah, I love you

and I love your souls. You are truly followers of the religion of Allah and of His angels; so, seek help from piety and diligence.”[\[xvi\]](#)

In a tradition, Mu'attib quotes Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying the following to Dawood ibn Sirhan: "O Dawood! Convey my greetings to my followers and that I say this to them: 'May Allah have mercy on a slave of His who meets with another and discusses our message, for their third will be an angel praying for their forgiveness. No two persons discuss us except that Allah Almighty boasts about them to the angels. If you meet, keep yourselves busy with remembrance, for your meeting and discussion keep our message alive. The best of people after us are those who remind others of us and call others to do the same.’”[\[xvii\]](#)

In a tradition narrated by al-Hassan ibn Fadhal, Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him) says, "One who remembers our misfortunes and weeps for what was committed against us will be with us in our level on the Judgment Day. One who is reminded of our misfortunes and who weeps and causes others to weep as well will not weep on the Day when the eyes will be tearful. One who sits in a meeting where we are mentioned, his heart will not die when hearts will be dying.”[\[xviii\]](#)

In the authenticated narrations of Muhammed ibn Muslim, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said that Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (Zainul-Abidin [peace be upon him]) used to say, "Any believer who sheds tears for the killing of [Imam] al-Hussain ibn Ali (peace be upon him) until they trickle down his cheeks will be granted by Allah chambers in which he will live for long periods of time. Any believer whose eyes become tearful until they trickle down his cheeks about what harm we were subjected to by our enemies in this life will be granted by Allah a truthful abode. And any believer who is harmed on our account, so he sheds his tears and they trickle down his cheeks because of the bitterness of the harm we had to endure, Allah will prevent harm from reaching his face and will grant him security on the Judgment Day from His wrath and from the Fire.”[\[xix\]](#)

In the tradition of the famous *Ziyara of Ashura* about him [Imam Zainul-Abidin (peace be upon him)] following a *Ziyara* by Malik al-Juhani who performed it from a distance, the Imam (peace be upon him) said the following: "Let one mourn al-Hussain (peace be upon him) and weep for him and order those in his house whom he does not fear to weep over him, too. Let him commemorate the tragedy in his house by grieving over him. Offer each other condolences on the occasion of the tragedy that befell al-Hussain (peace be upon him), and I guarantee for them, if they do so, that Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, will reward them all", meaning rewards of two thousand performances of the major pilgrimage (*Hajj*), two thousand minor pilgrimages (*Umrah*) and two thousand military campaigns. Al-Juhani asked the Imam (peace be upon him), "Do you guarantee for them such rewards and do you give your word for it?!" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "I am the guarantor and I am answerable to anyone who does so..., and if you can afford to refrain from attending to your needs on that day [*Ashura*], do so, for it is a day of ill luck... If they do so, Allah will record for them rewards of a thousand major pilgrimages, a thousand minor pilgrimages and a thousand military campaigns, all in the company of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), and each will receive rewards similar to those received by every prophet, messenger, truthful one and martyr who died or was killed since the day Allah created the world and until the Judgment Day ...”[\[xx\]](#)

Actually, this must be observed even on merry occasions, as the happiness is related to the group of divinely-appointed guides who are close to Allah Almighty, His ambassadors, those who speak on His behalf, who remind others of Him. Yet our truly happy occasions in this life is accompanied - at the end - by grief and sorrow and remind one of these tragedies because they are relevant to the chosen ones who were oppressed and persecuted and whose final end was stamped by tragedies and miseries. At the time when we are happy for Allah Almighty having blessed humanity through them and enabled us to accept their mastership and be affiliated with them, we are still saddened because of what they had to go through and what all mankind was harmed as a result of being deprived of their goodness. So, to Allah do we belong, and to Him is our return.

Secondly, is to focus on the tragic aspect and the shedding of tears especially during commemorative gatherings. This is so because what these gatherings aim at, besides bringing to memory the Ahl al-Bayt, Allah's blessings with them, is to highlight the loftiness of their status with Allah Almighty, their sacrifice in His cause, the misfortunes which they and their Shi'ites and supporters had encountered, their suffering at the hands of oppressors, the low status of the oppressors and the crimes of all types which they committed. Add to the above the explanation of the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt, Allah's blessings with them, and their directives in traditions, sermons, biographies and actual conduct and religious education as a whole. All of this results from keeping their message alive, the best of Allah's blessings with them, which they stressed in previously quoted texts and in others. Yet charging the atmosphere emotionally by expressing the tragedy and thus causing tears to flow is more effective in firming it and the souls interacting with it, attaching souls to it and causing them to cling to Ahl al-Bayt, blessings of Allah be with them, rejecting the oppressors and those who deserve to be cursed, separating and disassociating themselves from them.

Moreover, texts quoted from them – the ones that have already been cited as well as others – stress this fact. Actually, one who looks into the biographies of our Imams, may our lives be sacrificed for their sake, and into their norms of conduct, one who absorbs them, realizes how they cared about this aspect in an extraordinary way, and sees their pursuit for places of emotional excitement and the drawing of tears in an amazing, puzzling and noticeable way that testifies to the loftiness of the goal behind it, to the greatness of its benefit, to the magnanimity of its blessings.

Based on the above, this aspect in these gatherings and occasions must not be neglected; it must not be overlooked without taking of it a measure that suits its great significance. They are mourning sessions more than meetings, commemorative meetings more than meetings of education and guidance, even though education and guidance depend on performing them in their perfect way for which they were legislated and on which they were established.

We have prolonged discussing this subject due to its great significance in the structure of the true sect and in building its body. We plead to Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, to grant us success; He suffices us, and how great for reliance He is.

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- [i] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 145.
- [ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 346.
- [iii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 98, p. 367.
- [iv] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 10, p. 263.
- [v] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 97, p. 194; *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 10, p. 287.
- [vi] *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 4, p. 589, and the wording is his; *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 10, pp. 385-86.
- [vii] Refer to Vol. 2, p. 911 of *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*.
- [viii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 28, p. 57.
- [ix] *Ibid.*, Vol. 45, p. 135.
- [x] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 431.
- [xi] *Ibid.*
- [xii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 439.
- [xiii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 440.
- [xiv] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 10, p. 114.
- [xv] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 567.
- [xvi] *Ibid.*
- [xvii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, pp. 568-69.
- [xviii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 44, p. 278.
- [xix] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 392.
- [xx] *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, pp. 398-99.
- [xxi] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 44, p. 288.

CHAPTER 9

You mostly live in lands some of the residents of which suffer from moral looseness, lewdness, licentiousness and family disintegration, in a place where direct pleasure is sought in all its facets and from its shortest ways without a barrier formed by religion, conduct or tradition, so much so that this has prevailed throughout them, taken control of them, imposed itself on the ground of reality without denial, awareness or a call for reform.

When you settled in those lands, you were still carrying a remnant of religious, moral and social values on which your entity is based and by which your character is defined. If you are not fortified with these values, if you do not stick to them firmly and stubbornly, you will gradually be separated from them and will melt into them. The result of this will be the following:

Firstly: Allah Almighty will be angry with you; He will abandon you; His punishment against you will be great and so will His retribution. This is so because Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, wishes to be worshipped. He disciplined His servants and set limits for them: Whoever violates them will be subjected to His wrath against which nothing stands. The warnings about any single one of His prohibitions is too much to count. Allah Almighty has blessed you by granting you knowledge of Him, enabled you to bear the call to Him, so the burden on you is greater and your disobedience in this regards is much more serious.

In the reliable tradition narrated by Abbad ibn Suhayb, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) says, "Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, says: If one who knows Me disobeys Me, I shall send against him one who does not know [fear] Me."[\[i\]](#)

Secondly: You will reap what is trivial and shallow, and you may even stoop into the abyss of bestiality, even become lower, worse and more trivial than that, God forbid. In the authenticated tradition narrated by Abdullah ibn Sinan, the latter states saying, "I asked [Imam] Abu Abdullah Ja'far ibn Muhammed al-Sadiq (peace be upon him): 'Are angels better than the offspring of Adam?' He said that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abu Talib (peace be upon him), had said, 'Allah installed in the angels reason without desire, in the beasts desire without reason, and in the descendants of Adam both of them; so, if one's reason subdues his desire, he is better than the angels, and if one's desire subdues his reason, he is worse than the beasts.'[\[ii\]](#)

Thirdly: You will be subject to the problems and serious repercussions which result from them and which have now formed a danger threatening the structure of these societies; they cannot get rid of it or free themselves from it.

Fourthly: You will be followers of others and your character will decay. If you are swept away in this direction and run after it, you will become imitators, followers who walk behind them without catching up with them, because they are in the lowest pit of degeneration. If, God forbid, you catch up with them and reach what they have reached, what a lost following! How much better is it to follow others in their good morals and ethics, beautiful attributes and good conduct, for wisdom is the pursuit of the believer: Wherever he finds it, he grabs it.

But if you solidify, stick to your decency and modesty, if you safeguard your ethics and principles and separate yourself from anything lowly when it comes to these aspects, your character will be distinguished in a way which attracts others' attention. You will force your respect and admiration in their hearts, for the hearts, no matter how low they degenerate, how arrogant they may become, are inclined on respecting decency, modesty and commitment; they see disintegration, immodesty and lewdness as being abominable.

If periods pass by during which materialistic calls try to cast the attribute of progress, advancement and liberation on non-commitment to morality, they are empty voices that are not sanctioned by what the soul and conscience desire, especially after the glow of that call had gone due to the lengthy period and the surfacing of negativities and serious repercussions from them.

This shows how the truth imposes itself, how it is endorsed by reason, despite the old calls for not adopting the veil in the name of advancement, progress and civilization, for those who promote this call for abandoning the veil feel that when Muslims – by observing the hijab - are contrasting themselves to the western people, and cautioning them of their abandoning of the veil and their vulgar manners, belittling them, since their immodesty and lewdness represents a stigma: When one draws attention to it and criticizes it, he actually disrespects one's dignity, degrading him.

Yet your commitment to modesty and decency, being your distinguishing characteristics, may turn you into a beacon in the darkness of these societies. This beacon light shows the way for those who went astray; it is a flag-post for goodness and humanity which provides guidance for those who stray from Allah Almighty through which He shows His servants the right way, the gate of His mercy which He opens for them. If Allah, through you, guides a single person, it is better for you that all what the sun shines on, and surely success comes from Allah Almighty.

Hopes rest on you for not relaxing while avoiding the doing of that from which you are prohibited, such as abandonment of the veil, prohibited mixing of the sexes and indulging in prohibited sex. Instead, you should keep your distance from places of immodesty, licentiousness and lewdness in their various forms and shapes; raise yourselves above getting close to them. Do not try to hold on to licentiousness or listen to some deviating or defeatist calls to compromise and to take things lightly. Keeping a distance from the said places and avoiding them results in the following:

1. It strengthens your personality, underscores your modesty and decency as has already been pointed out.
2. It fortifies you from committing what is prohibited: No matter how one feels self-confident, he may be overcome and thus fall into what is prohibited if he gets close to where it is, if it is easy for you to commit it, whereas keeping his distance from it will form a natural barrier that secures him from it.

3. It strengthens the principle of forbidding evil and seeing the ugliness of unlawful acts in your soul, for a believer is obligated to denounce what is held as contemptible even when others commit it as much as he can while also denouncing it inwardly, accustoming his soul to looking at it with contempt, seeing it as being ugly due to Allah Almighty opposing it, because it violates His sanctities and transgresses His limits. Whenever one gets close to where prohibitions are, mingling with those who commit them, becoming used to his presence among them, these prohibitions become light in his eyes, his denunciation of them decreases, the religious impulse within him wanes, the light of conviction in his heart is put out, so much so that the matter may reach the extent that what is held as contemptible starts looking as commendable, and what is wrong appears to be right. Thus, hearts die, and Allah Almighty will place a seal upon them; we seek refuge with Allah Almighty against His abandoning us.

4. You will discourage by conduct some individuals from among your own community who may contemplate on getting involved in them and wading in their quagmires, for if they see their brethren rising above them, denouncing them, this will motivate them to avoid these prohibitions. Thus, you will have enjoined what is right and forbidden what is wrong, which are two of Islam's major obligations.

Places where Allah Almighty is disobeyed, where His sanctities are violated, are more likely to bring about His wrath and curse. The curse and condemnation may descend on these places, so all those in them will be affected even if they are not among those who commit them: Allah Almighty has said, "When you see men engaged in vain discourse about Our Signs, turn away from them unless they turn to a different theme. If Satan ever makes you forget, then after recollecting, do not sit in the company of the wrongdoers" (Qur'an, 6:68).

In a tradition narrated by Salih, the latter quotes Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying, "A believer should not sit where Allah is disobeyed if he cannot change it." [\[iii\]](#)

In the authenticated tradition narrated by Abdullah ibn Maymoon al-Qaddah, he [al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said that the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) had said, "One who believes in Allah and in the Last Day does not sit in a place where doubts [about Allah] are cast." [\[iv\]](#)

In [Sulaiman] al-Ja'fari's authenticated narration, the latter says that he heard Imam Abul-Hassan [Imam Ali] (peace be upon him) asking him, "Why do I see you keeping company with Abdul-Rahman ibn Ya'qoub?" Al-Ja'fari said, "He is my maternal uncle." The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "He is uttering about Allah preposterous things, describing Allah, while He cannot be described. You may either keep him company while abandoning us or keeping us company while abandoning him." Al-Ja'fari said, "He can say whatever he wants; why should I be concerned if I do not repeat what he says?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Are you not afraid the wrath may descend on him and harm you all? Do you not know about the companions of Moses (peace be upon him)? Someone's father was one of Pharaoh's people. When Pharaoh's cavalry caught up with Moses, the son lagged behind him in order to admonish his father so he would catch up with Moses (peace be upon him). But his father kept instead trying to pull him in his own direction. This went on until they reached the sea in which they both drowned. Moses (peace be upon him)

came to know about it, so he said, 'He [the believer] is in the mercy of Allah, but when wrath descends, nobody who is close to the sinner can keep it away.'^[v]

In the authenticated narration of Abu Hamzah, the latter quotes Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) as having said, "The rain falls every year in exactly the same measure, but Allah places it wherever He pleases. When some people commit transgressions, Allah, the most Great, will keep away rain from them which he had decreed that year and will send it to others in the plains, seas and mountains. Allah punishes the beetle in its hole by keeping rain from reaching the ground in which it lives on account of the sins of those in its company, for Allah has enabled it to go and live somewhere else where transgressions are not committed." Then the Imam (peace be upon him) quoted this verse: "So, be warned, O people who have vision" (Qur'an, 59:2).^[vi]

Do not let Satan and his followers deceive you with the blessings which Allah has bestowed on the societies in which you live, the riches of this world and its ornaments, and rest assured that they are blessings that have turned into curses due to their negativities and consequences, so much so that they have ended up in severe problems as a result of their affluence and the satisfying of their animalistic desires.

Yet these have diverted them from Allah Almighty, making them forget about remembering Him, so Satan took control of them, and they drowned into disobeying Allah Almighty, going to extremes in their stupor. Allah, praise belongs to Him, therefore, turned away from them, rendering their affairs to their own souls, giving them a respite. One of the most severe penalties of Allah Almighty with which He punishes His servants is to give them respite.

Allah Almighty says, "Do not let the unbelievers think that Our respite to them is good for them: We grant them respite so they may grow in their iniquity, but they will have a humiliating punishment" (Qur'an, 3:178) and "But leave them in their confused ignorance for some time. Do they think that because We have granted them abundance of wealth and sons, We would hasten them on in every good? Nay! They (simply) do not understand" (Qur'an, 54:56). He has also said, "We shall gradually visit those who reject Our Signs with punishment, in ways which they do not perceive. We will grant them respite, for My plan is strong (and unfailing)" (Qur'an, 7:182-83).

In a tradition narrated by Sufyan ibn al-Samt, the latter quotes Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying, "If Allah decrees something good for one of His servants who then commits a sin, He follows it with an affliction to remind him to seek forgiveness. And if He wishes for a servant something adverse and he then commits a sin, he follows it by granting a blessing so it may make him forget to seek forgiveness and he will persist in his sins. This is the meaning of this verse when Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great says: 'We shall gradually visit those who reject Our Signs with punishment in ways which they do not perceive' (Qur'an, 7:182), i.e. visit them with blessings when they sin."^[vii] And there are many other such texts.

Thereupon, you can see for sure that you should distance yourselves from such places and their likes and keep away from those who frequent them so you may not expose yourselves to embarrassment. Rise above corruption, purify your souls and maintain your modesty. But you may be forced to socialize, or it may be justified by a need, by a more important interest. In this

case, restrict it to whatever necessity dictates to you, for necessities are judged according to their own extents. But you should nevertheless fully condemn and detest it, deep down rejecting it and raising yourselves above committing transgressions.

Substitute these places with those wherein Allah is mentioned, where there are societies for goodness, guidance and righteousness. You must try to create assemblies and recreational places where you get together and which suit your religious, ethical and social condition, even if it may be in a limited scope, which all increase your clinging to your reality with which you felt comfortable when you were in your homelands. And you will be thus more upholding your great religion, honorable principles and virtuous manners. Allah, the most Praised the most Exalted, helps you in your trials and tribulations; He is the One Who is Merciful to you during your life and in the Hereafter.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 242.

[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 164.

[iii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 503.

[iv] *Ibid.*, p. 504.

[v] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 71, p. 200, in his own wording. *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 503.

[vi] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 501.

[vii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 5, p. 217.

CHAPTER 10

Undoubtedly, living in any society forces one to acclimate, to be in harmony with it and with its members, to go along with many of their norms of conduct, customs and traditions, but you should do the following:

Firstly: You must safeguard whatever you can of your positive customs and traditions, especially among yourselves, for this stresses your character, firms your entity and reminds you of being adherents of another religion and have other ideals, manners and norms of conduct.

Secondly: You must observe the limits imposed by Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, and His teachings, for many affairs relevant to socializing and mixing with these societies are prohibited by the Islamic Sharia, such as shaking hands with non-*Mahram* women, listening to music and songs, wine drinking, etc. So, you must abstain firmly and stubbornly from coming close to them no matter what the cost may be.

Satan, his loyalists and the evil-inciting self must not deceive you by telling you that doing so is only dictated by necessity, that you will feel too embarrassed to oppose them because it will distort your image in their regard, and they will look at you in a negative way because you have, in your view, departed from the rules and etiquettes of socializing, and that necessities have their own dictates. Stepping along such a path and surrendering to it with regard to the way they feel about you – in having departed from a nice companionship and a good way of socializing – will undermine your character, violate your religion, transgress on the sanctity of your Lord and will be a cause for His abandonment of you and His wrath. You will thus lose righteousness and sacrifice the truth in the deluge of corruption and moral disintegration, and the longer the period lasts, the retreat will be harder.

Yes, you have to behave well with them and to explain in a nice and wise way your viewpoint and justifications for your abstention, attracting their attention in a good way that your refusal to go along with them, with regard to these customs, does not mean that they are being disrespected, nor is it due to the bad companionship with them, but it is for the sake of your honorable commitments and sacred teachings. When this becomes clear to them, you will rise in their esteem and impose on them respect for you and for your character. They will then look at you with respect and veneration because souls are inclined to respecting people who have principles and commitments, those who have strong personalities. Thus, the truth will become clear the whole time, and your traditions will prevail and spread among them. They will not

denounce them, and it will be easy for you to follow them without feeling embarrassed; rather, you will do so with perfect dignity and pride.

CHAPTER 11

Among the most important of your preoccupations as you live in strange lands is mixing with the people of those lands and socializing with them, because:

Firstly: This is the requirement of the obligation which Allah Almighty imposed on you, the manners with which His great religion, honorable Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and Imams of guidance (peace be upon him) disciplined you; so, you should not neglect or fall short of taking charge of it.

Secondly: Your conduct reflects on your religion and its holy personalities: good conduct will reflect well, and bad conduct will reflect poorly, because people, by nature, attribute the good or bad things in the principles and religions to those who bear them and to whom they are attributed, making no distinction between one and the other, ignoring the natural distinctions of those who bear them and belong to them, their personal inclinations, general and private circumstances. You are the messengers of Islam in these lands, the representatives of faith and guidance in these societies, and they both are trusts in your hands. So, you must work hard to invite others to embrace them through your righteous way of life and good conduct. Do not be the reason for bringing your religion and its holy personalities shame and affliction.

Thirdly: It has the greatest impact on your success in life and on how your affairs go, especially in the long run, because keeping good companionship and socializing is one of the most important causes for people to love you, to trust you, to open up to you and for their being responsive to you.

From this onset, we would like to attract your attention to important matters related to the above:

1. One of the most important ethical principles, which is dictated by nature and which great Islam emphasized in the Holy Qur'an and in the traditions of the Trusted Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the Imams from among his Progeny (peace be upon them), is to speak the truth, to safeguard the covenant and to return the trust to the righteous or to the open sinners, to avoid cheating, cunning, conniving and treachery.

Allah Almighty has said, "...for them there is a painful chastisement (waiting for them) because of the lies which they were telling" (Qur'an, 2:10)." And He said, "... and fulfill (every) promise, for inquiries will be made (on the Day of Reckoning) regarding (every) promise (which you made)" (Qur'an, 17:34) and also, "Allah commands you to return the trusts to those to whom they belong" (Qur'an, 4:58). The Almighty has also said, "O you who believe! Do not betray the trust of Allah and of the Messenger, nor should you knowingly misappropriate things entrusted to you" (Qur'an, 8:27).

Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said that Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (peace be upon them) used to say to his sons, "Beware of small and big lies whenever you are serious or jesting, for if one lies about small things, he will dare to lie about big things. Do you not know that the

Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) had said, 'A servant of Allah keeps telling the truth until Allah writes him down as a truthful one, and a servant of Allah keeps telling lies until Allah writes him down as a liar?'"^[li]

In the reliable tradition Anbasah ibn Mus'ab, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "There are three things about which Allah does not accept any excuse: not giving the trust back to the righteous as well as to the openly sinner, non-fulfillment of a promise made to the righteous as well as to the openly sinner, and showing no kindness to parents, be they benevolent or openly sinners."^[lii]

In the authenticated narration of al-Hussain ibn Abul-Alaa, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, did not send any prophet except to emphasize saying the truth, giving the trust back to the righteous as well as to the openly sinner."^[liii]

In the authenticated narration of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, he says, "I heard the master of worshippers, Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib, peace be with them all, saying this to his Shi'ites (followers): 'You must return the entrusted, for by the One Who sent Muhammed (peace be upon him and his progeny) with the truth as a Prophet, had the killer of my father, al-Hussain ibn Ali (peace be upon him), entrusted me with the sword with which he killed him, I would have returned it to him."^[liv]

In a tradition narrated by Abu Kahmas, the latter says that he said the following to Imam Abu Abdullah Al-Sadiq, (peace be upon him): "Abdullah ibn Abu Ya`fur greets you." The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Peace be with you and with him. If you see Abdullah, convey my greetings to him and say this to him: 'Ja'far ibn Muhammed tells you to observe the status reached by Ali (peace be upon him) in respect of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) and to uphold it: Ali (peace be upon him) did not reach such a status in respect of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) except through telling the truth and returning the trust'."^[lv]

In the authenticated narration of Abdul-Rahman ibn Sayyabah, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) asked the narrator, "Shall I advise you?" The narrator answered in the affirmative, whereupon the Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Speak the truth, give the trust back to its rightful owner, and you will thus share wealth with other people!"^[lvi]

In one of the traditions narrated by al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah, he says, "The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) was delivering a sermon from the pulpit of Kufa. He said, 'O people! If it were not because of the hatred to treachery, I would have been the shrewdest of all people. Indeed, with every act of treachery is open transgression, and with every open transgression is disbelief. [The committers of] treachery, open sinning and betrayal are all in the Hellfire."^[lvii]

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said once to a man selling flour: "Beware of cheating, for one who cheats will in return be cheated of his wealth; if he has no wealth, he will be cheated of his family."^[lviii] And there are numerous other such texts.

2. Islam stresses treating all people in general with good manners, keeping others good company, the performance of obligations, the saying of what is nice and always wearing a smile. Allah Almighty has praised His great Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) on this account saying, "And you (stand) on an exalted standard of moral character" (Qur'an, 68:4). Thus are characterized his righteous Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) who are known to be as such, providing the most glorious of examples and the most sublime of such moral characters. Nay! Even their Shi'ites and supporters are known to be as such.

Ibn Abul-Hadid, in his biography of the Commander of the Faithful, peace of Allah be with him, after having stated some of the Imam's well-known virtues and famous merits, says the following: "As for the loftiness of manners, the pleasant face, the warm welcome, the smile..., he is proverbial in all of that, so much so that his enemies faulted him on their account! Amr ibn al-Aas said this to the people of Syria, 'He very much loves to be humorous.' Amr ibn al-Aas quoted it from Umar ibn al-Khattab: When people decided to select him [Ali] for the caliphate, Umar said to him, '[You would be the best], had it not been for your humor!' Umar was contented with this much, but Amr added to it and made it worse. Sa'sa'ah ibn Sawhan and other Shi'ites and companions have said, "He [Imam Ali (peace be upon him)] was among us like one of us, affectionate, extremely humble and docile. We were in awe of him like one tied for the executioner who is standing to behead him." Such manners have been inherited and transmitted among those who love him and are loyal to him until now, just as their being an aversion, roughness and crudeness in the other side. One who knows the least about people's manners and traditions knows this."^[ix]

Statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the Imams (peace be upon them) urging the above are numerous. For example, in the reliable narration of al-Hassan ibn Rashid, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having cited the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying, "O descendants of Abdul-Muttalib! You will not win people over with your money; so, meet them with a pleasant countenance and with an optimistic attitude."^[x]

The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Mingle with people in a way that when you die, they will grieve over you, and when you are out of their sight, they yearn for you."^[xi] And in the reliable tradition narrated by Samma'ah, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "If one returns to Allah with one of three things, Allah will grant him Paradise: Spending by way of charity even when he has very little to spend, maintaining a pleasant countenance with all people of the world, and being fair with his own self."^[xii] And there are many such statements.

3. You are in lands the residents of which are accustomed to respecting the law, abiding order and holding both law and order as sacred, condemning those who violate or take them lightly. They look at you as their guests and settlers in their land. They see that they have been good to you when they welcomed and hosted you, consoling you in your time of adversity. Whenever they see you having respect for the law and observant of order, neither violating them nor willing to ignore them, you will rise in their eyes, impose your character and respect on them. You will consequently impose on them respect for your great religion, honorable

principles and holy figures. But if they see that you violate the law, take order lightly, seizing any opportunity to violate them for the sake of some quick financial gains, seeking opportunities for illegitimate earning according to their standards, you will fall down in their esteem, your image will be distorted among them, and your reputation among their circles will be bad.

Moreover, hostile media, behind which huge forces stand against you, may take advantage of it to magnify and exaggerate matters, increasing their ugliness. This will reflect a bad and repulsive image about you, your religion, principles and holy symbols.

This may complicate matters against your interest, and it may be a cause to impose precautionary restrictions on you which increase your troubles and problems and you will find it difficult to surmount and come out of them.

Having reviewed these three matters, let us now turn to the teachings of our Imams, Allah's blessings with them, to the believers from among their followers and loyalists in the way they deal with people in general so we may derive light from them to underscore what has been indicated above and to make it clearly visible.

In the authenticated tradition narrated by Abdullah ibn Sinan, the latter says that he heard Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) saying, "I commend you to fear Allah; do not carry people on your shoulders so you may thus humiliate yourselves; Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, says in His Holy Book, '... Speak fairly to people' (Qur'an, 2:83)." Then the Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Visit their sick, attend their funerals, testify for or against them and pray in their places of worship."^[xiii]

In a tradition narrated by Marazim, the Imam (peace be upon him) says, "You should pray at mosques, be good neighbors for people, bear testimony and attend funerals. You need people. Nobody can do away with others in his lifetime, and people need each other."^[xiv]

In the authenticated tradition narrated by Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab, it is stated that the latter asked the Imam (peace be upon him), "How should we fare with each other, with our own people and with people who do not espouse our beliefs?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "You should look up to your Imams whom you follow and do as they do. By Allah, they visit their [non-followers] sick, attend their funerals, testify for or against them and return the trust to them."^[xv]

In a tradition narrated by Katheer ibn Alqamah, the latter says that he asked Imam Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him) to advise him, so the Imam (peace be upon him) said, "I commend you to fear Allah, to be ascetic, to adore Him, to prolong your prostration, to give the trust back, to speak the truth, to be a good neighbor. This is what Muhammed (peace be upon him and his progeny) brought us. Pray among their [non-Shi'ites] tribes, visit their sick, attend their funerals, be an ornament for us, and do not bring us shame; let people like us, do not let them dislike us; send every type of love our way, and shun every evil from our way..."^[xvi]

In the authenticated tradition narrated by Zaid al-Shahham, the latter says that Imam Abu Abdullah Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said once to him, "Convey my greetings to whoever

among them who obeys me and listens to what I say; I commend you to fear Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, to be pious while practicing your faith, to struggle in the way of Allah, to speak the truth, to return the trust, to prolong your prostration, and to be good neighbors, for this is what Muhammed (peace be upon him and his progeny) has brought us. Return the trust to those who entrusted you with it, be he righteous or openly a sinner, for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) used to order the return of [even] the thread and the needle.

"Stay in contact with your tribes, attend their funerals, visit their sick, perform your obligations towards them, for if a man among you is pious with regard to his creed, speaks the truth, returns the trust and has good manners when dealing with people, it will be said that he is a follower of Ja'far, and this will please me and make me happy. And it will be said that such is the etiquette of Ja'far. But if he is not like that, his affliction and shame will reach me, and it will be said: Such is the etiquette of Ja'far.

"By Allah, my father [Imam Muhammed al-Baqir (peace be upon him)] has told me that a man in a tribe may be a follower of Ali (peace be upon him), so he becomes the best in returning the trust, the most keen about rights, the most truthful. People convey their wills to him and their trusts. If you ask the tribe about him, it will say to you, "Who is like so-and-so?! He is the most keen among us to returning the trust and the most truthful when he speaks."^[xvii]

And there are many such texts which establish the duty of the faithful, leaving no excuse for them.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 8, p. 577; *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 69, p. 235.

[ii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 15, pp. 206-07.

[iii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 223.

[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 225.

[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 218.

[vi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 219.

[vii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 41, p. 129; *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 52.

[viii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 12, p. 309.

[ix] Ibn Abul-Hadid, *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 1, pp. 25-26; al-Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 41, p. 147.

[x] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 8, p. 512.

[xi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 404.

[xii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 512.

[xiii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, pp. 399-400.

[xiv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 400.

[xv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 399.

[xvi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 400.

[xvii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, pp. 398-99.

CHAPTER 12

It is expected that the vast majority among you has limited resources, perhaps suffering from difficulties making a living, so you need money. This may prompt some of you to get work opportunities and to take advantage of them. This may also force many to work in demeaning jobs, even prohibited ones, such as serving wine at some places, selling pork, repairing instruments of entertainment, etc. We would like to say the following:

1. As for the prohibited, they must be avoided at any cost, for pleasing Allah is above everything, and nothing stands in the way of His wrath: "There is no god but He. Everything (that exists) will perish except His face. Command belongs to Him, and you will (all) be brought back to Him" (Qur'an, 28:88). Yet if the most High sees how His servant relies on Him in the proper way and avoids transgressing over His limits, his piety preventing him from committing what He has prohibited, always seeking to please Him, rising above lowly gains, resorting to Him, thinking well of Him, pleading for His help and mercy, He will not disappoint him, nor will He be miserly with him, for He is the most Kind, the most Merciful, the most Affectionate. Actually, He has already made it a promise to do so, and His promise is true, there is no turning back from it; He, the most Exalted One, says, "He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Allah and He provides for him from (sources) which he can never imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, Allah suffices him: Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: Truly, Allah has appointed a due proportion for all things" (Qur'an, 65:2-3).

In the authenticated narration of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) saying the following during the Farewell Pilgrimage: "Indeed, the Trusted Spirit (Gabriel) instilled in my heart that nobody dies until he receives his full sustenance; so, fear Allah and be good while seeking it. When some sustenance is slow in reaching you, do not seek it by disobeying Allah, for Allah, the most Exalted, the most Praised One, has divided sustenance among His servants for them to obtain it by lawful means; He did not divide it through unlawful means. One who fears Allah and is patient, Allah will grant him His sustenance from the lawful things which He has. One who tears down the veil of covering [one's faults] and acts hastily, taking from unlawful sources, He will deduct it from his lawful sustenance and will hold him accountable for it on the Judgment Day."^[i] Texts in this meaning are too numerous to leave any excuse for anyone.

2. As regarding lowly and cheap means of gain, you have to rise above them as much as you can, for Allah, the most High, the most Exalted, has raised your status through His religion, raising your position by making you bearers of His Message. The most Exalted One has said, "... Honor belongs to Allah and His Messenger and the believers" (Qur'an, 63:8). So, do not humiliate yourselves, do not demean your status, for then you would be unfair and unjust. Dignity is above everything next to the Pleasure of Allah Almighty. In the reliable tradition narrated by Samma'ah, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Allah, the most Exalted, the most Great, has granted liberty to the believer to fare with his own affairs but did not grant him the freedom to humiliate himself. Have you not heard this verse by Allah Almighty: 'Honor belongs to Allah and to His Messenger and to the believers' (Qur'an, 63:8)?"

So, a believer should be honorable, dignified, not humiliated. Allah grants him honor and dignity through faith and Islam."^[ii]

The Master of Martyrs, Imam al-Hussain (peace be upon him) used to recite the following verses whenever he started his battles:

و العار أولى من دخول النار

الموت أولى من ركوب العار
و الله من هذا و هذا جار^[iii]

*Death is better than riding shame,
Yet shame is better than entering Hell:
By Allah, neither is my destiny.*

There are other verified texts that emphasize it.

This is so especially since you are living in lands of expatriation where your weakness is reflected in their societies and among their nations, on your righteous religion, the great Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), the most revered Imams (peace be upon him) and the sublime sanctities. Actually, if you do so a great deal and what you do is repeated in a systematic way, it may attract the attention of some hidden forces hostile to you and to your religion, so they may focus on it and try hard through various means to give you a hard time, to close the respectable work opportunities in your faces, thus encouraging you to go to lowly methods of gain until you become used to them and your souls accept them, so much so that you will be identified by them, and this will be a stigma of shame on you, your religion and sanctities. Just as is known in our homeland that some entities are specialized in doing lowly jobs, so this became a cause for weakening [their image in public opinion]. It is something rejected by Islam's ardor, zeal of conviction and lofty moral ethics. Actually, it may get to the extent of reaching the limit of prohibition or disobedience of Allah Almighty.

The master of martyrs, Imam al-Hussain (Allah's blessings with him), has said: "Far removed from us is humiliation: Allah, His Messenger and the believers reject it, as do the righteous guardianship, chaste outfits, lofty souls and dignified spirits."^[iv]

So, beware of all of this, rise above it, look after your own affairs, suppress your anxiety and panic and shield yourselves with contentment and patience. Resort to Allah, the most Praised One, Who has dignified and honored the believers by opening for them the gates of His comfortable sustenance and honorable living. Plead to Him for it, rely on Him, think well of Him. He shall never betray you if He sees that you do so, by the will of Allah, the most Exalted One.

^[i] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 27.

^[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 424.

^[iii] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 44, p. 196.

[\[iv\]](#) *Sharh Nahjul-Balagha*, Vol. 3, p. 250; *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 45, p. 83.

CHAPTER 13

What worries us the most and robs us of sleep, with regard to your affairs, is the issue relevant to the new generation that has been born or grew up in foreign lands. This generation is not familiar with the environment in which you lived, nor has it been acquainted with the principles with which you have been familiar, nor has it fortified itself with anything like that. Rather, all this is strange to it and to its community, distant from it altogether. Then it became exposed in these lands and societies to the most serious cultural and behavioral dangers especially with regard to the strictness of their laws in making education compulsory and in building it on “liberty” in a way which reaches the extent of moral looseness, immodesty, lewdness and the weakening of the authority of the parents and family on the child and the absence of these parents' watchful eyes. All this prepares this child to be fused into the society, in its culture and behavior. He will be fused into it easily and without any resistance or opposition. We have been told that some newspapers have expected all of this to take place, feeling spiteful, even boastful about it.

This hurts us and hurts every Muslim and every believer who has a conscience, because this new generation is the second generation of Islam and of faith in these lands. Actually, it is the next generation of Islam and faith if they remain in these countries; so, what a loss and a calamity if such problems come to pass!

From this onset, hope rests on Muslims and believers in general, in these lands and in the lands of Islam, to study the problem and its size and significance, and to raise religious and emotional fervor and bear the responsibility; then cooperate and solidify to fight this very serious peril and set up fortifications against it. All this can be done by trying to build schools for this generation in these lands, the curricula of which teaches the basics and branches of the creed, its rulings, ethics and behaviors while making all this attractive to this generation, explaining its benefits and fruits and the risks of abandoning it as well as the negativities of such abandonment.

All of this is intended to educate this generation with its pristine religious and moral education, direct it towards the most exemplary conduct, fortify it against deviation—cultural and behavioral—which is to be expected, safeguard its humanity, religion, ethical values and manners. All the above strengthen its ties with this generation's origins, tying it to these origins, igniting its feelings and sentiments towards them, distancing it from the impulses of looseness, disintegration and deviation.

Even if this requires in the beginning significant material sacrifices, yet the problem, considering its size and significance, requires such sacrifices. These sacrifices may

become lighter to bear through cooperation and solidarity. Later, they may even yield funds that help perpetuate these facilities or suffice to maintain them. Actually, it may cover past losses and have a surplus in the short or long term especially if the intention is to respond to the call of Allah through relying on Him and thinking well of Him, for He always assists His servant so long as the latter is with Him: "[As regarding] those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to Our paths, for truly Allah is with those who do right" (Qur'an, 29:69).

This applies to all the Muslims and believers in general. As regarding you, specifically those living in foreign lands, this new generation represents the apples of your eyes, the fruits of your hearts, the extension of your existence. It is your bright hope, the trust of Allah Almighty which He placed in your hands, making you in charge of protecting it and will hold you accountable about it; He, the most Exalted One, has said, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which stern (and) strong angels are appointed, (angels) who do not flinch (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah but do (precisely) what they are commanded" (Qur'an, 66:6).

Do you not see how one is afraid his son may catch a cold or disease or stumble or a thorn may harm him, would he still leave him to be fuel of the fire of Hell, sinking deeply in the pits of disintegration and moral decay, thus bringing him, his religion and honor a shame?

So, fear Allah, rely on Him, seek His help, resort to Him, then work very hard and make your preparations, set your resolve and hold on to your children, keep an eye on them, raise them well, look after them, feed them with the basics of Islam and faith, with the teachings of the true religion, with lofty Islamic manners, with the guidance of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). Bring their attention to the good things in all of this, to its benefits and fruits, and to the negativities of the ideologies, norms of behavior, risks and repercussions that surround them. Make them feel the latter's triviality and lowliness.

Prepare for them the suitable environment for it at home, in your meetings, assemblies, institutions, and do not neglect it in your private and public speeches, casual and fixed occasions, so they may be attracted to these good roots and fruitful origins and be attached to them with their emotions and feelings, live them and interact with them in their conscience and conduct. Do not let them be deceived by the ideologies, concepts and conduct that surround them, [so they may not incline to immediate pleasure, but they should denounce it, see it as repulsive and distance themselves from it.](#)

No matter how hard you work towards this objective and tolerate along its path troubles, difficulties, sacrifices and losses, all this is less than what it is worth: You are the winners! You are like a drowning person who has to hold on to anything that may keep him alive and safe: "... Allah is with you and will never put you in loss on account of your (good) deeds" (Qur'an, 47:35). We plead to Allah Almighty, by His bounties and generosity, and by the right of the choicest from among His creation i.e. Muhammad and his pure Progeny (blessings of Allah be **with them all**), **to assist you with the best of His assistance, to grant you, to give you guidance, to follow your efforts with success and triumph**; He is the most Merciful of all those who show mercy, the Master of the believers, the best Helper.

Be informed that the strongest ties that connect you to your origins and tie you to them, safeguarding your character and entity, is the sacred language, Arabic, the language of the Holy Qur'an, of the sacred traditions, the true religion, the truthful teachings, the lofty etiquettes—in preaching, supplications, sermons and *Ziyarats*—and of bright history, great glories and all pristine Islamic heritage. If they become familiar with Arabic, it will be easy for them to absorb all of this and interact with it.

Beware lest they should distance themselves from this language, **neglect it or ignore it, so they may thus sever their ties from all of this in a way which will be very difficult to retract and benefit from. So, let Arabic be the language among you, in your societies and clubs, and during your occasions, so they may keep it alive with you and take them from you. Prepare for them whatever you can – books, leaflets, recordings, etc – to feed them with, to tie them to. Do not neglect such things; do not lose them, due to its great significance in the life of this new young generation and its fate.**

Muslims, in all their nations and ethnicities, should show interest in this language, learn it themselves and teach it to their children, for it is the language of their great religion, which bears its legacy, branches of knowledge, teachings, culture and arts. It is the language that combined all Muslims, during their peak of glory, regardless of their nations, ethnicities and homelands. Through it, they filled the whole world with knowledge and culture in their writings, books, sermons and poetry.

We nowadays see many Muslims learning foreign languages so it may help them gain money or knowledge without, unfortunately, thinking of learning the Arabic language which is the language of their religion in order to reach their original culture and absorb their great legacy through which their salvation and happiness can be achieved and so can the perfection of their personality and entity. Let this language bring them all together, help them extend bridges among them, facilitate the means of

communication and friendship among them as well as with others despite their different nations, ethnicities and homelands.

CHAPTER 14

Expatriates live amidst societies overwhelmed by economic prosperity and plentitude of money. It is a blessing from Allah Almighty. However, as is the case with many of His blessings, it has changed, with regard to some people, into curses as a result of misuse and lack of right direction. You must avoid over-spending as well as being creative in finding new ways in spending it to the limit of extravagance, wasting and carelessly abusing resources. The beneficiaries of these blessings have proven to be ingrates to the Almighty: Gratitude for a blessing means rightfully benefiting from it, not wasting and squandering it.

Wealthy people have discovered in these societies the right grounds for absorbing and draining people's money, so they haveworked hard in producing instruments of opulence, becoming artistic in diversifying them in a way which attracts attention. So, people have kept spending on them huge sums of money out of their love for anything new, seeking convenience which they never found nor will they ever find. Rather, these monies became a cause for the economic, psychological and physical troubles due to laziness, too much rest and very little physical effort.

One of the most obvious causes of opulence and indolence which suck-in money is the common practice these days of upgrading models of merchandise which have very high prices. Soon afterwards, a newer model arrives which replaces the old one that might differ very slightly. All this is done to control people's spending habits, prompting them to heavily advertise, use different advertisement methods behind which the beneficiaries stand to suck-in money from people without them being aware of it. People are unaware of all of this; they have been fooled; they lost the right guidance.

So, the believers, may Allah Almighty grant them success, especially the expatriates who live amidst such societies that are immersed in indolence and are fond of these matters, must be aware of the reality of the matter and must not be carried away in their spending without sensibility and discretion, thus their money, with which Allah Almighty blessed them through their hard work and toil, will disappear uselessly, only to satisfy whims and trivialities imposed by the condition of these corrupt over-powered societies.

Let these expatriates follow the etiquettes of their religion and derive guidance from them in running their affairs, for all of this is not in harmony with the teachings of great Islam and its economic outlook of life's different fields because it is quite obvious that enjoying what is good and benefiting from useful things, though good and not held by the Sharia in contempt, yet spending on it in such a way is the most obvious manifestation of extravagance and waste which the Sharia prohibits as stated in the Holy Book (Qur'an) and articulated by the Holy Prophet and his pure Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them all).

We ought to refer here to some sacred verses and revered traditions which provide the general outlines for Islam's economic outlook. Allah Almighty says, "And render to their kindred their due rights, as (well as) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But do not squander (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Truly spendthrifts are brothers of the satans, and Satan was surely

ungrateful to his Lord. And even if you have to turn away from them in pursuit of the mercy which you expect from your Lord, speak a word of kindness to them. Do not (like a stingy person) make your hand tied to your neck, nor should you stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that you [eventually] become blameworthy and destitute” (Qur'an, 17:26-29).

The most Praised One has also said, "It is He Who produces gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): Eat their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the Day that the harvest is gathered. But do not waste by excess, for Allah does not love the extravagant” (Qur'an, 6:141); "O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: Eat and drink, but do not waste by excess, for Allah does not love the wasteful. Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the clean and pure things (which He has provided) for (their) sustenance?” (Qur'an, 7:31-32). The Almighty has also said, "...Those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor stingy but hold a just (balance) between these (extremes)” (Qur'an, 25:67) and "They ask you how much they are to spend. Say: “What exceeds your needs” (Qur'an, 2:219).

In a tradition narrated by Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, Imam Zainul-Abidin (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as referring to three things which save one from perdition, and he said of the third thing: “Moderation (in spending) during prosperity and poverty.”^[ii] Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying, "One who is not extravagant in spending on his livelihood will be sustained by Allah, and one who squanders will be deprived by Allah."^[iii]

In a tradition narrated by Dawood al-Raqqi, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Moderation (in spending) is something loved by Allah Almighty, while extravagance is hated by Allah Almighty, including throwing a date-stone, for it is good for something, and even your disposing of whatever remains of your drink."^[iii] The Imam (peace be upon him) said so during a time when date-stones could be used as fuel or feed for domesticated cattle at homes.

In a tradition narrated by Ishaq ibn Ammar, the latter says: I asked Imam Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him), "Can a believer have ten garments?" He said, "Yes." I asked him, "Twenty?" He said, "Yes". I asked again, "Thirty?!" He said, "Yes, this is not extravagance; extravagance is when you use good clothes in same manner you use your lesser clothes."^[iv] What the Imam (peace be upon him) meant is this: Extravagance is wearing luxurious outfits with which people beautify themselves in the presence of the public, yet he wears them at home, where beautifying oneself is not required.

In another tradition which he narrates, the Imam (peace be upon him) says, "The minimum measure of extravagance is disposing of water which remains in the container, covering yourself with luxurious clothes at home and throwing away date-stones."^[v] One of his companions came to him and saw him wearing a garment with a patch. He kept looking at it. Imam Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) asked him what he was looking at, and the man said, "A patch on your garment?!" The Imam (peace be upon him) said to him, "Put your hands on this book and read what is in it." A book was in front of the Imam or near him. The man looked and read this:

"There is no faith for one who is shameless; there is no wealth for one who does not know its value, and there is nothing new for one who has nothing old."^[vi]

In a tradition narrated by Ammar, the latter says that Imam Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) has said, "There are four types of persons whose supplication is not answered. One of them is used to having wealth but he abuses it, so he says, 'Lord! Grant me sustenance!'" Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, would say, 'Did I not order you to economize?'"^[vii]

Allah Almighty has placed limits for even spending in ways of goodness and charity; one who goes beyond these limits is extravagant, wasteful; he goes out of the teachings of Islam. Reason is above everything; wisdom and good conduct are the most important things which Islam commends, the religion of perfection in all fields of life. In a tradition related by Ibn Abi Umayr, the latter quotes some of his companions saying that Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) was asked once about the meaning of this verse: "...They ask you how much they are to spend. Say: 'Whatever exceeds your needs.'" The Imam explained that moderation is implied in this verse.

In a tradition narrated by Hisham ibn al-Muthanna, a man asked Imam Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq (peace be upon him)] about the meaning of the verse saying, "...Eat their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the Day that the harvest is gathered. But do not waste by excess, for Allah does not love the extravagant" (Qur'an, 6:141). The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "So-and-so Al-Ansari —naming him— used to have a farm. Whenever he gathered the fruit of his farm, he gave it away in charity, remaining with his family with nothing, so Allah Almighty regarded that as "extravagance".^[viii]

In a tradition narrated by Ajlan, the latter said that he was once in the company of Imam Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) when a beggar asked him for charity. The Imam (peace be upon him) stood up to fill his hand with dates in a measuring container and gave it to him. Another beggar came and the Imam (peace be upon him) did the same, and a third one as well came. The Imam (peace be upon him) likewise gave him dates. When a fourth beggar came, the Imam (peace be upon him) said to him, "Allah has sustained us and yourself." Then he said that whenever the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) was asked for anything of this world, he would give it away. A woman once sent him her son. She said to her son, "If he tells you that he has nothing to give you, ask him to give you his garment." The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) did, indeed, give his garment to the boy, whereupon Allah Almighty corrected him to be moderate in giving saying, "Do not (like a stingy person) make your hand tied to your neck [without giving anything by way of charity], nor [should you] stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that you (eventually) become blameworthy and destitute" (Qur'an, 17:29).

In a tradition narrated by Mas'adah ibn Ziyad, the latter quotes Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) citing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) saying that there are three types of people whose supplication is not answered [by the Almighty]: One who loaned another man a loan until a certain term but did not write it down, nor did he have witnesses; a man who invokes the Almighty's wrath on one of his relatives; and a man whom Allah, the most Praised One, blessed with wealth which he spent it all by way of charity and out of piety, leaving nothing of it with him. Yet the latter calls on Allah to grant him sustenance! To him, the Lord,

Blessed and Exalted is He, says, "Did I not grant you sustenance, making you free of want? Why did you not be moderate, and why were you so extravagant?! I do not love the extravagant ones." There is another man who stays at home while supplicating to Allah to grant him sustenance. He does not go out and seek Allah's favors as Allah had commanded him. To him, Allah says, "My servant! I did not keep the world out of your access, nor did I harm your faculties. My earth is spacious, why do you not come out and seek your sustenance? If I deprive you of it, I will have excused you, and if I grant you sustenance, it is what you seek."^[ix] Traditions dealing with this topic are too numerous to quote here in their entirety.

One who is wise should make a balance between his income and expenditure. One whose sustenance is expanded by Allah Almighty should give out without extravagance or unnecessarily. And one whose sustenance the Almighty straitened should give away as much charity as he can. A poor person should not spend beyond his means in order to brag about it or compete with what a wealthy person gives away, exhausting himself in the process, so much so that he may end up in a tragic situation. Allah Almighty has said, "Let the man of means spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are limited, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant ease" (Qur'an, 65:7).

In a tradition narrated by Umar ibn Yazid, the latter quotes Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) saying that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "A believer follows Allah's norm of conduct: If He grants him more, he gives out [for charity] more, and if He withholds, he, too, withholds."^[x] In a tradition related by Rifa'ah, the Imam (peace be upon him) is cited as having said, "If Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, grants you generously, you, too, must be generous in giving away, and if He withholds from you, withhold. Do not try to be more generous than Allah, for surely He is the most Generous One."^[xi]

In a tradition narrated by Abu Baseer, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "There may be a poor man who is more extravagant than a rich one: The rich man spends of what he is given, whereas the poor one spends without being first given."^[xii] There are many such instructions and etiquettes contained in traditions by the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them all) on the economic side which we cannot cite here in their entirety.

^[i] *Wasaail al-Shi'a*, Vol. 15, p. 259.

^[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 259.

^[iii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 257.

^[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 352.

^[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 376.

^[vi] *Ibid.*

^[vii] *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 4, p. 56. *Wasaail al-Shi'a*, Vol. 15, p. 261.

^[viii] *Wasaail al-Shi'a*, Vol. 15, p. 258.

^[ix] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 90, p. 355; *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 4, p. 1161.

^[x] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 15, p. 249.

[\[xi\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 259.

[\[xii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 263.

CHAPTER 15

It is expected that viewpoints among the faithful will vary and trends will be many. This happens everywhere, but the problem among your members in this regard is more complicated due to your distance from the centers of their original culture, and because there are no common rules of conducts that force themselves strongly. Anyhow, we would like to emphasize the following:

Firstly: Decision making and adopting of a particular viewpoint, after resorting to Allah Almighty and seeking success from Him, should be based on verification and not made hastily. Attention should be made to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty, to reform the creed and the believers, to perform the duty in this regard distantly from outside impulses and individualistic interests, material whimsical benefits, such as the desire for distinction and control or to give other sides a hard time or any low wishful desire, for Allah Almighty is above everything; to Him everything is referred; He knows what the hearts hide, what the inner intentions are. Our Imams (peace be upon them) have very strongly warned us about all these things.

For example, in the authenticated narration of Mu'ammār ibn Khallād, Imam Abul-Hassan [Ali ibn Abu Talib] (peace be upon him) once heard the name of a man being mentioned. He said, "He loves to preside over others." Then the Imam (peace be upon him) said, "No two wolves in a cattle divide their shepherds and create more harm than love for presiding in matters relevant to a Muslim's creed."^[i]

In a tradition narrated by Abu Mayyah, the latter quotes his father citing Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) saying, "One who seeks to preside over others will [sooner or later] perish."^[ii]

Abu al-Rabee' al-Shami quotes Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) as saying, "Woe unto you, O Abul-Rabee'! Do not seek presidency; do not be a wolf, and do not let people consume what belongs to us else Allah should condemn you with poverty."^[iii]

A tradition narrated by al-Qasim ibn Awn, Imam al-Sajjad, Zainul-Abidin (peace be upon him), is quoted as saying the following among other statements: "Beware of imposing your authority, for Allah will then debase you. Beware of consuming what belongs to others, for Allah will then increase your poverty. Be informed that if you are a tail in goodness, it is better for you than being a head in evil."^[iv] And there are many others.

Secondly: Keep violence away while trying to impose a viewpoint on others. Respect others' opinion and feeling, and deal with them gently, sensibly and with an open heart. In the authenticated narration of Zurarah, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) had said, "Gentleness is never placed anywhere except that it beautifies it, and it is not removed from anywhere except that it is disgraced."^[v]

In the authenticated narration of Mu'ath ibn Muslim, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted citing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying, "Gentleness is blessing, and recklessness is misfortune."

And in the reliable narration of Al-Sukuni from him (peace be upon him): The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "The best of actions is being fair to people with regard to your own self, consoling your brother in Allah and remembering Allah in all circumstances."^[vi] So, just as one does not accept an opinion being imposed on him by someone else with insistence and violence, he likewise should not impose his opinion on others with insistence and violence.

Thirdly: Differences of viewpoints must not lead to severing ties and going in opposite directions. Rather, all should maintain their brotherhood in faith and their unity under the shade of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) with an attempt to decrease the intensity of differences, bringing viewpoints closer to each other, paying attention to common aspects about which everyone agrees, serving them while each side keeps his viewpoint to himself or invites others to adopt it in the best of ways. Thus you will remain united, your affairs reformed, your Lord, the Great and Mighty One, will thus be pleased with you and so will His Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the Pure Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

"And together hold fast to the bond of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves, and remember God's favor unto you" (Qur'an, 3:103).

^[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 279.

^[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 280.

^[iii] *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 298; *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 280.

^[iv] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 281.

^[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 214.

^[vi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 225.

CHAPTER 16

You are encouraged to be involved in serving Islam, to cooperate with the members of other Muslim sects from among the people of guidance, sensibility and care about the supreme interest of Islam, those who are distant from scheming, conspiracy and hateful fanaticism, as our agreement with them in the principles of Islam requires everyone to pay attention to serving and firming them and to serving Islam as an inclusive religion. So, disseminate the Islamic faith, raise its flags, invite others to it, spread it in the corners of the earth and cooperate in this regard in the best and most perfect way, peacefully, amicably.

Merely differing from them about the sect's principles does not prevent us from cooperating with them and from supporting them in serving Islam as a whole after we all have agreed about it. Our role models in this regard are our holy Imams (Allah's blessings be with them) who provided the most glorious and sublime examples in self-denial and in performing this duty. Then our scholars and believing adherents followed suit in order to carry out this duty which is imposed by the Sharia. In the near past, religious scholars in Iraq led the believing masses and carried with them arms when Iraq was exposed to the invasion of the British, in defense of Islam and in order to safeguard its unity.

This does not mean that we or they should give up our points of contention. Rather, each side should keep what it believes to itself. It should work according to it in the best of ways without this negatively affecting our service to Islam as a common duty agreed about by everyone.

Many times have different groups agreed to serve their common material interests; so, what would you say about Islam which is the religion of creed and principle, especially since Islam is now passing through hard times and tough tribulations, resisting the ganging up of forces of evil that try to tear it apart from within by stirring differences, rivalries and fanaticism, besieging it from outside, pouring wrath on it and on all the Muslims, ignoring their rights, pursuing them and violating their sanctities.

So, this condition should stimulate all Muslims, regardless of the differences among their sects and groups. Muslims should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with solidarity to serve their true religion and sublime principles, invite others to them with beautiful wisdom and goodly exhortation, stand in the face of oppressive campaigns intended to weaken them and tear their unity apart.

You, nevertheless, should keep good company with the rest of Muslim groups and safeguard for them Islam's right and holiness. If we have already emphasized good companionship and its duties in the societies that surround you, many members of which are licentious, what would you say about the Muslims, who stay away from what the great religion of Islam has prohibited, believing in it just like you, while you are with them in those lands a weak minority? The stronger and more cemented such companionship is, the stronger and more firm you will then be.

CHAPTER 17

People in general and believers in particular are exposed to problems which may reach the extent of hardship and puzzlement, even despair, so much so that one feels that all roads have been closed in his face, having no exit out of his problems. The matter may become more complicated to the expatriates because they live in a materialistic environment distantly from anything that reminds one of Allah Almighty and of His power to change and alter things.

You must not ignore the above, so it may benefit you when matters become tense, when an exit is not found, for nobody should lose hope from the mercy of Allah Almighty, from the ease which He brings, for He is the One Who says, "He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Allah. And He provides for him from (sources) which he can never imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, Allah suffices him, for Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: Truly, Allah has appointed a due proportion for all things" (Qur'an, 65:2-3); and He has also said, "... Who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except those who go astray?" (Qur'an, 15:56).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) used to say this whenever there was hardship: "Whenever you become harder, eventually you will ease."^[i] Imam al-Hussain (Allah's blessings with him) said, "Lord! The variations of Your faring [with Your servants] and the speed of Your decrees have prevented those of Your servants who know You from expecting Your continuous outgiving and [also] from despairing from Your mercy when afflicted."^[ii]

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, revealed unto [prophet] David (peace be upon him): 'When one of My servants in particular seeks My protection, I will know it from his intention. Even if the heavens and earth and all those in them plot against him, I will make an exit for him out of them all.'"^[iii]

In the authenticated narration of Muhammed ibn Isma'eel ibn Bazee', Imam al-Ridha (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Think well of Allah, for Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, says: I am just as My believing servant thinks of me: If he thinks well of Me, I, too, think well of him; if he has evil thoughts of Me, I shall afflict him with evil."^[iv] There are many such references, and experiences and moral lessons in this regard are countless, innumerable.

So, stress this matter in your souls, strengthen it with bringing it to memory quite often and seek a moral lesson from it. Do not ignore it lest your souls should weaken as you face problems and crises; they may even collapse with despair and despondency. May Allah Almighty, through His mercy, protect you from such collapse, despair and despondency, and may He assist you manage your affairs; surely He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy, the One Who brings relief to those who seek refuge with Him.

[\[i\]](#) *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 91, p. 287.

[\[ii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 95, p. 225.

[\[iii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 41.

[\[iv\]](#) *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 180.

CHAPTER 18

The corrupt environments that surround you and the different temptations that face you may subdue some of you, so one may get off-track, slipping into the abyss of disobeying Allah Almighty and moral and behavioral degradation. Rather, he may even thrust himself into it, having severed his ties with his glorious past and pristine roots.

But all of this does not mean that the gate of mercy is closed in his face and the path is blocked for his return: Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, through His bounties, favor and wisdom, has kept the gate of repentance and forgiveness-seeking open for His servants and did not close them no matter in what condition they may be, how bad their deeds are, how dark the pages of their book of deeds may be. If one of them repents, returns to Him and seeks His forgiveness, He accepts his repentance and forgives his past sins without conditioning it with any limitations, time periods or conditions.

The most Exalted One has said, "Say: "O My servants who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of Allah's mercy, for Allah forgives all sins; He is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Turn to your Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (will) before the penalty comes upon you: After that, you will not be helped" (Qur'an, 39:53-54). He, the Great One, has also said, "He is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins, and He knows all that you do" (Qur'an, 42:25); "And whosoever repented after his wrongdoing and amended (his ways), Allah shall surely forgive him; surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Qur'an, 5:39); and also "Plead for your Lord's forgiveness, for He is oft-Forgiving" (Qur'an, 71:10).

In a tradition narrated by Jabir, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) says, "One who repents from his sin, he is as though he did not sin."^[1] In the reliable narration of al-Sukuni, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) quotes his forefathers citing the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying, "There is a medicine for every ailment, and the medicine of sins is seeking [Allah's] forgiveness."^[2] And there are many such holy traditions; so, take advantage of this opportunity, return to your Lord, repent to Him, enter the gate of His mercy and do not despair.

If a servant of Allah repents, and if after that his evil-inciting self-overcomes him and Satan causes him to fall again, so he returns to sinning, the gate of repentance is still not closed in his face after Allah Almighty had opened it for him. Rather, the gate remains open before him no matter how many times he repeats it, for Allah is most Forgiving, most Merciful. He loves His servants to maintain their link with Him and return to Him if Satan deceives him, so he sins and transgresses after which he repents and reforms and does not lose hope of His mercy.

In the authenticated narration of Abu Baseer, the latter is quoted as having asked Imam Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq (peace be upon him)] about the verse: "O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance" (Qur'an, 66:8). The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "It is (in reference to) the sin to which there is never a return." The narrator asked the Imam (peace be upon him),

"Who among us never returns (to it)?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "O Abu Muhammad! Allah loves His servant who always returns to repentance."^[3]

And in a tradition narrated by Abu Jameela, the Imam (peace be upon him) is cited as having said, "Allah loves His servant who is enticed (to sinning) and then repents, but one who is not so (i.e. one who is not enticed to sinning) is surely better than him."^[4]

In the authenticated narration of Muhammed ibn Muslim, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) is quoted saying to him, "O Muhammed ibn Muslim! A believer's sins are forgiven if he repents them; so, let the believer work for what follows repentance and forgiveness. By Allah, this is the way of only people of faith." The narrator asked the Imam (peace be upon him), "Suppose he returned to sinning after having repented, sought forgiveness, then repented again?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "O Muhammed ibn Muslim! Do you see how a believing servant regrets having sinned, seeks forgiveness and repents, do you think that Allah does not accept his repentance?!" The narrator said that he answered saying, "But he has done so too many times! He sins then repents and seeks forgiveness!" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Just as the believer returned to seeking forgiveness and to repentance, Allah, too, returns to Him with His forgiveness. Allah is most Forgiving, most Merciful. He accepts repentance and forgives sins; so, beware of encouraging the believers to lose hope for Allah's mercy."^[5]

The believers, all of them, should therefore come to know Allah's blessing on them and forgiveness when He opened for them the gate of repentance and invited them to it; so they must respond to their Lord's invitation, return to Him and not permit Satan to take control of them and thus cause them to forget remembrance of Allah Almighty, or he may cause them to lose hope for His mercy so he, Satan, may achieve his vile objective and perfect his scheming, hurling them deeply into corruption and transgression without return.

We plead to Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, to protect us from Satan and his schemes, and to help us abandon inattention and grant us success in order to avoid falling into extravagance; surely He is the most Forgiving, the most Merciful.

^[1] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, pp. 258-59.

^[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 354.

^[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 357.

^[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 364.

^[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 363.

CHAPTER 19

You must not sever your ties with the lands of Islam and their holy places. Rather, you must try to stay connected to them, to their ideologies and honorable concepts, in various possible ways of connection. And you should look forward to getting to know what goes on in them, their news, feeling tied to them.

It is commendable if you can visit them during regular periods or whenever chance permits, provided you utilize such visits to renew your pledge to the past, to keep it in your memory, to focus on and emphasize the cultural and educational aspect. Whoever is able to do so should seize the opportunity and stick to these lands due to the importance of such visits in staying connected with your origins and emphasizing your ties to them. If the cost of such visits is found by some individuals to be exhaustive, or if they find it impossible to undertake, it will be great if individual donations from each group are set aside to pay for alternate visits by their members during successive periods. The visitor must pay attention to carrying the useful concepts and ideologies from the lands of Islam and propagate them on his return among the faithful who live in foreign lands as Allah Almighty has said: "Nor should all the believers go forth together: If a contingent from every expedition goes forth, they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them (so) that thus they (may learn how) to guard themselves (against evil)" (Qur'an, 9:122).

All this is for the sake of the importance of such connection and visits and your need for them as you live in foreign lands. It protects you from getting lost in these societies, God forbid.

CHAPTER 20

We rest our hopes on you to be bearers of a message calling people there to your religion, principles and values. Do not underestimate your worth, and you should be discouraged from doing so, for the great religion of Islam has spread in many areas of the planet through merchants who travelled from Muslim lands or immigrants who sought refuge in these lands which were not subject to any military or Islamic invasion.

Also, the sect of followers of Ahl al-Bayt (the best of peace and blessings with them) has spread in most areas of the earth through this way without the backing of military might. Rather, it was carried to these lands by travelling incomers, and their residents accepted it from them due to the strength of its argument and clarity of its evidences, and because it combines logic with passion; so, prepare yourself to carry the message in the same manner and to work hard at it.

Let your call be first and foremost by your good manners, gentleness, good conduct, attractive companionship among those with whom you now live. Try to introduce them to one thing after another in a gentle and kind way, and take them out of their inattention through wisdom and beautiful exhortation, hopefully Allah Almighty will guide through you His servants and save them from the Fire.

In the reliable narration of al-Sukuni, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) quotes the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) saying, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) dispatched me to Yemen. He said to me, 'O Ali! Do not fight anyone before inviting him to accept Islam. By Allah, if Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, leads one person through you to guidance, it is better for you than everything on which the sun shines and sets.'^[1]

In a tradition narrated by Hammad, the latter reported: I said to Imam Abu Abdullah [Al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him): "I visit the lands of polytheism, and there are among us those who say that if I die, I will be gathered [on Judgment Day] with them." The Imam (peace be upon him) said to me, "Oh Hammad, when you were over there, did you express our message and invite others to our creed?" I answered in the affirmative. The Imam (peace be upon him) further asked me: "When you are in these cities, the cities of Islam, do you do the same?" I answered in the negative. The Imam (peace be upon him) then said to me, "If you were to die over there [in the cities of polytheism], you would be resurrected as a nation all by yourselves, and your radiant light will run ahead of you."

Within your religious occasions and celebrations and creed-relevant rituals there is great advantage and support for all this, as we stated in the eighth chapter :

"(As for) those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to Our paths, for truly Allah is with those who do right" (Qur'an, 29:69).

[\[i\]](#) *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 30.

CHAPTER 21

When we emphasize the importance of group work and how great its benefit is in all what we have already indicated, this does not mean the matter is restricted to it. One should not despair and be too lazy to do any work. He must not seek an excuse from the small number of believers in some lands or the difficulty of reaching them, or he is too busy, or he does not feel responsible for them, their families or even his own group, or towards their religion, principles and values, etc.

The basic matter is the work of the individual and his sense of responsibility: Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, asks everyone about what He commissioned him and enabled him to do; He appreciates one's good deeds and rewards him for them. Allah Almighty says, "We have fastened every man's fate to his own neck: On the Day of Judgment, We shall bring a scroll out for him, which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him:) 'Read your (own) record (of deeds): On this Day, your soul is sufficient on this Day to make out an account against you.' Whoever receives guidance receives it for his own benefit: Whoever strays, does so to his own loss: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: Nor would We visit any with Our Wrath until We had sent a Messenger (to warn)" (Qur'an, 17:13-15); "(As for) those who believe and whose offspring follow them in faith, to them We shall unite their offspring: Nor shall We deprive them (of the fruit) of any of their good deeds: (Yet) each individual is in pledge for his deeds" (Qur'an, 52:21); "Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its own deeds" (Qur'an, 74:38) and "O you who believe! Guard your own souls: If you follow (right) guidance, no harm can come to you from those who stray. Allah is the goal of all of you: It is He Who will show you the truth of all that you do" (Qur'an, 5:105). So, everyone should perform his function as much as he can and carry out his responsibility. He is not to be prevented from doing so by others not cooperating with him although cooperation and coordination among the believers is much better and more useful.

This sense of responsibility of each individual is more worthy of standing, of being sustained, because it calls for action, for always moving, and under all circumstances. Thus, there is no excuse for abandoning action and stopping it. If action remains in the direction of doing what is good, for the sake of what is right, though done by a small number, and if it does not stop, it will [eventually] be a cause to take others out of their inattention, and it will continuously be an argument against their apathy. Naturally, this will have its effect even though it may be on a small number, so they are motivated to take action. Thus, work will continue, and with it inviting others to it continues, too. If the suitable circumstances become available for its growth and expansion, it will grow and expand.

Moreover, our Imams (peace be upon them) gave importance to individual work, no matter how little it may be, addressing each individual alone in taking the burden, accepting the duty and subjecting the individual for rewards without having to share the work with others and coordinate with them.

Their true teachings have been instilled in the souls of a small number of the believers, taking control of them, without the presence of a group to support them or a force to back them up. Rather, they were exposed to the most severe of resistance and confrontations. Yet they did not stop; rather, generations, one after the other, carried the message: The minority has carried it, but this message set roots, grew and spread when the suitable conditions were prepared for it.

This much we can draw your attention to here, and we continue to look forward to hearing your news, to be familiar with your problems and troubles and sympathize to them. We know, nevertheless, that your situation is critical, problems are complex, the path is long and the course is distant. But Allah Almighty says: "O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy: Vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other and fear Allah (so) that you may prosper" (Qur'an, 3:200).

We plead to Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, through His bounties and kindness to keep your feet firm on His Right Path in this life and in the Hereafter and to increase your faith and to surrender to Him, to grant you refuge from Satan and the accursed and against seditions that mislead. We also plead to Him to sustain you, to look after you, to strengthen all your affairs, to help you with all your needs, to make things easy for you and not abandon you during your hardship, to prevent evil and affliction from reaching you, to protect you from the evil of your enemies, to overwhelm you with His blessings and mercy in order to mend thereby your affairs, repair the crack in your unity, keep you together and grant you happiness in this life and in the Hereafter. Surely He is the best Master, the best Supporter. Surely my success comes only from Allah; on Him do I rely, to Him do I return, and the last of our supplication is: Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Peace of Allah and His mercy and blessings be with you all, wherever you may be on this planet.

TAQLID

The Shia *Ithna-Asheri* sect, may the Almighty raise its status, is distinguished by keeping the door of *Ijtihad* open as centuries and generations pass by. Its righteous scholars, may Allah be pleased with them, followed this principle; by *Ijtihad* they do not mean the expansion of the legislative rulings in order to suit an age and the progress of time, nor do they wish to please the public masses, the rulers, the men of power or other people of influence or anyone else.

Rather, *Ijtihad* according to them means exerting the efforts to seek knowledge of the Sharia rulings from its original sources and to safeguard it as a trust about which Allah Almighty will ask the *Mujtahid* when the latter stands before Him on Judgment Day: "The Day when no friend can avail his friend in anything, and they can receive no help" (Qur'an, 44:41) and when "... the wrong-doers will have neither protector nor helper" (Qur'an, 42:8).

This sect has also been distinguished for *Taqlid* which means: referring of the general masses of people who are not familiar with the rulings of the Sharia with regard to their actions – in their worships and dealings with other people, etc. – to the *Mujtahid* who is entrusted with the Sharia law, one who is not neglectful in researching and examining, by following the ruler, pleasing the public masses, desiring to be distinguished for inventing something new, lightening burdens and make things easy, or for any other gain and any purpose, material or immaterial.

All this is done due to fear of Allah Almighty, fear of the magnitude and the severity of His penalty. For this reason, you find the followers of this sect holding their scholars in general, and those whom they emulate in particular, with great respect, veneration, awe and regard.

This sect has the right to raise its head high and feel proud of safeguarding the laws of Allah Almighty, having due interest in deriving it from the original sources of Sharia, and for standing strongly in doing so, as it defies the storms of time and the darkness of seditions, though the period is long and the dilemma is severe.

All of this is credited to its sincere scholars who do not fear for the sake of Allah, the Most High, the blame of any blamer, and to their believing followers who do not learn their religion except from those who are trusted in their religion and god-fearing, rejecting others who cannot bear the weight of the trust and of piety, those who do not care in which valley they tread and who have placed themselves in blameworthy positions.

Before their eyes in this regard are the teachings of the guiding Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (blessings of Allah be with them) which totally agree with the judgment of a sound reason, the Glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny).

In this regard, a great deal has been reported by the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). In a revered tradition narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), he held the Jews contemptible on account of blindly emulating their scholars, and then said:

"And so are our people, if they know their scholars to be open transgressors and excessive fanatics, and passionate for the world and for the forbidden things in it. If anyone emulates such people, he will be like the Jews whom Allah Almighty condemned for emulating their corrupt scholars.

"As for the Islamic jurist who safeguards himself, protects his religion, opposing his illicit desires, is obedient to the command of his Lord, the masses may emulate him; and no one is like that, except some of the Shia Islamic jurists, not all of them. One who perpetrates indecent and sinful acts, just as the scholars of the general Muslim community commits them, then do not accept from them anything from us [the Ahl al-Bayt], and do not accept their respect."^[1]

The believers – may Allah Almighty guide their steps to what is right, be they scholars or followers [of these scholars] - must get to know how great the responsibility on their shoulders is, how heavy the trust which Allah Almighty placed on them; and let the first and last concern of any scholar be getting to know the truth, safeguarding it and arrive at the Islamic rulings from its original sources. He must make it clear, so he may thus fulfill his Islamic responsibility without concerning himself about the number of followers and supporters, or desire for prominence, nor anything else from among the vanishing temptations of the life of this world and the invitations of Satan which lead to perdition.

He must keep before his eyes this verse of the Almighty: “Were he [the Messenger] to invent any sayings in Our name, We would certainly seize him by his right hand, and We would certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our Wrath)” (Qur'an, 69:44-47).

Also, let the followers' concern be to get out of the heavy responsibility of the Sharia law by obtaining them from the scholars who act upon their knowledge, those who are men of piety, godliness, integrity, sincerity and honesty, those whom accusations cannot reach due to their being distant from doubts and places of accusations, with the

perfection of verification and deliberation. Thus, they will be sure they will come out of the responsibility duly, and they will be excused when they stand before Allah Almighty on a Day when none of their secrets remains hidden.

Followers must not follow a particular individual based on haste, or deception by decorative speech, or if he agrees with their own whims and desires, for the One Who is monitoring is Allah Almighty Who knows what the hearts conceal, what is there in the chests and in the consciences; nothing, not even the weight of an atom, stays hidden from His knowledge be it in the earth or in the heavens.

People may stand puzzled, due to certain confusions and eventualities, before so many calls and trends, but this does not mean that one becomes neglectful of his duty and fall short of fulfilling his obligation.

No matter how confused the issues may be, and when seditions are ablaze, Allah, Great are His bounties, does not allow His proof to be lost, nor does He hide the teachings of His creed – due to His favor and mercy, God willing – from anyone who tries to find them, who exerts an effort to reach them: "And those who strive in Our (cause)! We will certainly guide them to Our paths, for truly Allah is with those who do what is right" (Qur'an, 29:69); "The conclusive argument is with Allah: Had it been His will, He could indeed have guided you all" (Qur'an, 6:149).

We hope we have thus performed a portion of our duty in advising our believing brethren and reminding them of their own duties: "...remind (others of your message), for (such) remembrance benefits the believers" (Qur'an, 51:55). Surely my success comes from Allah; on Him have I relied, to Him I shall return; He suffices us and what a great Helper He is! Praise to Allah as He deserves to be praised; blessings with the best of His creation, Muhammad and his Pure Progeny.

Q1. When did *Taqlid* start? In whose time did it start? Who is the *Marja* for the Shi'as during the Greater Occultation?

A: *Taqlid* means the referral of one who does not know to another who is knowledgeable in his field of expertise, and this is an instinctive matter not limited by time. It may have existed even during the period of the Imams (peace be upon them) when the Shi'ite masses referred to the best narrators [of traditions] and the most trusted of them in order to learn and understand the Islamic rulings from them.

Q2. Who are the *Ahlul-Khibra*?

A: The *Ahlul-Khibra* are those high level students of religious sciences who study religious sciences who are familiar with the scholastic levels of Islamic jurists as a result of their acquaintance with their statements and scientific opinions, by being their students, or by exchanging information with them, or from familiarity with their books, and the like, with their ability to make a comparison among the Islamic jurists, distinguish their degrees of knowledge and prefer one over another.

Q3. Sometimes the *Ahlul-Khibra* differ among themselves about determining who the most learned *Mujtahid* is; so, some of them may recommend emulating one *Mujtahid* while others recommend emulating another; therefore, what are people supposed to do in such a case?

A: If the question is meant to inquire about the individual's personal stance for everyone, so he may perform his religious duty and thus fulfill his responsibility, the treatises of practical Islamic laws have covered this subject sufficiently.

Our opinion is that when the required conditions of both opposing sides from the *Ahlul-Khibra* are met, this requires both testimonies to be dropped from being authoritative i.e. not considered anymore, and the issue becomes that of an uncertainty in determining the most knowledgeable among the group of scholars who fulfill the conditions of being emulated. It is then, when all the rest of conditions needed for emulation are met in all of them – the most important ones being the intensity of *Adalah* and the strength of piety – if it's possible for the individual to act on precaution, by acting upon the most precautionous of the two edicts when they differ, then he must do so, in order to maintain his conformity with the [actual] Sharia ruling.

If this is difficult for him and causes awkwardness, the mercy of Allah Almighty for the believers and the easiness of the true Sharia both result in the Holy Lawgiver not requiring us to practice precaution - which is the required primary course of action in the case of uncertainty of numerous arguments – and accept the emulation of one side taking into consideration the closest amongst the sides to the reality. Thus, this requires preferring the one most probable in being the most knowledgeable. If the probabilities in the sides are equal, the preference should be, then, given to the one most pious, as he would be the most trusted in deriving the Sharia laws when there is no evidence that others are more knowledgeable than him. Without the presence of this preference, the individual has the choice in selecting one of the possible candidates and follow him.

The individual is urged in all of this to verify and ascertain carefully, even if this is done by seeking help from the people of righteousness and knowledge in order to

clarify vision as much as possible. Man is a telling witness against himself while Allah Almighty does not over-burden anyone over his capacity; He is the most Merciful.

And if the question is intended to inquire about one's opinion vis-à-vis this difference – in viewing and dealing with it – our view is that it is quite natural as the concept of the most knowledgeable is one of the issues that require efforts to reach a conclusion about which viewpoints differ and opinions vary. It must be treated with objectivity and openness while maintaining mutual respect, after all sides are concerned with the truth while the sides are in the process of acting upon their trusted obligation and fulfilling their responsibility (in determining the *Marja*). One is not supposed to force others to accept his own convictions.

It may be good to mention an example which we lived through: The late Ayatollah Shaikh Muhammed Tahir Shaikh Radi, (may Allah sanctify his soul), was convinced in the equality between the two great *Marjas*: Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim and Shaikh Muhammed Rida Aal-Yasin (may Allah sanctify their souls) so his opinion was that the individual can choose any one of them, and he had a group of people in Khuzestan seeking his guidance in determining the *Marja* for them as he was one of the *Ahlul-Khibra*. He told them of his conviction, so they chose Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim (may Allah sanctify his soul) and observed *taqlid* of him, whereas his own family chose Shaikh Aal-Yasin whom they emulated. His relationship with his group in Khuzestan and with both great *Marjas* as well as with their respective groups stayed at its best while they knew his opinion.

Before that, Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim (may Allah sanctify his soul) used to refer people to emulate the late Mirza Naeeni (may Allah sanctify his soul) while his older brother, Ayatollah Sayyid Mahmoud al-Hakim (may Allah sanctify his soul), was referring people to emulate the late great *Marja*, Shaikh Ali son of Shaikh Baqir al-Jawahiri (may Allah sanctify their souls), each according to his own personal conviction without this affecting their warm relationship. The likes of these examples are many with regard to the conduct of the people of righteousness and piety.

Q4. What are the ways for identifying who the most knowledgeable person is, knowing that the *Ahlul-Khibra* are lower than him? Is it sufficient to use the teaching manner, the way of explaining, and the giving of speedy answers to identify him or are there other means by which we can identify and choose him?

A: These matters are not criteria for identifying the most knowledgeable. The criteria is the individual being the best in comprehending the religious texts that are used as a source to derive the verdicts, the most capable and competent of all in combining what these lead to through the conventional method, the strongest in the rules of the

principles of jurisprudence. This is an issue realized by the *Ahlul-Khibra* when they are in contact with the parties from which the most knowledgeable is expected to be and look at their scientific researches.

Q5. Is it sufficient, in practicing *Taqlid*, to take the treatise of practical Islamic laws from the *Mujtahid* and to be committed to its contents without applying it in conduct and action?

A: *Taqlid* means referring to the *Mujtahid* and acting upon his edicts, even though it may be with regard to a single issue; and it is not sufficient to acquire a copy of his treatise of practical Islamic laws.

Q6: Does knowledge of the conditions of Muslims and their problems in various countries, including what they must do about their reality and the current events, have any role in identifying who the most knowledgeable person is, such that it is a factor in preferring a particular *Mutjahid* over others, or does this have nothing to do with that?

A: This has nothing to do with the attribute of being the most knowledgeable that is required in the *Marja*. What this attribute means is that he is the most knowledgeable in deriving the Sharia laws in its general form. As for those laws pertaining to individual incidences that vary with the differences of times and places, which change according to new eventualities, the person observing *Taqlid* can derive their rulings after determining the subject-matter in general and applying the relevant laws which he obtains from his *Marja*, or by referring to him in such circumstances after explaining the particular situation and defining it for him.

Q7: Is fame by itself evidence in determining the most knowledgeable authority, even if it does not necessitate knowledge or satisfaction about it, or will it be evidence only if it entails knowledge or satisfaction?

A: What is meant by fame [in this regard] is fame among the *Ahlul-Khibra* while their reporting relies on acquaintance with the condition of the *Marja* and of other possible candidates for *Taqlid* by way of knowing their scientific findings and methods of derivation, and reaching a conclusion of favoring one *Mujtahid* without any notable disagreement amongst them, even if those who favor him were great in number to cause confidence that those who disagree were mistaken because of they are small in number. Such fame necessitates confidence or knowledge of who the most knowledgeable *Marja* is. Fame is used only as a way to determine the *Marja* when the witnesses who testify in the favor of one *Mujtahid* do not possess the attribute

of *Adalah*, or there is an opposing opinion from a witness. Otherwise, the testimony of two witnesses with *Adalah* is sufficient.

If fame is not based on what we have stated, then it is disregarded, such as fame among the general public that is based on the opinion of a small number of people, or if it is among the *Ahlul-Khibra* but it is based on something else other than what we have stated above, even this is because they did not give enough attention to examining the conditions of the others candidates, or due to the reliance of the *Ahlul-Khibra* on what others say without examining the condition of the other candidates by themselves, or for other reasons.

Q8: If the interests of Islam require emulating someone else other than the most knowledgeable *Marja*, is it permissible to observe his *Taqlid*? In determining the afore-mentioned interest, should one refer to the *Mujtahid* or is it subjective and thus left to the concerned individual?

A: The interests of Islam are the most important concerns of every sincere believer. He has to apply his efforts to exert himself in their regard, for one who is not concerned about the affairs of Muslims is not one of them. Undoubtedly, the interests of Islam are achieved only when the most suitable, the most learned and the most knowledgeable individual is selected for *Taqlid* because he is the most apt and capable of satisfying and achieving them.

Thus did Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, create mankind to select the best in all of his affairs. He does not stop from applying this principle except when there are irrational motivations such as an illicit desire, anger, complexities, past legacies or other such emotional impulses which sound reason does not endorse and are rejected by the straightforward nature. And by that Allah Almighty has established the argument against His servants, as He did establish it with regard to all natural issues.

But the areas where the best is needed, when such areas are many, and if there is an authority for them all, and he is the most suitable person in all of them, he should be referred to with regard to all of these matters. This is what the Shi'ites believe of the Greatest Prophet (peace be upon him) and the guiding Imams from among his Progeny (peace be upon them), for they are the most knowledgeable and the most suitable in everything, be it relevant to matters of life or of creed. They are the most knowledgeable in the religious laws when there is a need to know the religious positions and act upon them. They are also the most knowledgeable of administering the Muslims' worldly affairs, the most capable of doing all of this.

But if the most knowledgeable person in all affairs is not found, one should refer to the most knowledgeable in each respective area of expertise; and there is no sense in referring in some areas to somebody who is the most suitable and the most knowledgeable in other areas and abandoning the most learned in the areas in question. Nobody should refer with regard to medical matters to one who is most knowledgeable in engineering or administration while discarding the most knowledgeable medical doctor if their opinions differ, and the same applies to other fields.

Thereupon, with regard to the original question, there is no way, in observing *Taqlid* in legislative rulings and in becoming familiar with them - in order to act upon them and fulfill the responsibility towards them - to abandon the most knowledgeable in them while referring to someone else who merely is the most suitable for administering the Muslims' affairs.

This is especially so since the administration of the Muslims' affairs is permissible only if it was established on religious bases, as it is based on knowing the religious laws, so that they are the source upon which the actions should depend, and in its light does the successful Islamic movement continue. There is no sense in sacrificing the legislative rulings, which form the foundation, and obtaining them from other than the most learned, in mere consideration of the position of the most suitable person for administration or for anything else in this matter, especially due to the importance of the legislative rulings, the greatness of their holiness, and the weight of the responsibility of implementing them.

Furthermore, the obligation of following the most knowledgeable rather than following anyone else is due to the authority of the most learned scholar's opinion and the lack of authority of others' opinions. This is similar to the authority given to the testimony of men in witnessing the new moon or in divorce, whereas the testimony of women in these matters is not accepted, There is no sense in forfeiting or compromising it for the sake of taking the Muslims' interest into consideration.

One of the greatest responsibilities of the Muslims, the most sacred and the most obligatory of them, is safeguarding Islam's rulings and lofty teachings, fulfilling the trust in their regard, observing their sanctity and the holiness of Allah Almighty Who legislated them. We plead to Him, Praise belongs to Him, for our own selves and for all Muslims to grant us success in doing so; surely He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy, the Master of the believers; He suffices us and how great He is to rely on!

Q9: This phrase occurs in matters relevant to *Taqlid*: "When the opinions of The *Ahlul-Khibra* vary, their testimonies are disregarded." What should one do when it is not possible for him to follow precaution and when it is also not possible to reach a determination - through proof in accordance with religious laws - of who the most knowledgeable is?

A: One should choose who is more likely to be the most knowledgeable, and when such likelihood is one and the same, the most God-fearing is chosen, and when determining that is not possible, one can choose any one of them when acting upon precaution is impossible or is very difficult, as is the case in most instances. This has been explained further in the answer to Question 3.

Q10: In case of acting upon precaution [rather than following a particular *Mujtahid*], should one restrict himself to only the edicts of living *Mujtahids* to obtain the religious position, or is it permissible to refer also to the edicts of deceased *Mujtahids*?

A: He has the option to confine himself to the edicts of living *Mujtahids* in most issues of concern. Yes, if one used to observe *Taqlid* of a living person according to the Sharia-based criterion, and if that person whom he used to emulate died, he has to consider his edicts when observing precaution. But if he comes to know that one or more living *Mujtahids* are more knowledgeable than the deceased, the edicts of the latter should no longer be observed, but the individual must restrict his following to living *Mujtahids*.

Q11: What are the principles which one should observe when he acts upon precautions? Are there areas where *Taqlid* or *Ijtihad* are obligatory rather than precaution? Is it permissible in one single issue to sometimes take to precaution and to sometimes observe *Taqlid*?

A: Precaution here means to act on the possible religious obligation that originates from considering the edicts of the *Mujtahids* who are equal in the likelihood of being the most knowledgeable. A layman always has the choice to either adopt this option or observe *Taqlid*: He has the option to act, with regard to one particular issue, sometimes by taking to precaution, and some other times by observing *Taqlid*.

Q12: When it is not easy to find out who the most knowledgeable *Mujtahid* is, should one act on precaution, probability or assumption, or should he choose between edicts while he does not emulate the *Mujtahid* who permits his followers to choose; that is, he is still in the stage of looking for the *Marja* whom he should follow?

A: Regarding this issue, he has to refer to all *Mujtahids* and act upon the most precautionary measure. When observing precaution is difficult or impossible, he may choose one of them in the way previously explained in Question 3 and Question 9.

Q13: If an issue of religious law is raised, one in which the layman does not know his *Marja* religious opinion, should he investigate and find out the latter's opinion by asking his agents, including making an expensive telephone call? Or should he simply act upon the edict of one whose opinion he can easily obtain?

A: He may refer to a *Mujtahid* whose opinion he can find out, and he does not have to investigate and find out the opinion of his own *Mujtahid*, unless he knows that the latter's opinion differs from that of the *Mujtahid* whose opinion it is easy for the inquirer to find out about.

Likewise, if he happens to be afflicted with more than one issue, and if he knows that the opinion of the *Mujtahid* whom he emulates differs from that of the one whose edicts is easy for him to find out regarding some of these issues, it is not permissible for him in that case to refer to the one whose edict is easy for him to obtain.

Q14: Is it permissible to observe *Taqlid* in the fundamentals of the religion or sect, such as the belief in the justice of God, and of imamate (leadership of the Imam) – whether it is by appointment, consultation or anything else – and other principles? If you indicate a reason [in your answer] in this regard, it will be much appreciated.

A: What is established through evidences relevant to the permissibility of *Taqlid* is that doing so is permissible in the practical rulings [which are commonly known as the branches of the religion]. As regarding other belief-related matters, these are of two types:

(1) Matters that must be believed in, such as Imamate. What is obligatory is that the said belief must be submitted to; if referring to someone else results in conviction, it is sufficient. The basic point is that the person is not excused if a mistake takes place in arriving at a belief due to his shortcomings in reaching it. But if such following does not lead to conviction, due to the possibility of the referred person making an error, it will not be sufficient because the obligation of believing in such fundamentals is not met here.

(2) Things in which one is not obligated to believe, but he must not believe in them unless he know them to be true. This is so due to the fact that everyone is responsible

for whatever he says, and one must not say anything without knowledge, such as about the reckoning in the grave, the questioning by the angels *Munkir* and *Nakir*, etc. If knowledge is obtained because of what someone else says, it is permissible to believe it. If certain knowledge is not acquired, it is not permissible to confirm or deny it – after what we have already indicated about the restriction of the permission to observe *Taqlid* in practical rulings only – rather, one should refer knowledge of it to Allah Almighty.

Q15: What is meant by “*Adalah*” according to the viewpoint of Your Eminence, and is there a difference between the *Adalah* of the *Marja* in *Taqlid*, and that of the imam of congregational prayers?

A: Yes, there is a difference between the *Adalah* which is required in the *Marja* and the *Adalah* which is required in the imam of prayers. As for the *Marja*, the requirement is that he should be at a high degree of God-fearing which ordinarily prevents him from falling into committing prohibited deeds; and if he does fall into committing a sin, though rarely, he is quick to repent. As regarding the imam of the congregation, it is sufficient if he avoids committing major sins, and he does not commit minor sins while insisting on them and taking them lightly.

[\[i\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 94.

TAHARAH AND NAJASAH

(RITUAL PURITY AND IMPURITY)

Q1: What is the ruling about a non-Muslims far as *Taharah* is concerned?

A: Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians are by themselves *Tahir* unless they contact an external *Najasah*, such as wine, a dead body, urine, etc. Other non-Muslims are deemed to be *Najis* on an obligatory precaution, whether they are atheists who do not believe in any religion, or those who follow a creed that does not recognize Allah Almighty, or those who follow a creed that does recognize Allah Almighty but is not amongst the three aforementioned religions (Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism).

Q2: A Muslim in the West rents a furnished home. Can he regard everything in it as *Tahir* if he does not find any traces of *Najasah* in it, even if the individual who used to live in that house was Christian or Jewish? What if he is Buddhist or denies the existence of Allah Almighty, His messengers and prophets?

A: Everything in the house about which he knows that it was *Najis* and doubts that it was made *Tahir* considered *Najis* and the rules of *Najasah* apply. Everything else is regarded as *Tahir*, whether he knew before that it was *Tahir* and then doubts that it became *Najis*, or whether he knew it became *Najis* and it became *Tahir* – even if the *Taharah* or *Najasah* was not intentional – and he does not know which one occurred last. In both cases, it is judged as being *Tahir*.

Q3: The floors of most homes rented in the West are covered with thick carpets which stick to the floor, making it difficult to lift them and place a pot of water underneath them in order to purify them when they become *Najis*; so, how can this carpet be cleansed if it is made *Najis* with urine, blood, etc. and the water used in the cleansing is little⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ or abundant⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾, considering both cases?

A: If the cleansing is done with abundant water, it is only obligatory to wash the carpet or it's like once in such a way that it removes the *Najasah* of the urine, etc. and the water soaked in the carpet does not have to be removed after the cleansing process; this water is *Tahir*, not *Najis*. But if cleansing is done with little water, the water used in the process of cleansing must be removed (from the carpet). The water coming out in this case will be *Najis*. If the carpet is made *Najis* by urine, it should be washed twice to cleanse it; if it is made *Najis* by another form of *Najasah*, then it is sufficient to wash it once, provided that the actual *Najasah* (e.g. the blood) is removed in the process.

Q4: If one sees that a thing is *Najis* in his home which is contacting clothes and bodies of incomers with transferring wetness, should he tell them about it? Is the ruling different if he himself or someone else was the cause [of the *Najasah*]?

A: He does not have to tell them, unless they rely on his apparent conduct with them in considering the thing as *Tahir*. For example, a towel is provided to wipe the hands, and then he comes to know that it became *Najis*, so it will be obligatory on him to inform them.

Q5: If something borrowed by someone becomes *Najis*, should the latter inform the lender of it being *Najis*? Is the ruling different in the case where the borrowed item is to be used for a purpose which requires *Taharah*, or that it is not used for a purpose which requires *Taharah*, or that it is drunk or eaten from?

A: If it is something eaten or drunk from, he must tell him. If it is something which is not eaten or drunk from, such as clothes, and if it is apparent from his returning the item, without informing the lender about its status of *Taharah*, by his silence over it being *Najis*, that he is cheating the owner of the borrowed clothes or other property, then he must notify him; otherwise, there is no need to do so, such as if the borrowed item tends to become *Najis* through use.

Q6: Should one notify someone else, while the latter is praying or eating, about something relevant to his praying or eating as being *Najis*?

A: It is not obligatory to notify him about the *Najasah*, except for the case where the latter depends on them in his affairs, as in such circumstances it is an obligatory precaution to inform him. Similarly, it is not permissible to present others with *Najis* food which is likely to be eaten by them.

Q7: If a guest makes an item *Najis* at the house of his host, such as pots, utensils, etc., should he notify his host about it?

A: If the usage of such items requires them to stay *Tahir*, then based on obligatory precaution, he should tell the host about their *Najasah* when they become *Najis*.

Q8: There are some automatic washing machines attached to mains water supply, and the water runs through the clothes then it is cut off, and the washing machine starts emptying the water and the clothes go through a circular motion inside the machine. Then water is supplied again, and so on, several times. Will the clothes become *Tahir* through this method of washing if they were *Najis* before?

A: Yes, the clothes washed by the mentioned electric washing machines become *Tahir*.

Q9: In the West, public laundries are common. Muslims and non-Muslims wash in them their *Najis* and *Tahir* clothes alike. Is it permissible for us to pray wearing such clothes while we do not know if the washing machine, taking into consideration that is not connected to the mains water supply throughout the whole washing process, makes the clothes *Tahir* or not?

A: If the washed piece of clothing was *Najis*, it is deemed to be *Najis* even after it is washed; and if it was *Tahir*, it is regarded as remaining *Tahir* unless one knows that it contacted during the washing process a *Najis* object. However, all this is based on the assumption that there is doubt in the purification process which arises when there is a possibility that the connection of water supply is present only while the water in the washing machine is mixed with washing powder, soap, etc.

If one knows that the water supply is connected to the unmixed water in the machine, while the water sufficiently penetrates the clothes in such a way that makes them *Tahir*, the clothes will be deemed to be *Tahir*, and one should not pay attention to his doubts, should they arise.

Q10: Are the clothes washed with liquid detergents at places whose owner is not Muslim, where Muslims and others wash their clothes, regarded as being *Tahir*?

A: If they were *Tahir* before being handed over to the owner of such a place, they are deemed to be *Tahir* unless there is knowledge that they came in contact through wetness with something *Najis*, causing them to become *Najis*.

Q11: If there is doubt about a garment being *Tahir*, is it permissible to perform prayers wearing it?

A: Yes, prayer can be performed while wearing it because it is deemed to be *Tahir*, unless there is knowledge about its being *Najis* in the past and there is doubt whether it was ritually purified thereafter. In such a situation, it is regarded as being *Najis* and prayers are invalid when performed wearing it.

Q12: If one has access to only one piece of clothing [sufficient for prayer] which is *Najis*, can one perform the prayers wearing it?

A: If he has no choice except to wear it, perhaps due to coldness or something else, prayers in it are valid. But if he can take it off, he should, as an obligatory precaution, pray wearing it first, and then repeat the prayers without it, naked, in the manner described in detailed books of Islamic law.

The above is only applicable if there is nothing *Tahir* to wear in order to cover his private parts during the entire time available to pray. But if one can wait to perform the prayer until the last possible time within this period, in order to get a *Tahir* covering, one must do so.

Q13: In Europe, various religions mix. So if we buy from a place selling moist food which the seller touches with his hand, and we do not know what religion he follows, can we regard such food to be *Tahir*?

A: As long as one does not know the religion of the seller, the food he touches is *Tahir*. Yet it is best and a recommended precautionary to refrain from it, or make it *Tahir* if doing so is possible.

Q14: Natural leather is manufactured in a European country the origin of which is unknown. Here, some say that the European countries import cheap leathers (hides) from Islamic countries, and they then process them. Can one rely on such a weak probability and regard it to be *Tahir*?

A: Such a probability should not be relied upon. The said leather is deemed to be *Najis* and not allowed to be worn during prayers even if it is not used to cover private parts. Rather, it is an obligatory precaution not to even carry it while praying, let alone wear it.

Q15: What is the ruling about leathers of animals about which it is doubted whether they were slaughtered Islamically or not: Are these leathers *Tahir* or *Najis*, and can one pray wearing them accordingly?

A: Such leathers are considered to be *Najis* corpse, and prayers performed while wearing them are invalid if they were not taken from Muslims, and were not manufactured in the lands of Muslims. The same applies if they are taken from a Muslim and that Muslim had taken them from a non-Muslim, knowing that the Muslim did not care about ensuring that they were taken from an Islamically slaughtered animal.

Therefore, such leathers are deemed to be Islamically slaughtered, *Tahir* and permissible to pray in them in three circumstances:

- (i) If they were manufactured in the lands of Muslims;
- (ii) If they were taken from a Muslim, and it is not known that he obtained it from a non-Muslim;
- (iii) If they were taken from a Muslim, and that Muslim obtained it from a non-Muslim, but it's probable that the aforementioned Muslim was sure of it being Islamically slaughtered.

Q16: While wiping the head during *Wudhu*, is it sufficient to wipe over the top of the hair, or should the fingers go in between the hairs, wiping from top to bottom?

A: It is sufficient to wipe over the hair on the front top part of the head as long as the wiped hair are not so long that they can fall on other parts of the head when made to do so. Also, this wiping does not have to be from top to bottom; it is sufficient to just wipe (once) however it may occur.

Q17: What is the ruling about touching the names that are similar to those of the Prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) without the *Ritual Purity* obtained from performing *Wudhu*, *Ghusl* or *Tayammum*?

A: Touching the names of Prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) as well as similar names, without such ritual purity, according to our edict, is permissible.

Q18: Can one touch the name of the Almighty without *Wudhu*, if it is written in a language other than Arabic?

A: As an obligatory precaution, one should not to touch it.

Q19: Is a man or woman who is in the state of *Janabah*, or a woman in the state of *Haydh* (i.e. in her menstrual period), permitted to recite the Qur'an without touching the Qur'an?

A: Such people in the state of *Janabah* and *Haydh* are permitted to recite the Qur'an, although it is disliked, especially if it exceeds seven verses. However, it is forbidden for them to recite the verses of prostration from the four chapters:

- (1) Verse 15 of the Chapter *Alif Laam Meem Sajda* (Ch. 32)
- (2) Verse 38 of the Chapter *Haa Meem* [or *Fussilat*] (Ch. 41)
- (3) Verse 62 of the Chapter *Al-Najm* (Ch. 53)
- (4) Verse 19 of the Chapter *Al-Alaq* [or *Iqra'*] (Ch. 96)

Q20: Should one who wishes to write down a Qur'anic verse be in the state of *Wudhu*?

A: He does not have to unless writing necessitates touching the words, in which case he must perform *Wudhu* as an obligatory precaution.

Q21: Does seminal discharge happen to a woman, whether or not during sexual intercourse?

A: Yes, it is possible that she may have seminal discharge, with or without sexual intercourse. It is an obligatory precaution that she must, in such a case, regard herself as being in a state of *Janabah*. Such a precaution is not fulfilled except by combining *Wudhu* and *Ghusl*. Of course, her seminal discharge is not similar to that of males [since she has no sperm]; rather, it is a liquid which is discharged when she reaches sexual orgasm accompanied by convulsions similar to those a man experiences when he ejaculates.

Q22: What is the ruling regarding the blood which a woman sees at the start of her menstrual period the color of which is similar to that of *Istihadha*? What is the ruling of performing prayers while being in such a state? And what about fasting that day if the blood came out minutes before *Maghrib* time?

A: This blood is regarded as menstruation blood, and the fast of that day becomes void if blood comes out before the sun sets.

Q23: What is the ruling of a woman who uses a contraceptive that causes bleeding when it is not her period's usual time in as far as prayers and *Ghusl* are concerned?

A: If the said blood comes out ten days or more after the end of her menstruation, she has to regard it as menstruation blood provided the rest of the conditions associated with it are met. If the said blood comes out before the passing of ten days from the end of her previous menstruation, she should regard it as *Istihadha* and *its* respective rulings apply to it.

Q24: A woman may take a medicine that prevents the discharge of menstrual bleeding, yet occasional blood may be intermittently discharged from her during her menstruation period which does not have the characteristics of menstruation, keeping in mind that if she stops taking the said medicine menstruation blood will be discharged three days after she stops taking it; so, what is the ruling relevant to this occasional intermittent bleeding?

A: If the said intermittent blood is discharged along with any other bleeding for a total period of three days within a period of ten days, it is menstruation blood; otherwise, it is *Istihadha*.

To explain this: if the sporadic bleeding periods within the period of ten days are added up as though they went on successively, they will reach three days or more, then the bleeding within the ten days will be considered to be menstruation. If they do not add up to three days, it is *Istihadha*.

Q25: If a woman cannot find cotton during *Istihadha*, how can she determine the type of her *Istihadha* (minor or medium), and can she use a clean piece of cloth or a piece of tissue paper to determine the type of her *Istihadha*?

A: Suffices her to use anything like cotton which absorbs blood such as gauze which is used in dressing wounds at hospitals. Perhaps similar to it are tissue papers if they are of a good quality and not too thick.

Q26: Do the rulings of running water apply to tap water (commonly known mains water supply) or do the rulings of *Kurr* water apply to it in regards to purification?

A: We do not make a distinction between the rulings relevant to running water, *Kurr* water and tap water, and repeated washing or squeezing is not required during purification in any of them. Yes, the tap water must be connected to *Kurr* water or mains water supply.

Q27: Does purifying with *Kurr* water need squeezing or repetition if the *Najis* thing is a garment or bedding?

A: The said is not required, but the actual *Najasah* (the actual blood or urine, for example) must be removed. For example, in the case of urine, it must come out of the garment or bedding even if one has to keep pouring water on it.

Q28: Does a single continuous pouring of water (that takes a duration of two washes or pours with a gap in between) suffice and is equivalent to the two pours or washings required, in some circumstances, to purify clothing or body or anything else? Or, in order for two washings to take place, a gap between them is necessary?

A: An interval should take place in between two separate washings; one single pouring, however long it may be, does not suffice.

Q29: What is the ruling about water dripping after performing an obligatory *Ghusl* into a pot of water or something else?

A: The said water is *Tahir* and does not make what it falls upon *Najis*. If drops of it fall on some other water, one can perform *Ghusl* or *Wudhu* using that water. However, if much of it falls on a little, such that it is not overwhelmed by the latter, *Ghusl* or *Wudhu* using it is not valid.

Q30: If a man is a guest at another's house and he enters the state of *Janabah*, and due to his embarrassment he does not ask for water purposefully, is his *Tayammum* valid since he encountered a social embarrassment?

A: No, his *Tayammum* is not valid, and such embarrassment is not an excuse.

Q31: If water is not accessible, how does one cleanse himself after using the toilet?

A: He should purify himself from the feces with the use of stones, rags, tissues or the like and the place becomes *Tahir* in this way. The part of the body that is contaminated with urine cannot be made *Tahir* without the use of water. If water is not available and time is short to perform prayers, he has to dry it off with anything available so that the *Najasah* may not transfer to other parts or things through contact. It remains *Najis*, but he can perform his prayers in such an urgent situation.

Q32: If a part of my body is *Najis* with urine, for example, is it permissible for me to make it *Tahir* through these methods:

(1) I remove the *Najasah* with a rag or something like that if the actual *Najasah* is present, then I wash the rag and wet it with a small quantity of water, then wipe the *Najis* area with it, then I wash it and repeat the process once more?

A: No, it is not sufficient to wipe with such a rag no matter how many times the process is repeated; water has to reach the *Najis* area through pouring or dipping or something like that.

(2) Can I use the same method, but I replace the wiping with squeezing water out of the rag on the *Najis* area?

A: If pouring takes place by this method, and the water used in the process is separated from the *Najis* area, and if it is repeated twice, it suffices for purification. But prior to that, the rag has to be *Tahir*.

(3) Can I wet my hand and remove the actual *Najasah*, if it is there, then I wash my hand, wet it then wipe the area, and then I wash my hand and wet it again and wipe the place?

A: We have already mentioned that wiping is not sufficient in the process of purification. However, purifying can instead be done by first purifying the palm of the hand then taking water and pouring it on the *Najis* area so it may reach it twice.

Q33: What is meant by the sweat of *Janabah*?

A: It is the sweat that comes out after one enters the state of *Janabah* and until he takes the *Ghusl* of *Janabah*.

Q34: If a believer is in a state of *Janabah* and his body is wet with water, do the things which he touches become *Najis*? Is there a difference in the ruling whether the *Janabah* results from committing a forbidden act, like masturbation?

A: Things that contact the body of someone who is in the state of *Janabah* do not become *Najis* even if it may be through the transfer of wetness, and there is no difference whether the body is sweating or not, or whether the *Janabah* resulted from a prohibited act or not. But, if the body is sweating while he is in the state of *Janabah*, and if this *Janabah* resulted from committing something prohibited, based on compulsory precaution, prayers are invalid if performed in clothes or other items that came in contact with that sweat.

Q35: What is the ruling about a mosque built by non-Muslim workers who are considered to be *Najis*, keeping in mind that these workers build it with cement and paint it, that is, wetness that transfers *Najasah* is present as they do their work?

A: If they are Jews, Christians or Zoroastrians, they are taken as being *Tahir* and they do not make anything they touch with wetness *Najis*. But if they follow other creeds, it is an obligatory precaution not to let them build the mosque unless it becomes necessary to do so. Also, it is an obligatory precaution to purify the apparent parts of the mosque which they come in contact with.

Q36: If something *Najis* falls on an electronic device and penetrates it, it makes anything that comes in contact with it *Najis*, but the aforementioned *Najasah* does not harm the equipment; how is it to be cleansed?

A: If it is not possible to cleanse it with water, it remains *Najis*, and anyone who touches the *Najis* area through transferring wetness should treat the parts that touched it as *Najis*.

Q37: It is common knowledge that among the ingredients of soap is fat and other materials. After chemical processes, soap is made. If this fat is *Najis*, or it became *Najis* through contamination, can such soap be regarded as *Tahir* since it went through *Istihala* (transformation)?

A: Such change does not suffice to be regarded as *Istihala* which purifies the material. Rather, *Istihala* particularly purifies the end substance where it is from the same origin as the source although it is conventionally understood to be different in actuality; for example, a chick from an egg, ashes from a burnt item, steam from water.

Q38: Among the ingredients of some types of soap and shampoo is alcohol. Can it be regarded as being *Tahir* through *Istihala*? Can the same apply to medicines and perfumes?

A: It does not become *Tahir* because *Istihala* does not occur by that, as we stated in our answer to the previous question. Yes, if *Inqilab* (change) takes place, it becomes *Tahir*, that is, if it is no longer an intoxicant before being mixed with the other materials that make up soap and shampoo.

Q39: The primary sources for making alcohol vary. They include wood, and they include orange peel, as well as other liquid sources. So, can one regard medicines or perfumes to which alcohol is added as being *Tahir* if we do not know the source of the alcohol?

A: No, the variety of sources does not affect the ruling. What makes the alcohol *Najis* is its being intoxicating and originally liquid. Yes, if the type of alcohol was originally solid while it is intoxicating, it is not regarded as being *Najis*, and does not become *Najis* when it liquefies when mixed with something, even if its intoxicating effect remains after it thus becomes liquid.

Q40: Some perfumes have written on them a statement saying that they contain a percentage of alcohol. Is it permissible to use them? And if their use is not permissible, is it permissible to sell them?

A: It is permissible to use them as perfumes. But if the alcohol is intoxicant and is naturally liquid, it is *Najis*. As regarding their sale, it is permissible while indicating the fact that it contains a percentage of alcohol. The sale is also permissible even without such indication if it does not entail cheating.

Q41: Is "spirit" (industrial alcohol) regarded as an alcohol, and is it *Tahir* or *Najis*?

A: What we know is that "spirit" is an alcohol, and it is *Najis* on the basis that it is an intoxicant and originally liquid, as many people of expertise and knowledge have testified.

Q42: If the toothbrush head is made of pig's hair, is it permissible to buy and sell it? Does it make the mouth *Najis* when used?

A: Neither its sale nor its purchase is permissible except if the purpose is to buy its handle and the brush goes with it. Yes, it does not make the interior of the mouth and the teeth *Najis*, but it makes the outer mouth *Najis* if it comes in contact with it when it is wet.

Q43: There are things in Denmark that are made of pig's meat, fat or hair, such as soap, toothpaste and toothbrush. We do not know if the pig's fat or meat or lard in these items has undergone *Istihala* or not. So, what is the ruling in its regard, and which of these items undergo *Istihala* so it is permissible to use?

A: The purification process of *Istihala* does not occur in these types of things. On this basis, they must be regarded as *Najis*, as is indicated in the answer to question 37 above.

Q44: Is the alcohol that is added to some medicinal material regarded as having undergone *Istihala* due to the chemical interactions; so, does the medicine then become *Tahir*?

A: If alcohol changes by itself and if it no longer remains to be an intoxicant due to the chemical transformation, it becomes *Tahir*.

But the medicine is not considered *Tahir* unless the quantity of the material added to the alcohol is so little that it is conventionally understood to become part of the alcohol.

However, if the added material has greater quantity than this, it will become *Najis* simply by coming into contact with the alcohol before its transformation, and it will thus not follow it in becoming *Tahir*.

Having said this, if the alcohol does not intoxicate because it is diluted by mixing it with other medical ingredients without altering its intoxicant nature by itself, it remains *Najis* and causes other things to be *Najis* as well, whether the material mixed with it – in the process of making the medicine - is little or much in quantity.

Q45: There is a type of agricultural fertilizer the origin of which is human feces; then it was entered into a process until it turned into tiny granules similar to laundry washing powder. Since it comes in large sacks, there are those who divide this fertilizer into smaller bags. This leads to the spread of these granules on one's face, hands and the rest of his body. So, is it sufficient to wash the hands and face, or should one wash all parts of his body where it came into contact with the substance, while having a perspiring body?

A: If the said agricultural fertilizer has been processed from feces into a chemical material that is quite different from it as understood conventionally, it is *Tahir*. But if it stayed as itself (without such transformation), such as ground coffee and dried milk, it is *Najis*, and it causes anything that comes in wet contact with it to be *Najis* too, whether it's the face, hands or anything else

[i] The term “little” refers to the amount of water that does not exceed *Kurr* which equals in mass to 464.1 kg, and it is preferred to consider 470 kg for the *Kurr* as a precaution.

[ii] The term “abundant” refers to water that equals or exceeds *Kurr*.

DEATH

It ends worldly pleasure, it separates groups, and Allah Almighty has subdued and humbled His servants through it, and through it does the collection of people's wealth ends, hope vanishes, one's ambition, tyranny, oppression and arrogance comes to an end. It suffices to teach moral lessons to men of reason, wisdom and guidance. It is the conclusion of this life which, when one looks [to the hereafter] through it, he will gain sight, and if one looks to it, it blinds him. Allah has made it a plantation for the Hereafter and a race ground for it. It is has been narrated from some of our Imams (peace be upon them) that he stood at the edge of a grave being dug up and said, "If something ends with this, its beginning must surely be looked down at. And if this is the beginning of something, its end should certainly be feared."^[ii]

Death causes one to leave this life, so he departs from it and everything in it having nothing in his company except his deeds and what he committed which are in a Book of Deeds which does not leave anything out, be it small or big, without recording it. After that, everyone will be presented before Allah Almighty for their trial, then fair judgment and sentence: "Then anyone who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it; and anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it" (Qur'an, 99:7-8).

The most Exalted One has also said, "We shall gather them all together, and We shall not leave out any one of them. And they will be brought before your Lord in ranks (with the announcement of:) 'Now you have come to Us (bare) as We first created you. Nay, you thought We would not fulfill the promise made to you to meet (Us)!' And the book (of deeds) will be placed (before you), and you will see the sinners in great terror because of what is (recorded) in it; they will say, 'Ah! Woe unto us! What a book this is! It leaves out nothing small or great but takes account of it!' They will find all that they did placed before them, and your Lord will not treat a single one of them unjustly" (Qur'an, 18:47-49).

A believer has to be cautious about it by doing the good deeds, by earning what is lawful, by being prudent and cautious in managing his affairs, always looking for whatever pleases Allah Almighty, avoiding exposing himself to His wrath. He must not surrender his lead in the life of this vanishing world to his wishes, desires, emotions and impulses, and listen to the evil whisperings of Satan the accursed and the motives of the human self which enjoins evil, being inattentive to the schemes that surround one, being distracted from the sure fate, for there is no avoiding death at all when the time comes. The Almighty says, "We have made many jinn and men for Hell: They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle! Nay! More misguided, for they are heedless (of warning)" (Qur'an, 7:179).

We plead to Allah, all praise and exaltation belong to Him, through His bounties and generosity, to protect us from whatever causes one to fall in perdition, to make us among the people of remembrance and admonishment and not make us indifferent; surely He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy, the Master of the faithful.

Q1: In some non-Muslim countries, the deceased person is put inside a wooden box, and the box is then buried inside the grave; what should we do in this case?

A: There is no objection about it if the other obligations are taken care of such as washing and *Tahneet*ⁱⁱⁱ shrouding and performing the funeral prayers for it while it lies on its back, and all other burial obligations are taken care of such as making the corpse lean on its right side facing the *Qibla* with his head to the right side of the praying person and legs to his left. It is also possible, in addition to the above, to do other commendable actions such as placing earth underneath his right cheek.

Q2: If a Muslim dies in a non-Muslim country where there is no cemetery exclusively for the Muslims, and he can be transported to an Islamic country for burial, but the transportation expenses are too high; is it permissible to bury him in a non-Muslim cemetery?

A: Burying a Muslim in a cemetery belonging to non-Muslims is prohibited only if the deceased person's dignity or that of the religion is violated. In this case, one must avoid his burial in it as much as possible even if the expenses of transporting his corpse are very high. However, if this does not bring about such violation it is not prohibited to bury him in the cemetery of non-Muslims, even if the transportation costs for moving his body to a Muslim country was not high, especially if the cemetery is not for any particular religion, rather, the cemetery was founded for the purpose of the burial of anybody without regard to their religion.

Q3: If there is no guardian for a Muslim who dies in a non-Muslim country, who should take care of all of his [funeral-related] affairs?

A: The Muslims must prepare him [for burial], and anyone who does so, it will be sufficient. There is no need to refer to anyone. Yes, if it is possible to contact his guardian in his homeland, even via a telephone call or the like, it is an obligatory precaution to do so.

Q4: Unidentified bodies are taken out of hospitals; nobody knows to whom they belong. Is it permissible to pay their burial expenses from the *Khums* money?

A: If the deceased person is known to be a believer in the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), it is permissible then to pay it from *Sahm al-Imam* (may Allah hasten his reappearance) after consulting with the *Hakim Shar'i*. If consulting with him is not possible due to time constrictions or the like, it is permissible to cover his burial expenses from *Sahm al-Imam* (peace be upon him) if this is the only possible option, due to the absence of a donor and unavailability of funds from any other source other than this sacred *Sahm al-Imam*. However, funds spent must be restricted to what is necessary and not on something which is unnecessary.

Q5: Someone indicates in his will that his body should be taken after death to the holy shrines. When those working in the hospital come to know about it, they remove some of his internal organs after his death so they may be able to preserve the body for a longer

period of time. Is it permissible for the guardian to permit them to do that? What is the ruling if people in charge in a country refuse to transport the body unless its internal organs are cut off, so not allowing them to do so and thus not transporting the body will violate the will?

A: Organs must not be cut off, and the guardian must prevent them from doing so even if this requires the will not to be implemented; a will cannot be implemented if doing so results in committing something which Islam prohibits.

Q6: There are some believers who die in foreign lands and whose families and relatives wish their bodies be transported to some Islamic countries, such as Iraq, for burial. Because a long period passes after the death before the body can be transported, due to official procedures, it is required that the blood be drained from the body in order to slow down it's decay. Is it permissible for the blood to be drained out for this purpose?

A: Transporting a corpse is, in itself, permissible, and it is commendable if it is taken to the holy shrines. But drawing the blood out of a corpse like that, and thus dealing with his body in this way, is prohibited. Therefore, it is mandatory to avoid transporting it if this is what it takes, and the body should be buried there (in foreign land). Allah Almighty will reward him for his faith, intention and his family's intention with His mercy, if He wills; surely He is the most Merciful of all those who show mercy.

Q7: Is it permissible to walk behind the coffin of a non-Muslim to bid him farewell if he is, for example, a neighbor?

A: Yes, it is permissible; actually it is commendable because of the good social relations it entails, which Islam emphasizes in its Holy Book, the Qur'an, and it is commended by its Great Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) and the Imams from among his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them all). We have already stated in the eleventh chapter of the Introduction in the beginning of this book, as well as in other chapters which are relevant and helpful; so one can refer to it and ponder over it.

Q8: What should the believers do when someone commits suicide or dies due to the use of drugs and other substances, or if he was known for being a transgressor and a corrupt person, whether he was openly being so or not. Should the believers attend his funeral and burial? What about his family in particular?

A: It is permissible to attend his funeral, burial and the like, as long as this does not encourage committing prohibited deeds, or if avoiding it is considered to be forbidding evil. One must then restrict the proceedings to the minimal obligatory acts in the washing, the shrouding, the prayers and the burial.

Q9: If a corpse bleeds abundantly and is yet to stop bleeding, is it permissible to wrap the bleeding place with a bag or by placing plaster on it and washing it with such bandaging?

If washing in this manner is not valid, what should be done while the corpse is still bleeding?

A: If it is possible to wait until the bleeding comes to an end, then one should wait; otherwise, if it can be washed with the bleeding even if it is to be done with the use of *Kurr* water, or the bleeding place is washed while removing the blood from it, and then leaving it to bleed while the rest of the body is washed, then this must be done. If washing in these manners is not possible, one must wash the body with the mentioned bandaging as well as perform *Tayammum*, as a matter of precaution.

Q10: If the corpse bleeds during the third *Ghusl*, should all past *Ghusls* be repeated, or should only the third *Ghusl* be repeated with the use of clear water?

A: If the bleeding occurs after completing any of the three *Ghusls*, the *Ghusl* does not become invalidated; the only thing that should be done is that the *Najasah* be removed.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 315.

[ii] *Application of camphor on certain parts of the body.*

PRAYERS

The prayers are one of the pillars on which Islam is built on. Actually, it is the first of these pillars and the most important one next to belief. It is the foundation of Islam, its pillar and its grandeur. Allah Almighty mentions it and emphasized it in many places of His Holy Book (the Qur'an), and there is no room here to quote all of them. For example, He says, "... Uphold regular prayers, for these prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times" (Qur'an, 4:103) and "Strictly guard your (habit of) prayers, especially the middle prayer, and stand before Allah with devotion" (Qur'an, 2:238).

It is the last testament of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his household) and that of all other prophets (peace be upon them), and it is the first thing about which one is asked on the Judgment Day, according to reports narrated from the Great Prophet and the Pure Imams (peace be upon them all). Some of these reports tell us that one who neglects to perform his prayers on purpose is dissociated by the Islamic creed; the performance of the prayers forms a link between a servant and his Lord, and serves as a reminder for him of his Lord. For these and other reasons, they must be awarded the attention they deserve, performed habitually with devotion, submission and care. One must perform it unhurriedly, completing the bowings and prostrations, and all other parts and conditions of prayers, for if his prayer is accepted by Allah, everything else is accepted, and if it is rejected, everything else is rejected. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "Our intercession shall never include one who takes prayers lightly."ⁱⁱ

It is beyond our means here to cite everything said about the merits of prayers. Suffices us, then, to indicate that it erases sins; Allah, the most Praised and Exalted, says, "... Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night; indeed the good deeds remove the evil ones. This is a reminder for the (believers who are) mindful (of their Lord): And be steadfast in patience, for truly Allah will not suffer the reward of the righteous to perish" (Qur'an, 11:114-15).

Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying this to someone: "If there is a river at your house's door in which you bathe every day five times, will any uncleanness remain?" The man answered in the negative, whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) went on to say, "Prayers, therefore, are like a flowing river: Whenever one performs a prayer, the sins he committed between this prayer and the previous prayer are forgiven." Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "One obligatory prayer is better than twenty pilgrimages, and one pilgrimage is better than a house full of gold of which one spends by way of charity until it depletes."ⁱⁱⁱ

It is truly depressing to see today how there are so many individuals in the Muslim nation who are now taking this great ritual so lightly, underestimating it; so, "We belong to Allah, and to Him is our return" (Qur'an, 2:156).

We hope the texts in the Holy Qur'an and the sacred traditions, those which we have cited above and those which we have not, all heavily emphasizing it, deter people from taking it lightly and prompt them to uphold this great obligation since "... Remembrance benefits the believers" (Qur'an, 51:55).

This applies to the believing expatriates who live in non-Muslim countries. This great obligation is their symbol which confirms their character, underscores their identity and connects them to their pristine origins and upright creed. It makes them the flags for righteousness and guidance in these societies. The Prophet (peace be upon him and holy progeny) has been quoted as saying, "One who reminds [others of the Almighty] among the indifferent is like a fighter amongst the retreaters."ⁱⁱⁱ

It protects their link with their Lord, takes them out of their inattention and safeguards them from sliding into the abyss of crime in any society. The most Praised and Exalted One has said, "... Establish regular prayers, for prayers restrain from shameful and unjust deeds" (Qur'an, 29:45). We have discussed in the fifth chapter of our advices in the Introduction what can be beneficial in this subject, so refer to it and contemplate on it. It is only from Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, that we derive assistance and success; He suffices us, and how Great a reliant He is!

Q1: It is time for prayers, and the Muslim worker is at work. A job is not easy to find in non-Muslim countries. A worker finds it difficult to leave work to pray, and a situation such as this may cause him to lose his job. So, can he make up for his prayers later, or should he pray even if doing so leads to quitting a job which such a worker so badly needs?

A: One must safeguard prayers and must perform them on time, even if it may be near the end of its designated time. It is not permissible to postpone them beyond their time and make them up later at any cost, for prayer is the pillar of the creed and the symbol of Islam. Through them does a Muslim impose his presence, character and respect on others. Through them does one bring about the pleasure of Allah Almighty, His success and blessings, especially since you are living in a land in which the Name of Allah Almighty is not celebrated. We have already indicated that those who remind others amongst the inattentive ones are like those who fight in the cause of Allah Almighty while others flee.

A believer must rely on Allah Almighty, have good faith in Him, trust His promise that He will provide him with sustenance when He said, "Such is the admonition given to one who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Allah. And He provides for him from (sources which) he can never imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, Allah suffices him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: Truly, Allah has appointed a due proportion for all things" (Qur'an, 65:2-3).

We have mentioned in the fifth, tenth and eleventh chapters in the Introduction texts that are relevant in this regard, so refer to it and ponder on it, and Allah will be with you.

Q2: We live in some Western countries, and sometimes while we are at work the time for prayer arrives. Is it permissible for us to take time from work to perform the prayers, knowing that doing so does not affect our work? And if it does affect work, is doing so permissible? Is such prayer valid? Should we first seek permission of the person in charge?

A: If praying does not affect his work, there is no problem. But if it does affect it, the prayer is valid, except if the owner of the business is a Muslim. Yes, believers must not be known to be undisciplined, violating the laws in effect, and we have stated what is relevant to this in the eleventh chapter of the Introduction.

Q3: How do we perform our obligatory prayer while flying in a plane and we do not know the direction of the *Qibla* in addition to the lack of physical stillness as required in prayer?

A: One must exert an effort to find out the direction of the *Qibla* even if it may be by asking others. He must act on whatever information he gathers even if it is only assumption and does not lead to certainty. If he cannot know the direction of the *Qibla* for sure, nor does he have an assumption, and if he has enough time to wait until he is quite sure about the direction of the *Qibla* or have an assumption in it, he must wait until then; otherwise, he must pray in any direction which is the most probable in being that of *Qibla*.

As regarding physical stillness, this is normally obtained to a sufficient degree when flying on a plane, as per what the Sharia requires. However, in circumstances where it is not obtained some of the time, one should wait until such a time when he possesses physical stillness, while there is enough time; if there isn't enough time to wait, one should commence praying with what he has.

Q4: What is the ruling about one who, due to his ignorance of the law, does not pray facing the direction of *Qibla*?

A: It is void and must be repeated.

Q5: Is the compass used to determine the direction of *Qibla* reliable?

A: If the manufacture is trustworthy in their expertise, one can rely on it.

Q6: If prayer time approaches while we are outside our home and cannot determine the direction of the *Qibla* for sure, and there are no nearby mosques or Islamic centers, is it permissible for us to pray and rely on assumption regarding the direction of the *Qibla*?

A: If the expected difference is not so much that it defies the conventional direction, such as fifteen centimeters, prayers outside home are valid; otherwise, one should wait to find out its direction.

Q7: Is it permissible to rely on the television in knowing the timings for sunset and sunrise?

A: Certainty of the arrival of the prayer time is necessary to perform the prayer. It can be achieved either from the television, if it is known for its precision of its announcements, or by using it as a guide to find out the approximate time and taking precaution by delaying the prayer by such a time so as to become sure of the arrival of the actual prayer time. Taking such a precaution is especially required since the television reflects the prayer timing of a particular area or city and it does not tell about all other areas. Rather, its timing with respect to other nearby areas is approximate.

Q8: If one believes that if he sleeps he will not wake up for the morning prayers, should he remain awake until the prayers are performed? And if he sleeps and does not wake up for the prayers, will he have committed a sin?

A: He is not permitted to sleep except when there is a possibility to wake up [for prayer] even if it may be by an alarm clock waking him up for the prayer, or he may ask someone to wake him up at the said time.

Q9: How do we determine midnight? Does 12am indicate midnight, as is common now among some people?

A: The aforementioned is not an indication of the midnight as determined by the Sharia. It is, rather, halfway point between sunset and *Fajr* time.

Q10: In some parts of Norway, night vanishes completely from the [beginning of] July to the middle of August, so there will be 45 days of daytime and no night. What is the ruling, then, with regard to the fast if the month of Ramadan happens to be during those days, and what is the ruling about prayer times?

A: As regarding prayer times, apparently the time to offer the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers is after the sun passes the highest altitude of the upper half within its circular path. Also, it is an obligatory precaution to perform the other prayers - as it will be explained below - with the hope that it is required [by Almighty Allah].

If what is meant by the vanishing of the night is that the Sun itself does not set, then based on an obligatory precaution, one should perform *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers after the Sun enters the lower half of the circle upon which it traverses; and *Fajr* prayers should be performed before it leaves the lower half of its circuit.

As regarding the fast, its performance is not required by Sharia in such times, but must be made up as lapsed fasts after that during the times when there is distinction between the night and the day during any of the year's seasons, i.e. when the light wanes after sunset and darkness overwhelms, then light starts appearing before sunrise.

If the vanishing of the night means that the whiteness in the sky (i.e. the twilight) does not disappear – which is sufficient for the occurrence of *Fajr* while the Sun is below the horizon – then based on an obligatory precaution one should perform the *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers after the setting of the Sun and before it reaches the lowest part of its circuit below the horizon at midnight, and *Fajr* prayer should be performed before the Sun appears over the horizon, but after the dawn light becomes strong in the eastern sky.

Regarding the fast, based on an obligatory precaution, one should start the fasting when the light is strong in the eastern sky, and continue until sunset; thereafter, the fasts should be made up as lapsed fasts during the rest of the year when the night is clearly distinguished from the day.

In such countries, just as a period passes when there is no night, another period of the year contrasts it when there is no daytime, as the Sun disappears throughout the rotation of the Earth. During such a period, the prayer times do not materialize at all,

even the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers. So, the five daily prayers must be performed according to the intention referred to above and they should be distributed throughout the 24 hour period in accordance to the position of the Sun in relation to the horizon. Determining these timings becomes clear with some thought. As for the fasts, they are not required by Sharia [during such odd times] but they must be made up during the time when there is distinction between the night and the day during the rest of the year.

Q11: If you are in a country and the sun rises for half an hour only every day, how can you arrange the prayer times? And how is fast to be performed?

A: As regarding the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers, they become obligatory when the sun passes the highest point in the sky during the day which is called the *Zawal* time, that is, the last 15 minutes of the day in this particular case. *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers become obligatory when the sun sets, and if the twilight in the eastern side disappears after sunset, its time then extends up to midnight, as long as it may be. *Fajr* prayer becomes obligatory when the twilight appears, and its timing extends until sunrise.

If the said twilight does not disappear during the night, the timing for the *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers extends also to midnight. It is an obligatory precaution not to pray the morning prayers except after the light in the eastern side becomes strong after having been weak. And it is an obligatory precaution in this case to perform both *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers as well as *Fajr* prayer with the hope that it meets the requirements.

As regarding fasts, in the situation where the twilight disappears after sunset, the fast begins with the appearance of this light, and ends at sunset. Based on a recommended precaution, one should continue to fast until the redness of the eastern sky disappears. In the situation where the twilight does not disappear, the requirement of fasting by Sharia law is problematic, so based on an obligatory precaution, one should begin fasting from the time the brightness in the sky begins to strengthen after it was weak and diffused – if such is possible – and one should end his fast at sunset, while also making up for this fast at some other point during the year, where the day is clearly distinct from the night, meaning that the light disappears after sunset during the night.

Q12: A man entered the state of *Janabah* before morning prayers, and he woke up before sunrise at a time that was too short to perform the *Ghusl* and to pray. What is the ruling in this case?

A: It is a recommended precaution for him to hasten in first performing *Tayammum* and then praying, but he will have to make it up [repeat it] after he has performed his *Ghusl*.

Q13: How do we perform our prayers while we are on the train or in cars, and should we prostrate on something, or this is not obligatory but it suffices to bow then?

A: There is no harm in praying in them while observing all the conditions of prayer, such as performance of *Wudhu* or *Ghusl*, the direction of the *Qibla*, physical stillness and correct bowing and prostrating on what is fit to be prostrated on, etc. If any of these is not met, one has to wait until the train or car stops at a station. When there is not enough time, one should fulfill what is possible from these conditions, with the exception of *Tahara* which must be fulfilled, be it with the use of water (i.e. *Wudhu* or *Ghusl*) or earth (i.e. *Tayammum*), as per the rules given in the treatise of practical Islamic laws, . If *Tahara*, in all its forms, is not possible, one's prayer without it is insufficient, rather, the prayer will have to be made up after that. However, it is a recommended precaution, in addition to all of this, to perform whatever one can perform of his prayer without *Tahara*, with the hope that it is required [by Almighty Allah] and without escaping the responsibility to repeat it later.

Q14: Is it right to pray on a concrete block and on mosaics?

A: Yes, it is.

Q15: Is it permissible to prostrate on writing paper or on tissue paper, while we do not know of what material they are made, i.e. whether or not its ingredient can be prostrated on or not?

A: It is not permissible to prostrate on them unless one knows that they are made from material upon which prostration is permissible.

Q16: Companies and big firms in European and other countries have groups of employees, who work at their offices, and they do not know anything about the ownership of the place; what is the ruling with regards to using their water for *Wudhu* and praying there?

A: Performing *Wudhu* and praying in them is permissible unless one knows that they were usurped from a Muslim owner.

Q17: What is the ruling about something on one's skin which is seen after the performance of the prayers on one of the parts included in the *Wudhu* without prior knowledge of its existence?

A: If there is a possibility that it was not there during the performance of the *Wudhu*, or there is a possibility that the water was able to make its way through it to the skin, due to abundant water being used, for example, the *Wudhu* will be valid. But if its existence was known during the *Wudhu*, and that it prevented water from reaching the skin, the *Wudhu* and the prayers have to be repeated.

Q18: Is it permissible to wear a belt or a watch strap, to carry a wallet in one's pocket, or to wear clothes on which there is a leather patch bearing the name of the manufacturer, as is the case with jeans, if all of these things are made of natural leather while there is no sure knowledge about the animal from which it was made, whether it was slaughtered Islamically or not?

A: As an obligatory precaution, one should avoid carrying dead animal's body or a part of it when one performs his prayers even if he does not wear it. Therefore, if the said leather was made in the non-Muslim countries, it is deemed to be animal carcass. But if the leather came from an animal slaughtered in the lands of Islam, it is treated as being Islamically slaughtered, and the prayer is valid wearing it. The same applies if one bought it from a Muslim country while not being sure about its origin.

Q19: Is it permissible to carry a wallet during the prayers if it is made of leather imported from non-Muslim lands?

A: As an obligatory precaution, it must not be carried.

Q20: A believer thinks that the belt he wears is made of artificial leather. Should he take it off before performing the prayers? Also, does the same case apply to the watch strap?

A: It does not have to be taken off unless he knows for sure that it is made of natural leather and he does not know it to be from an Islamically slaughtered animal. And he does not have to investigate whether it is artificial or natural; rather, he can rely on his position of doubt.

Q21: Is the silk necktie or the like which made of silk regarded as being worn or hung or what? What is the ruling of wearing it with respect to its prohibition and permissibility? And also what is the ruling relevant to it the validity of the

prayer? What if there is doubt about its being made of pure or mixed silk although it is written on it that it is made of pure silk?

A: Putting on such items is regarded as “wearing” it, and it is permissible to wear it, whether one is praying or not, unless it’s made of pure silk. In this case, based on an obligatory precaution, one should not wear it, whether during the prayers or at any other time. When there is a doubt about it being made of pure silk, one can pray wearing it. But if it is written on it that it is made of pure silk, its manufacturer's writing is regarded as credible proof, i.e. it will be considered as pure silk, if there is no commonly recognized reason to doubt his trustworthiness, for example, if there is a reasonable possibility that he wrote it falsely in order to circulate his merchandise and encourage people to buy them.

Q22: What is the ruling of a coat's or jacket's lining or any other menswear, if it is woven with pure silk or if there’s a doubt whether it is made from pure silk or not, while it is written on it that it is?

A: In both cases, as an obligatory precaution, it must be avoided if it is conventionally regarded as being part of the outfit.

Q23: What is the ruling regarding a handkerchief placed in the upper pocket of a man's coat or jacket by way of decoration if it is made of pure silk or if there’s a doubt whether it is made from pure silk or not (even if it’s written on it that it is)?

A: It is permissible in both cases, as long as it is not regarded as being part of the clothing.

Q24: Although some companies write on their products saying that they are made of natural silk, we doubt it due to their cheap prices; so, are we permitted to wear and perform the prayers while wearing them?

A: If the source of this doubt is that these companies desire to attract the buyers to buy their merchandise (and hence they lie about the material used), they can be worn. However, if one does not have such a doubt in the company, one should consider the statement to be the truth, and the said products must not then be worn.

Q25: If a group non-Shia Muslims prays with us, and they stood in rows so as the connection between the imam of prayers and those who follow him is made through them only, do they thus form a disconnection between the imam and the rest of the followers? And if the sole connection between the imam and a follower

is occupied by an individual whose prayer we know is not valid in reality, is the connection with the imam broken?

A: As the case here is that praying with them is with the consideration of bringing Muslims' hearts closer to each other and to keep good company with them which we are ordered to do when we deal with them, therefore, they do not form a disconnection.

Also, one single individual whose prayer is invalid cannot void the prayers of others if the distance between the individuals who are offering the prayer correctly is not greater than one meter and twenty five centimeters (1.25m).

Q26: Some new Muslim circles in some countries suffer from the problem of their births having resulted from friendships between their non-Muslim fathers and mothers, and this status is common in their circles, so much so that it is rare for marriages to take place within any legislative system. Since they give great importance to the congregational prayers, regarding it as a necessary rite which is very difficult to bypass, what should they do? Should they present one of them and pray behind him, bypassing the condition of legitimate birth [of the imam leading the congregational prayers] since they all or mostly do not fulfill it? What is the solution which, in your opinion, would be accepted by the Sharia?

A: There is no solution for this problem as the fact that the condition of the legitimacy of birth is absolute, unless what their parents had done was regarded as marriages according to their traditions and is recognized by the parents' religion even if it is not recognized by the state. The same applies if they mistook their relationship to be marriage and not fornication. But if it was fornication without any doubt, then they cannot pray behind each other.

Q27: A) Refugees are first accommodated in several locations, and one may stay in one place for a period of time which ranges approximately from one to three months until he is finally accepted. During these periods, he may travel to visit his friends who are located at a distance from his place where he stays for few days, perhaps three or seven days, then he returns to his place. The question is: Does he need a new intention of residency after his return, or should he maintain the intention which he had made before?

A: Residency is interrupted by the said trip if it reaches the distance prescribed by Sharia; so, one has to offer the traveler's prayer i.e. he should shorten his prayers, or make a new intention of residency.

B) If he stays at his place during the first ten days and does not travel, then he goes to see his friends or relatives every week; what is the ruling regarding his prayer after his return to his place every week?

A: Residency is interrupted by the said trip if he had intended to stay [as a resident] during the first ten days. But if he did stay for ten days without such an intention, it is not regarded as being residency in the first place, so the question of such residency being ended or not by the trip does not arise.

Q28: A refugee may be accommodated in a fixed place for months (one, two or three) during which he has to go to an integration school (one that teaches him about the [hosting] government) for two or four weeks. This school is more than 23 kilometers away; so, what is the ruling about his prayers at the school or at his own place?

A: He must perform shortened prayers at the school and also at his place if he did not intend, upon his return to it, that he would stay there for ten days.

Q29: A traveler on a trip abroad is now at some country waiting to return or hoping for an opportunity or a suitable condition to return to his homeland. What is the ruling regarding his prayers if, at every moment, he desires to go home?

A: Suffices for the prayer to be complete (and not shortened) is that there is a temporary settlement in the country where he is staying, such that it is true to consider the said country as his place of residence.

Q30: Someone may leave his country and no longer consider it as his homeland. A year or two later, he ponders and decides to return to it. Does the homeland ruling remain in this regard? Will he have to pray the complete prayers as soon as he reaches his birthplace or that of his parents?

A: When he decides, upon entering his country, that he wishes to take it as his homeland again, he must perform the prayers in full. If he does not make such a decision, that is, his entry is temporary, he must shorten his prayers, and this is not affected by his decision afterwards to consider it as his homeland.

Q31: Please explain the rules in relation to the beginning of the distance required in the travelers' prayers with respect to large cities, and when should one begin measuring it? Is it from the local area? How can we determine the separation between different localities of one city as far as the general living conditions of

the area are concerned? Is it determined by where one does his daily shopping, or by observing all the links between localities, especially since the needs of residents of large cities for each other are complicated? For example, there may not be specialized doctors in a particular locality, or some machinery and cars' spare parts may not be available, or the social relations may be weakened among the residents of the same big city. So, does this or the like suffice to determine the beginning of the distance, for the purpose of performing travelers' prayers, to be from the edge of the locality? Please explain the criteria in detail.

A: What is meant by that is the sufficiency of a person by what is in his locality in his general living needs, in such a way that he does not leave it but in exceptional cases such as if he is making a trip. This varies according to individuals: Those who quite often undertake social obligations throughout his large city will consider the whole city as his home city. And if one confines himself in his aforementioned obligations and needs to his residential locality, so he does not need to travel to other parts of the city for any of his affairs, his locality will be his home rather than the city as a whole. And if one quite often visits specialized doctors or places where spare parts are sold, so much so that this becomes his daily routine or almost so, his home will be so much broader. But if one does not do so quite often, going there only exceptionally, his home is his local area. The criteria in determining this is convention and the general understanding of the public. When there is confusion, one has to perform both shortened and complete prayers in the areas that are distant from his local area.

Q32: If the localities and the areas are connected, how can I determine the point where a traveler should begin shortening his prayers, known as *Hadd Al-Tarakkhus*, when I travel? Should I measure it from my home? Or should I measure it from the end of my area or locality? Or how else should I do it?

A: The Measurement is from the end of the area where you live and you have your day to day affairs and all its surroundings in such a way they are all conventionally considered as your hometown. And it extends to the distance where the *Athan* is not heard if it is called at your area.

Q33: One intended to stay in Beirut, and he performed his prayers in full. After the end of his stay, he decided to travel back home, so he left from the place of his residency to the airport. Due to the delay in his wait at the airport, he returned to his place of residency. What ruling applies to him until he travels?

A: If the airport is located at least 23 kilometers from his place of residence, he has to break his fast [if he is fasting] and shorten his prayers when he returns to Beirut;

otherwise if the airport is not so far away, he should remain praying in full and keeping his fasts.

Q34: If someone's work is such that requires traveling, such as a car's driver, and if he wants to pray on the way, or the noon time approaches him as he is on the road on the day that he is fasting, should he perform shortened prayers and break his fast? Is there a difference if he returns home every day, every week or more?

A: If one's regular setting involves frequent travelling and travelling is not exceptional in his routine – such that the time he spends travelling is close to the time he is at home or even more than that, such as a car driver and the like – then he should offer the prayers in complete and maintain his fast, and it does not make a difference whether he returns home every day, every week or less frequently.

Q35: If the driver of a car leaves his usual route, or he goes to a destination which is not his regular destination, what ruling applies to him?

A: If his travel outside of his normal route is within his normal job and his accustomed routine, he must pray in full and fast, like if his job was to transport passengers on a particular route, and he left it and went to another route.

However, if he left his normal route for any other purpose which has no relevance to his normal routine, for example if he went to visit an ill person, a doctor, or to repair his car, or to buy spare parts for his car, etc., he must shorten his prayers.

Q36: One works continuously in a city which is not the place of his residence such as administering a commercial shop or working as an accountant, etc. He continuously travels to the place where he works. If he is required to travel to another location on an assignment relevant to his job, such as following up on a transaction for importing goods or the like, should he pray in full during that trip or should he shorten his prayers?

A: He should shorten his prayers during that trip if the distance he travels equals or exceeds the distance set by Sharia in this regard.

Q37: If one goes during his vacation to his work city, what is his obligation regarding his prayers and fast? Is there a difference if this place that he is going to is a place where he resides in as well or a place where he only works?

A: If he resides at his job's location, he should pray fully and fast if he goes during his vacation days and his vacation is short. But if his vacation is lengthy, it is an obligatory precaution to perform both shortened and complete prayers, as well as both fasting and making up for the fasts at a later time. But if he does not reside at his work location, but he goes home after finishing his job every day or in most days, he has to break his fast and shorten his prayers if he goes there during his vacation.

Q38: Someone travels to another place to work there temporarily for one, two or three months, such as students during the summer vacation. Should these students observe the rulings relevant to those whose jobs require them to always travel, or will the rulings relevant to a traveler apply to them with regard to the performance of the daily prayers and to the fast?

A: If, in this case, he resides at his work city and takes it as his residence during that period, his place of work will not be considered as his home city if the period is a month and the related rules do not apply. Rather, he is a traveler and he must shorten his prayers, unless he intends to stay for ten days. In fact, the same applies even if the period is of two or three months, as an obligatory precaution. So in this case – if he stays there for two or three months – he must either make the intention to reside there or he must perform both shortened and complete prayers.

But if the situation is that he travels quite often to his work city, so he goes there and returns every day or most of the days, then there are three possibilities:

- i) He travels for one month: he is not considered to be a frequent traveler – which would necessitate performing complete prayers and undertaking his obligatory fast during one's travel. His obligation will then be to shorten the prayer and not fast.
- ii) He travels for three months: this period of travel time is sufficient for him to be regarded as a frequent traveler, especially if this occurs every year.
- iii) He travels for two months: the sufficiency of this period for him to be considered as a frequent traveler is not established, especially when these travels occur in one year, without it becoming a yearly routine.

In such a situation, based on an obligatory precaution, he should perform his prayers twice: shortened and complete.

However, if he happens to stay at a place for a period of ten days, even if it was without intention, then he must perform shortened prayers in his first trip to that place, even if the period of his repetitive trips is of three months and this is a yearly custom.

[\[ii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 26.

[\[iii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 1190.

FASTING

The ritual obligation of fasting is one of the pillars on which Islam is built and one of the great obligations imposed by Almighty Allah on His servants, the obligations through which He is worshipped so the worshippers may thus cultivate their souls, purge their hearts, purify their bodies, distance themselves from their carnal desires, and strengthening self-discipline and patience.

The Fast is protection from the Fire, and through it a servant of Allah enters Paradise. One tradition says that Allah, the most Exalted and the most Great, says, "All good deeds of a son of Adam are rewarded manifold up to seven hundred times except perseverance: It is Mine, and I shall be the One to reward it." Hence, the rewards of patience are treasured with Allah; and patience is the Fast.[\[i\]](#)

Reports have cited the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and Imams (peace be upon them) saying that the sleep of a fasting person is worship, his breath and silence is the glorification of the Almighty, his good deeds are accepted, his supplication is answered, and for Allah the smell of his mouth is sweeter than that of musk. A fasting person feasts himself in the gardens of bliss (in Paradise); the angels pray for him until he breaks his fast. He has two joyful occasions: One is at the time when he breaks his fast, and one when he meets Allah Almighty [at the time of death]. It has also been reported that fast keeps Satan at bay, blackening his face.

Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, has chosen for this sacred obligation His blessed month of Ramadan, the very best of all months, the one which is held as the most revered by the Almighty, so He chose it for Himself, attributed it to Himself, honoring and magnifying it, rendering it as sacred by the token He chose it to reveal His Book (Qur'an) during it, selecting it in particular for *Lailatul-Qadr* (the night of destiny, of power) which is better than a thousand months. During it, the demons are chained, the sins are forgiven, the rewards for good deeds are multiplied, the gates of the fire are shut and the gates of the Gardens of Bliss are opened. During it, the faithful are invited to be guests of Allah Almighty, thus becoming amongst the people who receive His blessings.

There are many rules of etiquette relevant to the fast. In a tradition narrated by Muhammed ibn Ajlan, the latter says that he heard Imam Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] (peace be upon him) as saying, "Fast is not just abstention from food and drinks, that is, one does not eat or drink; rather, when you fast, let your hearing, vision, tongue, stomach, private parts perform the fast with you. Safeguard your hand and your

private parts [against committing wrongdoings], be silent most of the time save when it is an occasion to say something good, and be kind to whoever serves you." [\[ii\]](#)

In a report by Jarrah al-Madaini, the Imam (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "If you fast, safeguard your tongues against telling lies, lower your gaze, do not dispute, do not envy, do not backbite, do not quarrel, do not lie, do not cohabit, do not clash, do not be grudging, do not taunt each other, do not exchange bad names, do not argue, do not initiate fights, do not oppress, do not indulge in nonsense, do not be rude, do not neglect to remember Allah or to perform the prayers. Take to silence, remain mute, clement, patient, truthful, and avoid getting in contact with evil people. Cast a look at the Hereafter, watch how your days expire one after another, be hopeful about what Allah has promised you, and supply yourselves [in preparation] to meet Allah. Take to calmness, be dignified, submissive to the Almighty, surrendering to Him, feeling humble like slaves that are afraid of their masters, rest your hope on Him, fear His wrath, desire what He has in store for you, be fearful of the outcomes of your wrongdoings. If you diminish any of the above, the rewards for your fast will be reduced accordingly..." [\[iii\]](#)

We plead to Allah, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, through His benignity and generosity, to help us and all the believers perform this great obligation perfectly with a good intention, to accept our endeavor and honor our supplication; He is the most Merciful of all those who show mercy, the Master of the faithful.

Q1: Can we depend on European observatories to determine the timing for *Fajr* (dawn), sunrise and noon during the days of the year, including those of the blessed month of Ramadan, knowing that they are scientific and very precise up to the fraction of a second?

A: Relying on the said observatories is permissible if they result in knowledge of the arrival of the times [of prayer]; otherwise, one has to wait until he learns of the arrival of these times. Yes, they are useful for determining the *Fajr* time if it is known that its Sharia-determined meaning is sought, which is the whiteness that appears in the eastern horizon. But if it is known that they do not make such a determining, knowledge of the occurrence of such whiteness [as per the Sharia] must be sought [before proceeding with dawn prayer].

Q2: If the crescent [of the month of Ramadan] has been determined by the *Hakim Shar'i* [Islamic appointed judge], should one break his fast if he is convinced that such a jurist is sure about determining it, or should he ascertain it by himself?

A: If he knows of the cautious verification of the *Hakim Shar'i*, in such a way that the crescent is not determined by him except when it actually is present, or if the legislated evidence testifies before him the presence of the crescent, then it is permissible to rely on the determination.

Q3: Someone lives in a non-Muslim country and fasts during the blessed month of Ramadan. Is he permitted to feed non-Muslims during daytime?

A: Yes, he may do so unless doing it weakens his faith and his call to it, that it is known that he is a Muslim and his abstention from serving food is a symbol that expresses his commitment to his religion and pride in it, whereas his serving food violates the said symbol and is a manifestation of belittling his religion and taking it lightly.

Q4: If the crescent is confirmed in the East, is it also confirmed for us in the West? And if sighting it is confirmed in America, is it likewise confirmed in Europe?

A: If the sighting of the crescent is confirmed in some Asian or European or African countries, it suffices to rule on its existence in the rest of those countries as well on the same day, be they Eastern or Western countries, except in Malaysia and other countries that are closer to the Americas where the crescent is not confirmed unless it is known to be present there on the same day in such a way that it could be sighted with the naked eye. But if such knowledge is not available, the crescent is confirmed on the following day. Also, if crescent sighting is confirmed in Asia, Europe or Africa, the crescent is confirmed in America on the same day.

Yes, if the crescent sighting is proven only in America, it is not confirmed in Asia, Europe or Africa on the same day but on the next day.

Q5: It is commonly held amongst the jurists that if the sighting of the crescent is confirmed in the Eastern countries, then it confirmed in the Western countries as well; but in some seasons of the year, the crescent is sighted in the Eastern countries whereas it cannot be sighted in some Western countries because of the absence of darkness during the night there. So, can the crescent be confirmed in these countries based on its having been sighted in the Eastern ones?

A: Based on what we have mentioned, i.e. the unity of horizons in Asian and European countries, the sighting of the crescent is confirmed in these countries based on the countries that preceded them in sighting it because of the darkness that occurs in the latter during the night.

Q6: Several requests have reached us seeking edicts. It appears from these requests that residents of Australia and New Zealand are not allowed to rely on Western countries, with regard to confirmation of crescent sighting, such as the Middle East, just as those living in these regions, for example, cannot rely on Australia and New Zealand. But the answer stated above shows contrariwise. Has there been a change of that edict so we may alter the previous edicts, or what?

A: What exists in our previous publication is an exception for New Zealand only. We confirm that the ruling relevant to Australia and to Middle Eastern countries is one and the same.

Q7: I reside in Australia. If the sighting of the crescent is confirmed in one of the Arab countries, that is, the Middle East area, can I follow it if its sighting is not confirmed here?

A: Yes, it is confirmed according to you if it is proven through legislated evidence that it has been sighted in countries of the Middle East area.

Q8: If one misses the fast of the month of Ramadan for several years, is he obligated to make it up and also pay the *Kaffara* required of one who deliberately breaks his fast, knowing that he is ignorant of the rulings of lapsed fasts (*Qadha*) and *Kaffara*?

A: If he knows that he is required to fast, yet he takes it lightly and does not fast, he must make it up and pay the *Kaffara*. He likewise has to pay the *Fidyah* to the needy people if he delays making up for the first year.

Q9: Should the *Fidyah* be paid on behalf of a woman who fell sick during the month of Ramadan so she could not fast, then her sickness continued until she died before the next month of Ramadan? She has left a legacy and willed to take out the third [of her inheritance] and pay off from it whatever she is obligated to pay.

A: Paying the *Fidyah* on her behalf is not mandatory.

Q10: There are some women who do not adhere to the legislated obligations, such as the *Hijab* and prayers during the days of the year, but when the month of Ramadan approaches, they fast and pray. Are their prayers and fast valid even though they do not commit themselves to observing the *Hijab*?

A: Their prayers and fast are valid, and it is hoped that they will be included in the blessing of the sacred month, so Allah Almighty may guide them in repenting and reverting to the path of faith and to righteous deeds.

Q11: One is required to make up for the lapsed fast, but he did not take making it up seriously and was too lenient about it until he could not fast anymore due to continuous illness. In this case, is the fasting obligation dropped from him, or should he state in his will that it should be made up on his behalf?

A: He should include it in his will and efforts should be exerted so this is done after his demise, so that his obligations are met and cleared.

Q12: If a married couple are unable to perform *Ghusl* during a night of the month of Ramadan, is the wife still permitted to let her husband have intercourse with her? What is the ruling if we suppose that traveling is possible that night? Should the wife still let her husband have intercourse with her while she knows that the husband would not permit her [to travel] or travelling causes difficulty for her? What is the ruling in this question if the ritual bath is harmful to the wife only? Should she still allow him?

A: If they cannot perform the *Ghusl* due to lack of time, she is not permitted to allow him. If it is due to any other justifiable excuse – such as lack of water or illness – she is permitted to allow her husband. Also, it is an obligatory precaution for them to perform *Tayammum* instead of *Ghusl* before dawn in such a situation.

Q13: If a fasting person breaks his fast depending on something – like a clock or the recitation of the *Athan* or a timetable for the opening and breaking of the fasts – then he finds out that there was a mistake, such as malfunction of the clock, or the reciter of the *Athan* was mistaken, or a printing mistake took place in the timetable, what is the status of his fast?

A: His fast is valid if he believed, when he broke it, that night had already entered, as is most likely. Yes, if he did not believe that it was night time, but he rushed to break it only on the notion that it was night time, with the possibility of using the wrong method [of determining the time to break the fast] and of it not actually being night time – even if such a possibility was distant – his fast is invalid if he happened to break his fast during the day time, and he has to make it up and pay the *Kaffara*.

Q14: What is the ruling if the said error had taken place during the *Imsak* time (i.e. the time one should begin the necessary abstentions for the fast)?

A: If one can easily come to know the exact time of *Fajr*, but he did not look into determining it and committed an act which breaks the fast, then he should make it up.

Q15: Someone is performing a recommended fast. His father, brother or someone else invites him to eat or drink though knowing that he is fasting. Can this fasting person accept their invitation knowing that the purpose behind such an invitation by the relative is to break his fast [as it is recommended to invite someone to break their fast] so they may get rewards and blessings?

A: It is recommended for him to break his fast with them if they asked him to do so because they like that he eats or drinks in their company and he thus earn rewards for fasting and rewards for having honored a believer's invitation, but if they do so because they are disrespecting his fast, then it is doubtful that it is recommended to honor their invitation. From their side, their conduct is not considered as the recommended act of inviting a fasting person to break his fast. Rather it is presenting the food and drink for him after sunset and the completion of the fast.

Q16: If a percentage of the pressurized gas taken orally by an asthma patient reaches his stomach, will it invalidate his fast?

A: It does not invalidate his fast, unless it contains a liquid medicine which he knows that some particles of it will reach his stomach.

Q17: Does brushing the teeth with the toothpaste invalidate the fast?

A: No, it does not invalidate the fast at all, unless it leads to swallowing some toothpaste or water.

[\[i\]](#) *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 7, p. 295.

[\[ii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 118.

[\[iii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 119.

KHUMS

This is an obligation imposed by Allah Almighty for Him, for His Trusted Messenger, His Pure Progeny (peace be upon them all), the descendants of Hashim, the Prophet's nearest in kin, in order to compensate them for having raised their status above receiving people's charities, in order to dignify them, elevate them, honor their position and safeguard the dues owed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) for them. The believers, may Allah Almighty grant them honors, must be attentive about paying these dues so they may not be counted among those who wrong and harm those for whom *Khums* is due. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "The hardest situation through which people will suffer on Judgment Day is when the one to whom *Khums* is payable stands and says, 'Lord! [Where is] my *Khums*?'"^[ii]

It is thus that the believers are cleansed, their wealth becomes lawful and the means of their livelihood grow. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "I take from one of you the dirham while I am amongst the wealthiest in Medina; I only want you to thus be purified."^[iii] Imam al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) has said, "By Allah! Allah makes it easy for the believers to make a living through five dirhams: They set aside one of them for their Lord while consuming the remaining four lawfully." Then the Imam (peace be upon him) said, "This is one of our traditions which are hard to apply: Nobody acts upon it and is patient in its regard except if he is one whose heart Allah tested with faith."^[iii]

Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him) wrote a letter once about the subject of *Khums*. He said, "Do not keep it away from us [the Ahl al-Bayt] and [thus] you deprive yourselves of our supplications as long as you can pay it, as its payment is the key to your sustenance, the removal of your sins, the things that you prepare for yourselves [to be used] to the Day of your need [Judgment Day]. A Muslim is one who honors his pledge to Allah, and a Muslim is not one who responds to the call of Islam with his tongue while his heart inclines otherwise."^[iv] Such traditions are numerous.

Q1: Some people deal with the Sharia-required dues without referring to the *Hakim Shar'i* or his agent with the excuse that one is not convinced about the way some agents deal with these dues; so, what is your opinion in this regard?

A: One has to know the following:

Firstly: It is prohibited for one who pays the dues to pay them to somebody about whom he is not convinced that he would deal with it in a good way, because these dues are trusts in his hand, and he must not be negligent about it.

Secondly: Not being convinced about how some agents fare with the ways they are to be dispensed does not justify one abandoning the Sharia-imposed criteria so he feels independent in dealing with such dues without referring to the *Hakim Shar'i* who is entrusted to handle them. Evidences have proven the obligation of referring to him, and one is not cleared of the responsibility for these dues when he thus behaves independently. One has to refer to him or to

his trusted agent who will then pass the dues to him or personally deals with it according to his instructions. The matter is not restricted to the agents whom the said individual is not convinced that they deal well with the dues.

Thirdly: One must be on his guard regarding some people who try to make accusations against scholars and their representatives, and exaggerating in doing so, without having proofs, or by deliberately making a lot of noise without any justification. We do not deny that there are some anomalies and negativities as a result of unintentional errors, or even overlooking things in an unjustifiable way. But this does not mean that nobody should be trusted and that all of them must be avoided, for such is a stark injustice to the truth on one hand, and it causes the disobedience of the religious laws on the other; reason and the Sharia do not see any alternative to the scholars. Any alternative that has been imposed or is being imposed in our societies and in all societies on earth is less trustworthy and sincere than the religious scholars. What is then expected from the alternatives in respect of anomalies and negativities is much, much greater than what has taken place in the current situation, as testified by observing other religious societies. The latter has replaced the creed with frozen slogans and dead traditions which have no impact or effect, and replaced it with a toy in the hands of politicians and influential forces in the world that push it wherever they want. Who have preserved the principle of Shi'ism during this long period, despite the intensity of the calamities, by its active spirit and lively call, other than the righteous scholars who struggled along the path of Allah Almighty, advised and guided the servants of the Almighty and tolerated harm while doing so? They did not respond to the oppressors, nor did they coordinate with them or recognize their rule until they imposed their religion and their own selves on the grounds of reality.

Beware, beware of this oppressive and suspicious campaign against the pious scholars: It is a branch of the brutal campaign against Shi'ism in general which all corners of the world are witnessing. The believers, May Allah Almighty lead their steps towards what is right, must ensure a relationship with the practicing sincere scholars and with their righteous and upstanding representatives. Everyone must attach themselves to them so they may facilitate performance of their function perfectly, in the best of ways. Thus, the agitators who are prompted to cause such noise should realize the defeat of their pursuits, and their prompters should realize the failure of their schemes:"... It may be that Allah will restrain the fury of the unbelievers, for Allah is the Strongest in might and in punishment" (Qur'an, 4:84).

Q2: Is it permissible to pray in a residence or wearing a garment or on a carpet, the *Khums* of which has remained unpaid? Is buying food with money, from which the *Khums* has not been paid, considered consuming what is prohibited to consume? Does the prohibition in all these things apply to persons other than the owner of these items those *Khums* has remained unpaid?

A: The owner of the property and money the *Khums* of which has remained unpaid is prohibited to use them before paying their *Khums*, and if he uses it, for instance, in performing the prayers, such prayers are not valid while he is aware of the rule; like if he prayed while wearing a garment or while living in a house the *Khums* of which is yet to be paid. Dealing with the property, the *Khums* of which has remained unpaid, is valid in the sense that it is not prohibited to use an item if such item was bought using it, if this property was money; similarly, if the

property is not money, it is permissible to use the price that is given in return for an item on which *Khums* has not been paid. Having said that, the owner of the property which has remained liable for *Khums* remains in debt of paying the *Khums* and he will be questioned about it on Judgment Day.. The same applies if he permits someone else to use that property: that someone else is permitted to use it, while the owner of the property will carry the sin of being negligent of *Khums*, so the burden will be on him while someone else enjoys it lawfully! Imam al-*Sadiq* (peace be upon him) has said, "The hardest situation of anyone on the Judgment Day is when one to whom the *khums* is due stands up and says, 'Lord! Where is my *Khums*?'"^[v]

Q3: Is it possible to invest Sharia-imposed dues - *Sahm al-Imam* (May Allah hasten his reappearance) and *Sahm al-Sadaat* – in secure investments in order to see the money thus grow with the permission of the agent of the *Mujtahid* if there is no urgent and immediate need in the country to spend it? If we suppose it is permissible, are the benefits of such investments to be spent in the same way as the original share of *Khums* is spent or can it be spent more openly, like if they are spent for the general welfare?

A: There is no way to invest *Sahm al-Sadaat*. As for *Sahm al-Imam* (May Allah hasten his reappearance), it is not permissible without being certain of his satisfaction and that is not acquired by merely not needing to spend it in that country since the Imam (May Allah hasten his reappearance) had been in charge of and concerned about meeting the needs of the religion and of the believers in all lands. And the need to spend this *Sahm* to promote the religion and to fulfill the needs of the believers in many countries is obvious, to the extent that it has reached the status of tragedy and urgency. Even if we say that such investing is permissible, it is necessary to obtain the permission of the *Hakim Shar'i* in this regard. Also the ways of spending the profits of such investments are the same as the ways of spending the blessed *Sahm*, since the profit follows the original capital.

Q4: Do you permit one who follows you in *taqlid*, for example, to hand over his *Khums* to a contemporary jurist?

A: We have stated in our treatise of practical Islamic laws, *Minhaj al-Saliheen*, in issue number 79 of the Book of *Khums*, the requirement which has to be met by one receiving the *Khums*, and we did not restrict it to our own self or to any other particular individual. So, when this requirement is met, the obligation is fulfilled and there is no need to refer to us. Without it, we cannot permit the payment of *Khums*.

There is something which is quite important to which attention should be paid: Referring to the *Hakim Shar'i* fulfills the obligation if the individual is certain that he chooses the best ways to spend the dues in order to please the Imam (May Allah hasten his reappearance) and that he is able to do so. *Khums* belongs to the Imam (peace be upon him) and one who has to pay it is its custodian. Authority over the obligation is jointly shared by the owner and the *Hakim Shar'i*: each is obligated to spend it on whatever pleases the Imam (peace be upon him). So, the owner of the property should not pay the *Khums* to the *Hakim Shar'i* and assign to him the task of spending it unless he trusts his good handling of it, in a way which pleases the Imam (peace be upon him).

With the differences amongst the *Hakims* in their understanding and good handling, the most trusted one with the best knowledge in spending the *Khums* must be chosen, the one who is more able to deliver the dues and spend them in their appropriate places, according to the dictates of dealing with a trust. If his choice is not based on all of this, he will have betrayed the trust and he will be held accountable for so doing.

We have discussed the explanation of the above in length in *Minhaj al-Saliheen*; and it is from Him, the most Praised, that we seek help and achieve success.

Q5: After searching and questioning about the most knowledgeable *Mujtahid*, a believer became convinced about a particular *Mujtahid* to whom he paid the religious dues [i.e. *Khums*]. After that, his conviction shifted to another *Mujtahid*. Is his first action sufficient and his obligation fulfilled?

A: If he had exerted his efforts in his search, if he did not have shortcomings in doing so, and was not neglectfully hasty, by the will of Allah he will receive the rewards of what he had done. If he was hasty and did not exert all his effort in investigating, he should refer to the *Mujtahid* who has fulfilled all the necessary criteria according to him and is the right person to follow (i.e. the *Mujtahid* that he has chosen as his *Marja*) and explain to him the situation; if he is certain that the first *Mujtahid* has spent the dues in the right place, the second *Mujtahid* might approve the spending of the first and the individual's action will be sufficient. If the second *Mujtahid* is not satisfied with the ways the money was spent, what the individual has done is not sufficient, and he must repay the dues again.

Q6: There are certain cases in the West in which the government pays the rent on behalf of a tenant so it may secure his residency...

A. If he buys a house to live in while being still in such a status, will this second home be regarded as extra, so he must pay the *Khums* on it?

B. If it is extra, can he end the State's rental of his rented house then reside temporarily in the house which he bought so he does not have to pay the *Khums*, then he gets out of it again to a house the rent of which the State pays while he lets his own house which he bought?

C. If he registers it in someone else's name then occupied it, can he take the State's funds paid to the one in whose name the house is registered?

D. Can he keep renting the house (for which the State pays rent) while he temporarily lives in the house he bought for a few days so he does not have to pay the *Khums* for it, after which he gets out of it and leases it and pays the profit's *Khums*?

A: Arranging a house to live in does not make it part of the [deductible] expenses and *Khums* is not dropped from it. Rather, this [dropping the *Khums*] depends on the house being actually his own place of residence. It does not suffice if he resides in it for a period of time in order to avoid

the *Khums* requirement. Rather, it has to be used as a place of living so as it is true to describe it as his place of residence. But if he undertakes it as residence and the *Khums* is dropped from it, there is no objection if he takes the rental money from the State if it is registered in someone else's name.

Q7: Some individuals form a society in which every individual pays a certain amount of money every month, and these sums are handed over to the president of the society so he would pay it every month to one of the society participants. But it is not known whether handing over these monies to the president is done as a trust, a grant, a loan or as their agent or under any other label. So, they do not make a distinction among these labels, or they do not mean any of them in particular.

The question is: Is there *Khums* to be paid on these funds so that each individual should calculate his annual profits taking into consideration his share of the funds, and thus take his *Khums* out?

A: If paying the money to the president is for the purpose of him paying it to the participants, as is surmised from the question, the president will be acting as an agent [representing the group], and he will not be a borrower unless it is his turn and he takes it out, or they permit him to borrow it before his turn reaches him. Each participant must consider what he had paid to be part of his profits. Then he must take out its *Khums* after excluding his debts based on the religious rulings of *Khums* exclusions.

Q8: If a government employee or one who works in a private company does not receive his salary in person, rather the company transfers it to his account in a government owned bank or a private bank; does he have to pay its *Khums* at the end of the *Khums* fiscal year?

A: Cash bills which are withdrawn from government banks, received as salary from the Government, if they were previously owned by Muslims, are called “*Majhool Al-Malik*”. The religious obligation on it is to receive it with the intention of being on behalf of my behalf, and then you intend to own it. It is then, considered amongst the profits and *Khums* is applicable on it if the rest of the conditions of *Khums* are fulfilled. If the government salary was not withdrawn from the bank and remains in it, then *Khums* is not applicable. As regarding salaries of private companies, it is profit as soon as it becomes due and *Khums* is applicable on it if the rest of the conditions of *Khums* are met. This ruling of the private companies’ salary is not affected if the salary was deposited in a government bank.

Q9: The State and some companies in non-Muslim countries and in some Muslim countries may transfer salaries of their employees directly to their own respective bank accounts, so the employee does not hold the money in his hand as cash, but he can withdraw it whenever he wants. So, if an employee's account rises above his annual expenses, should the *Khums* then be taken out of it?

A: The *Khums* has to be taken out of it if the salary comes from a private company. But if it is from the State, *Khums* does not have to be paid on it unless he obtains it in cash and there is a surplus in it at the end of the *Khums* year.

Q10: Every citizen who works at a government office or a company has a small amount deducted from his salary and is deposited in a retirement fund. When the worker or employee reaches retirement age, he is given every month from this fund an amount close to a fourth of what his salary used to be. If the employee or worker resigns from his job, he asks to get paid from his retirement fund all the funds due to him which accumulated during the years of working at the office or company. Is this sum liable to *Khums* after having received it, or should he first see if it exceeds his annual expenses to know whether to the *Khums* is due or not?

A: If this sum is received gradually every month at his retirement or if it is received as a lump sum when one resigns, and he acted according to his obligation of "*Majhool Al-Malik*", as explained previously, then he can spend from it until the end of the *Khums* year arrives, at which time if there is any surplus he should pay *Khums* on it, otherwise nothing is due. This applies to the salary if received from the State. This applies to the salary if received from the state. But if it is received from a privately owned company, the *Khums* applies to it as soon as it is received because it is considered as debts that are profits of past years and the *Khums* thereof must be paid when received.

Q11: If an individual deposits an amount of money in a Government bank, will *Khums* be applicable on the said money?

A: As an obligatory precaution, the *Khums* must be taken out of the said money.

Q12: Is it permissible to seek reconciliation with regard to the *Khums*, to clear one's responsibility and obligation to pay it?

A: Reconciliation about the *Khums* is only done when there is doubt about how much of it should be paid, between a higher amount and a lower amount. It is not cleared from one's responsibility even if someone claims that it he dropped it for the individual or he forgave it for him. There must be precaution undertaken when referring to someone who does that, as doing so is wasting the religious dues and it is an alteration of the religious ruling; we plead to the most Praised One to protect us from this and to keep our feet firm on His Right Path.

Q13: Are the electronic devices like the television or the like regarded to be among one's exempted expenses? If it is not, should *Khums* be paid as soon as it is purchased?

A: If these are used for the intended purpose in a considerable amount, they are included in the exempted expenses, and do not become subject to *Khums*.

Q14: There is a set of household pots. If I use only some items of the set, is this sufficient so I do not have to pay the *Khums* on the entire set?

A: If what one needs cannot be obtained unless he buys the whole set, there is no *Khums* required to pay if he uses some of it. But if he can get what he needs without having to buy the whole set, the *Khums* applies on what remains unused

Q15: Is a gift subject to *Khums*? If so, should payment of its *Khums* be done one year after it is received or at the time? What is the ruling relevant to funds taken from an individual who does not pay *Khums* on his property?

A: Payment of the *Khums* on a gift is due at the end of the *Khums* fiscal year – not when it is received, nor after the passing of one year. The property taken from an individual who does not pay *Khums* on his wealth is lawful. The burden of not paying the *Khums* falls on the shoulders of one who does not pay it, and the claim against him shall remain standing.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 6, p. 386.

[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 337.

[iii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 338.

[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 375.

[v] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 6, p. 386.

HAJJ

Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage, is one of the greatest religious obligations and one of the five pillars on which Islam is built. Allah Almighty obligated it in order to erect the religion, firm its foundations and glorify its symbols. He ordered His friend, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) to call on people in times immemorial to come to their Lord, respond to His call, receiving His mercy, obediently, in humility, spending their wealth, abandoning the worldly desires, bear for His sake weariness and exhaustion, in order to pay their dues to Him and to gain benefits. They left their worldliness behind and got rid of it for His sake. The season of Hajj is characterized by its high spirituality due to:

- 1) The prohibitions during the state of *Ihram* is based on lightening the materialistic and carnal aspect in humans in order to avoid many of its pleasures and whatever is actually hostile in them.
- 2) The benefits of many rituals of *Hajj* are unknown had it not been due to belief in the unseen itself and to submission to the command of Allah Almighty.

Both of these matters stimulate the spiritual aspect and absolute connection with Allah Almighty. What cause is there that is stronger than this one between a servant and his Lord?

It is apparent from numerous narrations from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) and Imams from among his Progeny (peace be upon them all) that pilgrims, wherever they, are guests of Allah Almighty, who came to Him; so, they are destined to be rewarded by His great hospitality, enjoying His great rewards and generous giving, and all this is guaranteed for them.

Thus, in a tradition narrated by Mu'awiyah ibn Ammar, Imam Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) says, "When people settle in [the valley of] *Mina*, a caller calls out to them: 'If you only know in Whose precincts you have settled, you would then be certain of what you will receive in compensation [of your expenses and troubles] after you have been forgiven.'"^[ii]

In another tradition narrated from the Imam (peace be upon him), a man asked him in *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* (the Great Mosque of Makah): "Who among people will carry the heaviest burden [of sins on Judgment Day]?" The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "He who stands at these two stations, *Arafah* and *Muzdalifah*, and he runs between both these mountains (*Safa* and *Marwah*), then makes the rounds circling this House,

then he prays behind the standing place of Ibrahim (peace be upon him), then he tells himself and assumes that Allah did not forgive him. Such person is amongst those who will carry the heaviest burden."^[iii]

In another tradition from him (peace be upon him), he says, "Those who perform the *Hajj* and *Umrah* [the lesser pilgrimage] are guests of Allah: If they ask Him, He will give; if they plead to Him, He will respond; if they intercede on behalf of others, He accepts their intercession. If they remain silent, He will initiate with them, and he will compensate them for each dirham a thousand."^[iii]

In a tradition related from Imam Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (peace be upon him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) said, "Pilgrims are of three types: One who will receive the largest share [of Allah's generosity] is one whose sins of the past as well as of the future are all forgiven, and Allah protects him from the punishment of the grave. After him in status is one whose past sins are forgiven, and he continues his deeds for the rest of his lifespan. After him is one whose family and wealth are protected."^[iv] And there are many other such texts.

Some traditions narrated by Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) indicate that one of the noble goals of *Hajj* and its desired benefits is that one acquaints himself with the legacies of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) and his traditions, so he may remember and not forget them. Similarly, in some of their traditions there is emphasis on emulating the Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny), by observing some of the places where he had been and what he had done.

Therefore, the pilgrims have to exert an effort to do that as much as they can. They should visit the sites where the Prophet (peace be upon him and his holy progeny) had been or by which he passed, and remember his stations and the events associated with him, assimilate these traditions into their souls, and become passionate about them and about him (peace be upon him and his progeny) with their hearts, to affirm their love for him, confirm their relationship with him and strengthen their link to him, for he is the one who is affectionate towards the believers, merciful to them, the one who will intercede for them, whose intercession is accepted. May Allah Almighty reward him with the very best of rewards with which he rewards a prophet on behalf of his nation, and may He convey our salutation to him and our greetings.

Also, in order to perfect the pilgrimage, one should visit him (peace be upon him and his progeny), and win the honor of being in his courtyard, to greet him, in order to recognize the greatness of what we all owe him and renew the pledge his nation had pledged to him.

In a tradition narrated by al-Aslami, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) says that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "One who goes to Makah for *Hajj* but does not visit me in Medina, has shunned me; and one who has shunned me, I will shun him on the Day of Judgment. And whoever visits me, my intercession for him has become a certainty, and whoever's intercession has become a certainty, his place in heaven becomes a certainty."^[vi]

All of this also applies to his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them all) because they are of him and he is of them: they were created of his light and spoke on his behalf. One who loves them loves him, and one who honors them honors him. The pilgrim, therefore, should not miss the opportunity to become acquainted with their legacies visit their shrines, remember their traditions and fulfill the duty to the Prophet in respect to them (peace be upon them). Isma'eel ibn Mahran narrated Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying, "If one of you performs the *Hajj*, let him conclude it by visiting us because such is among the perfections of the *Hajj*."^[vii]

Some revered traditions indicate that among the benefits of performing the *Hajj* is to come to learn the religious rulings and to disseminate of the religious teachings throughout the world. This, indeed, is something worthy of attention these days especially when it comes to you, expatriates, after you have become dispersed in the valleys of the earth, in small groups, distant from the centers of religious education and surrounded by ideologies some of which do not believe in God.

It is for this reason that you surely need to fortify yourselves from the effects of the above and from its perils by educating yourselves with genuine ideologies derived from the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) which have been defended and safeguarded all this time by our eminent scholars whom our Imams (peace be upon them) made them the authorities for the believers to refer to during the long period of tribulation. You can, during this sacred season of *Hajj*, meet the sincere men of the *Hawza* (the religious seminary) as well as those who carry the genuine religious education who, too, visit the holy places. You can learn the accurate information and religious culture which they have, and you can discuss it with them.

As such, you will be able to bear the pristine religious education and take it back with you to your countries throughout the world, then disseminate it among those who reside there and fortify them through it. Thus, this blessed assembly becomes a season for studying and circulating the true ideologies and a cause for goodness and mercy to descend upon the believers.

Beware of not performing the *Hajj* and taking it lightly, after all the conditions are met that make it obligatory on you, because doing so is one of the major sins and a

mortal sin which Allah Almighty considers as being the equivalent of heresy, saying, "... the Pilgrimage to this house is a duty mankind owes to God, those who can afford the journey, but if anyone denies faith [by neglecting *Hajj*], Allah is not in need of any of His creation" (Qur'an, 3:97).

One sacred tradition says, "If one is able to perform the *Hajj* but does not, he has abandoned one of the legislations of Islam."^[vii]

In a will by the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), he said, "Do not abandon the pilgrimage to the House of your Lord lest you should perish."^[viii] Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "If people abandon the pilgrimage to his House, punishment will then descend on them, and they will not be given a respite."^[ix] We have already discussed in the nineteenth chapter some points which are relevant to this.

There is one matter which one who desires to perform the *Hajj* should take care of and pay due heed to and focus his attention towards: learning the rules of *Hajj* and understanding them. This is so for two main reasons: firstly, because to do so is mandatory with regard to all obligations, in order to fulfill all that is required and be duly discharged of all obligations; and secondly, if any mistakes are made (due to improper preparation), it may cause complicated problems that are not easy to resolve and come out of.

Such education is achieved through two steps:

(1) by referring to books that deal with the rituals and rules of the *Hajj* and *Umrah*, each according to the *Marja`* whom he emulates, and study the rulings relevant to the *Hajj* before going there so he becomes familiar with them and is enlightened about them in advance. This is so because *Hajj* includes some hardships and distractions in addition to the shortage of time which most often prevents a pilgrim from becoming acquainted with and absorbing the pilgrimage rulings on his way going there.

(2) By staying in touch with the guides who have complete experience with the *Hajj* and are too pious and God-fearing to take it lightly or to be hasty in teaching it, those who are affiliated with pilgrimage caravans or who go individually. No matter how familiar one may be with the rulings relevant to *Hajj*, he must not feel that he does not need such a guide while acting upon these rulings and implementing them. Also, he may not be able to afford not to refer to the religious missions that take upon their shoulders the responsibility to guide the pilgrims and resolve their problems.

Since the pilgrim is dependent on the books teaching the rituals and rules of *Hajj*, as we have already indicated, which have taken the responsibility of teaching the important Sharia laws and rules of *Hajj*, we here do not have to detail its rulings, save a few issues with which the expatriates are afflicted, and which are not usually discussed in the said books or their likes; surely Allah is the One who corrects the paths of the believers.

We plead to Allah through His bounty and generosity to grant us and your own selves the ability to obey Him, to bless us all with performing of the pilgrimage to His Sacred House, while accepting our deeds, responding to our supplications and reforming our conditions; He is the most Merciful of those who have mercy, the Master of the faithful; He suffices us and how great He is in helping those who resort to Him!

Q1: What are the criteria of ability which makes the performance of *Hajj* obligatory?

A: In order to satisfy the criteria of “ability”, one has to meet the following:

1. The financial ability to perform the *Hajj*, either by being able to pay the needed expenses for *Hajj*, or due to the presence of someone who will bear the said expenses on his behalf.
2. The physical ability to perform the *Hajj*.
3. The way is open before the individual and travel is possible for him.

One who meets these conditions is obligated to perform the *Hajj* in the first year when they all become available. If he neglects to do so and does not perform it, he will remain liable to it even if he in later years became unable to meet some of these requirements. For more details, one should refer to books that deal with *Hajj* rites.

Q2: If I fulfilled the criteria of “ability” to perform the *Hajj*, but time does not permit me to do so because I have examinations to take, am I permitted to delay performing the *Hajj* so I may take the examinations?

A: It is not permissible to delay the *Hajj* for this reason, except when there is an extreme necessity to take the examinations so that your failure to attend the exams will cause a problem which you cannot bear, such as its being a cause for your banishment from that country to another where life is very difficult, or such sorts of serious problems.

Similar to these examinations are other commitments such as that of making a living by a particular job which will be lost because of going for *Hajj*.

Q3: A young unmarried man has recently become able to perform *Hajj*, and he is now considering getting married. If he travels to perform the *Hajj*, his marriage will be delayed for some time; so, which one he should take priority over the other?

A: *Hajj* has precedence, unless there is urgency in getting married so as delaying it would create a problem too difficult to bear.

Q4: The salary of a government employee in the West is transferred to a bank, and he then withdraws what he needs for his livelihood, keeping the rest in his account. As time passes by, his account balance rises to a sum which suffices to perform *Hajj*. Will he then become “able”, and will *Hajj* then become obligatory on him?

A: No, he will not be fulfilling the criteria of being “able”, and *Hajj* is not mandatory on him as long as he does not actually withdraw what suffices him to perform *Hajj*, as he does not own the sum of money in the bank account until he physically holds it.

However, it is best for him to hasten in withdrawing the funds sufficient to enable him to perform *Hajj*, so that *Hajj* will then become obligatory upon him, whereupon he will then perform it.

Q5: What if, in the supposition of the previous question, he receives his salary, and after spending from it as per his needs, he deposits what remains at the bank until his account balance is enough to cover the expenses of performing *Hajj*?

A: In such a situation, it is an obligatory precaution for him to perform *Hajj*: that is, he should withdraw the sum that suffices him to perform it, so that he is completely sure that he fulfills the condition of “ability” and that *Hajj* is obligatory upon him, and then he performs it.

But if a sum of money accumulates in his hands, such that it suffices him for performing *Hajj*, which he then deposits at the bank, there is no doubt that *Hajj* becomes obligatory upon him.

Q6: Continuing on from the previous scenario, if one is an employee of a private company which transfers his salary to the bank, not paying him directly, does

performing *Hajj* become mandatory on him if his account balance reaches a sum that suffices him to perform it?

A: As an obligatory precaution, he should perform *Hajj* under such circumstances, and he should withdraw funds that suffice him as explained in the answer to the previous question.

But if he can receive the salary from them directly, and if the salary of a month is sufficient for *Hajj*, yet he agreed to its transfer to the bank, there is no doubt that *Hajj* becomes obligatory on him.

Q7: Regarding offering congregational prayers at both Sacred Mosques (at Makkah and Madinah), some people go to the upper floors, and pray with the intention that they follow the imam of the congregation prayers from there although they do not see any of the rows of congregation, nor do they see the imam himself; so, is it permissible to follow an imam from there?

A: There is a problem regarding the validity of prayers performed at such a height, and what is certain in the validity of prayers applies to non-excessive heights which do not conventionally undermine the communion of the place.

Q8: Is it permissible for a pilgrim to undertake *Ihram* in Jeddah city? If it is not, what can he do since airplanes land there?

A: It is not permissible, and he has to undertake *Ihram* at one of the *Meeqats* (the stations designated for *Ihram*) such as Juhfah.

However, he can make a vow to undertake *Ihram* in his city or any other place he passes by prior to boarding the plane, so his *Ihram* will be convened and he boards the plane in such a state. But he, in this case, has to sacrifice a sheep as *Kaffarah* because of being shaded in the plane (which is one of the prohibitions of those in the state of *Ihram*).

Q9: If the Muslims belonging to other sects confirm the sighting of the new crescent, while it is not established according to us as per the Sharia – whether it is known that they erred or not – during these times when the ruler imposes his will in this regard, should one then observe the *Hajj* rites according to the established moon sighting as per our criteria, if one has a chance to do so?

A: It is not mandatory to do so, as it is sufficient to be there with them.

One who is enabled and graced by Allah Almighty to perform the *Hajj* and *Umrah* pilgrimages can refer to the books on the relevant pilgrimage rituals where the rules and disciplines are also explained.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 8, p. 65.

[ii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 66.

[iii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 68.

[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 70.

[v] *Ilal Al-Sharai'*, Vol. 2, p. 460; *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 10, p. 261.

[vi] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 10, p. 254.

[vii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 18.

[viii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 14.

[ix] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 15.

THE RULES OF FOODS AND DRINKS

Allah created mankind with the need to eat and drink, because through them both he supports his body, he sustains his existence, and he preserves his strength and energy, so he may perform his role in this life, exert his effort and perform his obligations. But a straightforward person is one who eats and drinks so he may stay alive, taking of them what meets his need – not the one whose main concern is to eat, so he lives to eat and drink out of his desire for foods and drinks, consuming of them both as much as he can, just like a tied animal which is concerned only about its feed, and like a loose animal which does nothing but goes from one pile of garbage to another. Doing so means descending to the status of animals. It harms the body, causes the heart to be cruel and distances one from Allah Almighty, who said: "O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: Eat and drink, but do not waste by excess, for Allah does not love the wasteful" (Qur'an, 7:31).

In a tradition narrated by Amr ibn Ibrahim, the latter said that he heard Abul-Hasan, (peace be upon him) say, "Had people been moderate in consuming food, their bodies would be healthy."^[i] In a tradition narrated by Salih al-Nayli, the latter quoted Imam Abu Abdullah, Ja'far ibn Muhammed al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying, "Allah hates the eating of too much food". Abu Abdullah said also: "A son of Adam has no option but to have a meal by which he maintains himself. When any of you eats, let him make a third of his stomach for food, a third for drinks and a third so he may breathe well. Do not get fat like pigs are fattened for slaughter."^[ii]

In one of his narrations, Abu Baseer quoted the Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) as saying to him, "O Abu Muhammed! ... The closest a servant of Allah can be to his Lord is when his stomach is light, and the most hated a servant of Allah can be to his Lord is when his stomach his full."^[iii]

We do not mean that one should stop enjoying the good things, diversifying what he eats and improving its quality, for Allah Almighty has created the goodness in food and drinks as well as other things, so that mankind may enjoy and benefit from them. All we wish to say is that one should not eat and drink too much, filling his stomach with them, because they have the harms referred to above. One must not be extreme in his attention to them for this is one of the contemptible animal habits, so much so that it has been said that if one is concerned mostly about filling his stomach, his worth is what comes out of it!

As such, Allah has banned certain types and conditions of foods and drinks. He does not prohibit anything arbitrarily, nor does he want for Himself what He prohibits, nor

is His desire from doing so is to harm anyone by depriving him of enjoying what he likes to enjoy. Rather, He does so for the goodness and benefit of mankind. In a tradition narrated by al-Mufaddal ibn Umar, when he asked Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about why the Almighty prohibited some things, the Imam (peace be upon him) said, "Allah, Blessed and Praised is He, did not prohibit His servants from some things and make everything else permissible for them because of His desire in what He prohibited, nor out of His needlessness of the permissible. Rather, He created everyone and He knew what is best for the maintenance of their bodies and what benefits them the most, and made these things lawful for them out of His favor and grace for their own sake, and He knew what would harm them so He forbade and prohibited these things for them..."^[iv]

A believer, especially the expatriate who is exposed in his environment to many prohibited things, must refrain from committing what is prohibited in all its types and in all cases, and he must not allow himself to commit them, in order to obey Allah Almighty Who made such prohibitions, and adhere to His limits. Another reason is the fact that there are many perils relevant to one's religion, body and psyche. What is made permissible for him is widely available, enjoyable and sufficient. It has been narrated that one whose stomach gets him to be hurled into the hellfire is distanced from Allah^[v]. Among the attributes of a believer is that he has chastity with regards to his desires for food and sex. Surely Allah Almighty is the Master of success and guidance, and He is the most Merciful.

Q1: Is it permissible for a Muslim to eat food prepared by non-Muslims, be they Christians, Jews or others?

A: The preparation of food itself by non-Muslims does not prohibit eating it; rather, eating this food becomes prohibited in three cases:

- (1) If the food itself is deemed to be prohibited, such as pork, and meat about which there are doubts whether the animal was Islamically slaughtered or not and without any valid evidence by which one can be sure of its being Islamically slaughtered.
- (2) One knows that it is *Najis*, either because he knows that it was touched by a person who is considered to be *Najis* through something wet or moist, or he knows that the food came in contact with some *Najis* utensils.
- (3) One knows that the food had become *Najis* earlier, such as the meat which was slaughtered according to the Islamic rules but then came in contact with the blood of slaughter, and he does not know whether the non-Muslim cleansed it or not, it is then deemed *Najis* and eating it is not permissible.

Q2: If a Muslim wants to eat of food, should he first examine the contents in order to make sure that the food does not have anything which is not permissible for him to consume?

A: He is permitted to eat of it without examining it unless he knows that it contains what he is not permissible to eat. He must then investigate to distinguish the permissible from the non-permissible foods.

Q3: Tables with wine served are common in some countries. What does it mean that one is prohibited from sitting at a table where there is wine? Is it the one particular gathering where there are many tables?

A: What is prohibited is one sitting at a table where wine is being drunk. If they are two tables close to each other and on one of which there is wine, one can sit at the other.

Q4: If a Muslim enters a café and starts drinking tea, then a stranger comes to drink wine at the same table, should he stop drinking his tea and leave?

A: Based on the scenario in the question, it is not obligatory to stop drinking tea or to leave the café. However, if one enters and starts drinking wine at that table, one must stand and leave that table, and he may return to sit at it after that person had finished drinking his wine.

Q5: Is a Muslim permitted to be present at gatherings where wine is served?

A: It is not permissible for him to be present in such gatherings in two cases:

- (1) If by being present there, he encourages the doing of a prohibited act;
- (2) If his non-attendance will be an expression of forbidding the wrongdoing, when the conditions that obligate the forbidding of wrongdoing are met, such as the possibility of this bearing an impact, even if it may be with regard to one who is not sinning yet, so as it may be a cause in some people being deterred from committing wrongdoing and thus minimizing transgressions.

Q6: A Muslim works here in the West in a forbidden job such as selling pork or wine, but he has no other means of making a living other than this job. Am I permitted to eat at his house if he invites me? What is the ruling if his job is just to distribute these banned items such as working as a distribution worker?

A: Yes, it is permissible to eat food at his place.

Q7: Is it permissible to drink beer on which it is written that it is alcohol-free?

A: If the absence of alcohol is due to processing it into a non-intoxicating drink through chemical processes, it is *Tahir* and it can be drunk. But if the above is done by withdrawing the alcohol after it had already been in it, such as through a distillation process, it is *Najis* and must not be drunk. If the statement refers to the barley water which by itself is alcohol-free, it is not a beer and it can be drunk.

Q8: In the Islamic countries, there is a liquid called barley water which is alcohol-free; is it *Tahir* and can it be drunk?

A: Yes, it is *Tahir* and may be drunk if it is alcohol-free to start with, or if its alcohol was lost through chemical processes. But if there was alcohol in it which was later drawn out of it through a filtration process, it is forbidden – just as we have explained in our answer to the previous question. *Fuqa*’ is *Najis* and drinking it is unlawful and it is made of barley water. However, it is said that *Fuqa*’ is beer and that the former contains a very small percentage of alcohol which causes a weak level of intoxication.

Q9: Is it sufficient for meat to be halal if it is imported from non-Muslim countries and "slaughtered in the way prescribed by Islamic law" is written on it, and is eating it permissible?

A: If the meat imported from non-Muslim countries is taken from a Muslim, and if it is probable that the Muslim had ensured that it was slaughtered according to the rules of the Islamic Sharia, it is deemed as being halal. But if it is known that that Muslim did not do so, it is regarded as being *Najis* and not halal.

Q10: Some meat producing companies in non-Muslim countries print packages on which it is written that their meat is slaughtered according to the Islamic way. Should we believe what they say? Should we believe what they say if it said on the package that it was slaughtered under the supervision of a committee sent by an Islamic country?

A: Their statement should not be believed, as well as such labeling, except if these companies themselves are Islamic or the meat was owned previously by a Muslim and it is probable that he ensured that the meat came from animals slaughtered according to Islamic rules.

Q11: The statement "slaughtered according to the Islamic way" is written on meats produced in Islamic countries by non-Muslim companies. Are we allowed to eat their meat?

A: Eating their meat products is prohibited, and the said statement does not make eating them permissible. But, if the origin of these meats is an Islamic company, their meat will be deemed to be permissible to eat.

Q12: Are we permitted to eat such meats (mentioned in the previous question) if their origin is an Islamic company in a non-Muslim country?

A: Yes, it is permissible to eat them, if it is probable that the producing company followed the rules of the Islamic Sharia in slaughtering the animals or paid due attention to these Sharia rules in such a way that it is possible that they are not processed by the mentioned company except by ensuring that the animals were slaughtered according to the laws of Sharia. But if this is not probable, they must not be eaten.

Q13: Is the meat and skin of an animal, about which it is doubted whether it was slaughtered Islamically or not – and thus it is deemed to be not slaughtered Islamically - *Tahir* or *Najis*?

A: It is regarded as being a corpse and is *Najis*.

Q14: In some non-Muslim countries, there are shops that sell "halal" meat for Muslims. If we suppose that we doubt the meat they sell being slaughtered Islamically, should we treat it as we treat what is sold at Muslims' markets so we regard it as being as being slaughtered Islamically and permissible to eat?

A: No, it will not be deemed to be halal, nor will it be deemed to be slaughtered according to Islamic law, unless the shop belongs to a Muslim and it is probable that the meat was slaughtered according to the Sharia.

Q15: Is it permissible to buy meat from a supermarket owned by a Muslim with the assumption that it is halal although the owner sells wine?

A: If the buyer finds it probable that the meat was slaughtered according to Islamic law, he can buy it from it.

Q16: If one of the People of the Book tells a Muslim that this meat is halal, and if the Muslim inquired and found out that it is indeed slaughtered according to the

Islamic way, can he rely on him again considering that the non-Muslim does not lie, without [again] inquiring about the status of such meat?

A: He must not take his word every time unless he is certain in his truthfulness, because what is required when he takes meat from a non-Muslim is the Muslim's knowledge of the animal being slaughtered Islamically

Q17: It has become customary at some large slaughterhouses, in order to facilitate the process of slaughtering livestock, to electrically stun the animal, and cows are shot in the head. This does not lead to killing the animal which is slaughtered after it and it moves its limb after its slaughter; so in such a situation is its meat halal?

A: If the blood comes out moderately in the conventional way when an animal is slaughtered, eating its meat is permissible, and this remains the case even if it is stunned or shot as mentioned above.

Q18: There are in Sweden some Arab Islamic shops that sell Danish chickens on which it is written in Arabic "slaughtered according to the Islamic way," and it is common knowledge among Muslim refugees and residents that it is halal. But when we are asked if we witnessed how they were slaughtered, we give the answer: "No, we did not see it, but we heard it from trusted persons." And then the trusted persons heard from trusted persons, and so on. Are we permitted to eat such chickens?

A: Eating the said chickens is permissible if it is probable that it was slaughtered according to the Sharia.

Q19: Companies slaughter large numbers of chickens at once. If the operator of the equipment is a Muslim, he recites the *Takbir* and mentions the Name of Allah at the time of slaughtering all the chickens at once; so, is their meat halal?

A: Reciting the Name of Allah suffices while slaughtering such a large quantity as long as the slaughtering and the operating of the machinery are conventionally simultaneous. Yes, the rest of the conditions have to be met too, such as the animal must be facing *Qibla*, the slaughtering is done under the larynx in order to cut the four jugular veins, the slaughtering is done from the front and not from the back, and all the other conditions.

It is not sufficient if the recitation of the Name of Allah is simultaneous to the operation of the machine but the slaughtering of the animal took place after this as the

machinery continued to run; nor it is sufficient in such a scenario with the repetition of the Name of Allah after the operation of the machine and simultaneous to the slaughter.

Q20: A chicken is suspended by its legs and its head is down while the front of its body faces the opposite direction of *Qibla* and the one doing the slaughtering is a Muslim facing *Qibla* and invoking the Name of Allah; can a chicken slaughtered like that be eaten or is it to be regarded as a *Najis* corpse?

A: It is, according to the way described above, a *Najis* dead meat if the person slaughtering it deliberately lets the chicken not face *Qibla* while knowing that facing *Qibla* is necessary condition. This is because what is a condition in the validity in slaughtering is that the animal being slaughtered must face *Qibla*, not the one performing the slaughter. But if he did not know about this condition, or if he made a mistake in the way to fulfill this condition, or erred about determining the direction of *Qibla*, the meat of the slaughtered animal is halal.

Q21: What is the opinion of Your Eminence about slaughtering animals using something made of steel, and is the meat of the animal thus slaughtered halal?

A: As the steel knife is made of an alloy which consists mainly of iron and the additive is in little quantity, it does not change the fact that slaughtering is done using iron as conventionally understood. Therefore using such a knife is sufficient.

Q22: What is the ruling relevant to slaughtering with the use of the common steel knife, and the percentage of non-iron material in it, as people of expertise and specialization tell us, ranges from 12% to 14%, and maybe the highest percentage reaches 25% and does not reach 30% except rarely and in a knife which is not ordinarily used?

A: Apparently, the common iron is not without a mixture of non-iron materials in varying percentages. There is no objection to slaughtering with steel if the percentage of the additive ranges between 12% and 14%, as per the answer to the previous question.

Q23: Is it permissible to slaughter with a knife made of something else other than iron, such as brass?

A: It is not permissible, while one has the ability to slaughter using iron. Yes, there is no harm in slaughtering using iron mixed with another material if what is mixed with it is little.

Q24: Is it permissible to eat food fried with oil about which it is not known whether it is vegetable or animal oil?

A: While there is doubt about its *Taharah* and *Najasah*, they can be eaten.

Q25: Is it permissible for a Muslim to eat packaged foods prepared by European companies which do not contain meats or fats?

A: Yes, it is permissible as long as one does not know that they contain prohibited foods even if such a prohibition is due to its becoming *Najis* through contact with *Najasah*.

Q26: Is it permissible to eat halal food which is steamed with the steam of meat not slaughtered in the Islamic way?

A: Yes, it is permissible unless the halal food contains visible fatty parts from the meat which is not slaughtered in the Islamic way.

Q27: Is it permissible to eat cheese, honey and oil imported from non-Muslim countries while we do not know where exactly they came from, because most of them are imported from non-Muslim countries then packaged in Muslim countries?

A: It is permissible to eat it unless one knows that it's *Najis* or that it contains what is prohibited to consume.

Q28: Some cheeses processed in non-Muslim countries contain rennet of calves and we do not know if it is taken from animals slaughtered according to the Islamic Sharia or not; so, is it permissible to eat these cheeses?

A: Yes, it is permissible if the rennet is of calves or similar animals that are permissible to eat [as opposed to pigs and other such animals which the Sharia prohibits].

Q29: Are we permitted to eat foods or drinks containing gelatin while we do not know if it is extracted from plants or animals; and if it's known to be from animals, whether it is extracted from its bones or from the tissue surrounding the bones, and then whether the animal was slaughtered in the Islamic way or not?

A: They can be eaten, unless it is known that they are extracted from tissues of an animal which is not slaughtered Islamically, or if they are extracted from an animal which is not permissible to eat.

Q30: Can the cosmetics imported from non-Muslim countries, which contain gelatin derived from animals, be regarded as having been altered into a different form, so it now is *Tahir*?

A: Gelatin is not different from its origin, and the change that occurs in it is not deemed to be the change of a substance which makes *Najis* things *Tahir*; rather, it is similar to the process of separating fatty substances by heating and boiling.

However, if the gelatin is derived from bones, it is *Tahir* because the bone is known to be *lifeless*, so it is *Tahir* even if it is taken from the corpse of a dead animal [not slaughtered Islamically].

So, it is permissible to consume if it is from an animal which is lawful to eat.

One should make sure that the bones from which the gelatin is taken is *Tahir* by washing them with water if their external parts are deemed to be *Najis* because of being in contact with meat of the corpse of an animal [which is *Najis*].

Q31: Large fishing boats throw their nets and bring out tons of fish, selling their catch at markets. It is now well known that the modern method of fishing is based on getting the fish out of the water alive. Moreover, fish that die in the water are sometimes thrown back for fear of contamination. Are we permitted to buy these fish from shops owned by some People of the Book or Muslims who do not pay due attention to this? It should also be considered that it is extremely difficult to obtain certainty that the fish in front of me have been taken from the water alive, or to find a trusted informed witness who tells me so; rather it is not practical nor is it realistic. Is there a solution for the problem of Muslims who face difficulty verifying the meats of chickens and other livestock being halal, so they highly prefer fish?

A: If the company bases its business on not marketing fish found dead in the water, and the probability of selling fish which has died in the water is because of error on their part, one should not pay attention to such probability and the fish then may be bought and eaten, especially if such probability originate from unreasonable doubts. If the probability of the fish having died in the water is high and the company may have tolerated it, eating such fish is forbidden. Yes, it is likely that the fish that dies in the water is not good for packing because it decays. So, if the fish is not decayed, this

serves as evidence to its having died outside the water, and perhaps assistance should be sought from experts for verification.

Q32: Some species of fish have very few scales, while most of their bodies do not have them; is eating such species permissible?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

Q33: Is it enough for fish to be halal if it dies inside the fishing net?

A: It is necessary that it is taken out of the water alive. It is sufficient that it is trapped in the net until the water runs out while it is alive, such that it dies in the net outside the water.

Q34: Presently, poison is often used in fishing; are these fish lawful to eat, knowing that the poison kills them in only a few minutes?

A: If it is known that the fish came out of the water dead, it is not permissible to eat it, even if it is bought from a Muslim. But if there is merely a probability [that it came out of the water already dead], and if it is bought from a Muslim, it is permissible to eat, but if it is – in this particular case – not bought from a Muslim, it is unlawful to eat.

Q35: Is it permissible to eat the halal small fish which are swallowed by a big fish brought out of the water alive?

A: Yes, it is.

Q36: Sometimes we find on a can of fish the name or picture of that fish, so we know that this fish has scales. Are we permitted to rely on the name or picture to determine the species of fish, while we know that lying about matters such as these exposes the producing company to a great deal of loss and perhaps to greater hardships?

A: The company can be believed, unless one considers it to be dishonest in such a claim. Apparently, based on the information given in the question, the mere possibility of the company lying can be disregarded.

Q37: Is it permissible to buy fish from a non-Shia Muslim while we do not know whether the fish has scales or not?

A: One has to be certain that it has scales, even if it may be through inquiring about it with the seller, as long as he is not considered to be dishonest.

Q38: Are we allowed to eat shrimps, lobsters and turtles?

A: Eating shrimps is permissible, and it is not permissible to eat lobsters and turtles.

Q39: What are the principle criteria that make the eating of meat of wild animals permissible?

A: What is prohibited is any animal that has fangs, and all predatory animals, bears, elephants, rabbits, monkeys, lizards, mice and rats. Based on an obligatory precaution, one should avoid insects – other than grasshoppers – and gerbils and hedgehogs [and porcupines]. It is best to restrict oneself in terms of eating to camels, cows, goats and sheep, domesticated or wild, as well as antelopes, deer, ibexes, roe deer, zebras, domesticated donkeys, horses and mules, although the last three are disliked to be consumed as food.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 16, p. 406.

[ii] *Ibid.*

[iii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 405.

[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 310.

[v] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 40, p. 340.

DEALING WITH THE LAWS OF NON MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Q1: What is the difference between the religious laws and the man-made laws of the land?

A: The religious laws are those that were legislated by Almighty Allah, the obedience of which results in rewards in the hereafter and disobedience is met with punishments in the hereafter.

The law of the land determines the responsibilities and the relations between the members of the society or the relations between countries. Disobedience of these laws results in legal consequences that vary based on the law broken.

Q2: Muslims – like others – may break the laws in some countries, but some components of the media enlarge this issue which could contribute to the tarnishing the image of Islam and Muslims. What is your ruling in this regard?

A: It is not fair to use some limited practices that occur in all groups of people to ruin the image of a religion or a nation. It is the responsibility of Muslims in all parts of the world to avoid what harms their religion and the Muslim nation. Every Muslim must be a positive part of society. In a narration, the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) stated: “Deal with people in such a way that when you die they would cry for your loss, and when you live they long for you.”^[ii]

Q3: What is your advice to the expatriate Muslims about the laws of the countries?

A: We urge Muslims to uphold the laws which have been imposed upon them to serve the betterment of society in all countries whether Muslims form a minority or a majority in them. A Muslim should be a positive part of the security, order and improvement of the society in which he lives.

Q4: Is one permitted to work unofficially? If the authorities come to know about it, one will be subjected to fiscal penalties and maybe other penalties.

A: The individual bears the legal responsibilities of disobeying the law. We advise everyone to observe the laws that serve the betterment of the society.

Q5: After any refugee arrives in some countries and gets residency and housing, a loan is given to him according to the size of his family. This loan must be

returned two years after the residency in one lump sum or in installments. But installment payments require payment also of interest, unlike paying it in one lump sum. One can get away with not paying the money. Is this allowed?

A: One can pay it back in a lump sum. It can also be paid in installments without intending to form a contract bound by the Sharia, but as a legal transaction only. If one decided not to pay the money back, he will bear the legal responsibility. We advise this person to uphold the laws.

Q6: There are in some countries private television companies, and they provide their services for certain fees. Is it permissible to take this service without the company's knowledge and without paying the service fee?

A: If doing so does not necessitate the usage of the company's possessions without its permission, there is no problem.

Q7: A Muslim employee in a non-Muslim company can take some of the company's items without its knowledge; is he permitted to do so?

A: Since the company employs its employees based on its trust in them with regard to its possessions, stealing its possessions is a breach of trust which is prohibited. Even if the hiring was not based on trust, a believer should rise above doing that. Actually, doing so may be prohibited because it may reflect a bad image about Islam and Muslims, and doing so may bring them negative results. A Muslim is obligated to safeguard his religion's honor and that of its followers; he must not do anything that would cause them harm. In the eleventh chapter of the Introduction, we have already stated what is beneficial in this regard, and it will be advantageous to refer to it and contemplate about it.

Q8: Every member of a family residing in some countries receives a monthly stipend according to age. Are the parents allowed to use their children's stipend while knowing that the parents' stipend alone suffices to meet the family's needs?

A: The stipends set aside for the children were paid so they would be spent on meeting their needs and to serve their interests. There is no harm if he [the head of the family] spends it in the manner for which it was intended.

Q9: What is the ruling about stealing in Western countries and the Muslims who travel to these countries - as visitors, residents or refugees - violating their laws?

A: There is no doubt at all about the prohibition of any conduct which tarnishes Islam's image or causes harm for the believers. A believer is prohibited from transgressing the wealth entrusted to him to safeguard it. Betraying anyone's trust is prohibited by Islam even if the trust belongs to a non-Muslim or to an enemy of the Prophet and his Progeny (peace be upon them).

[\[i\]](#) *Nahj Al-Balagha*, p.771.

WORK AND TRADE

Earning money and seeking sustenance are among the emphasized commendable deeds. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said, "Worship is comprised of seventy portions the best of which is seeking lawful gain." Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said, "Whoever seeks the worldly sustenance in order to be avoid asking people, to provide for his family and to be compassionate to his neighbor, he will meet Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, on the Judgment Day with a face like the full moon."^[i] Imam al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) has said, "One who seeks to make a lawful earning so he would benefit himself and his family, he is like one who performs *Jihad* in the Way of Allah."^[ii]

In a tradition narrated by al-Sukooni, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) cites his father and forefathers (peace be upon them) quoting the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying, "Great is financial prosperity as a way to help one become pious, God-fearing."^[iii] In a tradition narrated by Dhuraih, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "Great is this world [and the provisions therein] as a help to succeed in the Hereafter."^[iv] And in a tradition narrated by al-Mu'alla ibn Khunais, the latter says, "Abu Abdullah – Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) saw me being late in going to the market [to trade], so he said to me, 'Hurry to what grants you dignity!'"^[v]

It seems from many narrations that it is disliked to abandon doing so: In a tradition narrated by Hammad ibn Uthman, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) is quoted as having said, "Abandoning trade decreases one's intelligence."^[vi] In a narration of Asbat ibn Salim, the latter says, "I visited [Imam] Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who asked us about what Amr ibn Muslim was doing. I said to him, 'He is a righteous man, but he has abandoned trade.' Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said, 'This is the work of Satan,' repeating it three times and adding, 'Did he not know that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) once purchased what a caravan had brought from Syria; he paid from its profits the debts which he had owed and distributed money among his relatives?! Allah, the most Exalted One and the most Great, says, '... by men whom neither sale nor merchandise can divert from remembering Allah, nor from establishing prayers, nor from the giving of charity. Their (only) fear is of the Day when hearts and eyes will be frightened'" (Qur'an, 24:37). Storytellers say that the men [to whom the Almighty refers in this verse] were not trading. They [the storytellers] lie: these men did not allow their prayers to be delayed from their designated times. They are better than those who perform the prayers on time but do not trade."^[vii] In a tradition narrated by Muhammad ibn Muslim, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said, "I hate a man who is – or I hate for

a man to be – lazy about the affairs of his life. One who is lazy about his life's issues is lazier about those of the Hereafter."^[viii]

In a tradition narrated by Abu Baseer, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said, "Allah, the most Exalted One and the most Great, hates one to sleep too much, [or] to have too much spare time."^[ix] Traditions conveying this and the like are too many to be covered.

But one has to be on his guard about unlawful means, for the believer ought to seek help from this life to benefit him in the Hereafter, as this world is the best support for his next life, as the previous narrations mentioned, and he must not make this life a cause for losing the Hereafter.

In a tradition narrated by Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as saying the following during the Farewell Pilgrimage: "The Trusted Spirit [Gabriel] instilled in myself that nobody dies without receiving his full destined sustenance; so, fear Allah and be good as you seek it. Your delayed sustenance should not cause you to seek it by disobeying Allah, for the most Blessed and Exalted One has already divided sustenance among His creation for them to obtain it lawfully; He did not divide it to be received by unlawful means. So, whoever fears Allah and is patient, Allah will sustain him with his designated sustenance by the permissible ways. One who tears the veils of covering [by violating the law] and is hasty, taking sustenance from places which are not lawful, Allah will decrease it from his lawful sustenance and he will be held accountable for it on the Judgment Day."^[x]

Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) quotes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) as having said, "What I fear most about for my nation is the unlawful earnings, secret desires and usury."^[xi] He (peace be upon him) has also said, "One is not my follower if he unlawfully consumes what belongs to another believer."^[xii] He (peace be upon him) has also said, "The effects of whatever one gains unlawfully will [eventually] appear in his offspring."^[xiii]

In a tradition narrated by Dawood al-Sarmi, the latter says that Abul-Hassan (peace be upon him) said: "O Dawood! The unlawful does not bear fruit and if it does, Allah will not bless it for him. Whatever he spends [from this source] he will not be rewarded for it. Whatever one leaves of it behind will be his provisions on his way to hell."^[xiv] Reports conveying similar meanings are many.

So, one has to be on his guard about what is prohibited especially in these non-Muslim societies to which the expatriates are subjected. In order to avoid committing

prohibited acts, one needs continuous vigilance and caution, effort and a great deal of struggle.

One will not be able to protect himself from committing what is prohibited, be it with regard to earnings or anything else, except through learning the religion and the rules of the Sharia. So, the believers, may Allah Almighty safeguard their dignity, must express an extreme interest in doing so; they must not take things easy so that the limits of Allah Almighty may be safeguarded, His rulings be upheld, the earnings may be lawful. Al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah has said that he heard the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) saying the following as he was on the pulpit preaching: "O merchant, learn [the laws of trade] before you trade, learn before you trade, learn before you trade. By Allah! Usury in this nation is more hidden than the sounds of the ants' footsteps on rocks! Adjoin your vows with the truth; a merchant is wicked, and the wicked are in the Fire save one who takes what is due and gives what is due."^[xvi] He (peace be upon him) has also said, "One who trades without knowledge will collide headlong with usury..."^[xvii]

It is regretful to see nowadays many of practicing believers who enter into transactions and then ask about the ruling applicable to it. Thus, one finds himself in a Sharia-related problem which is difficult to resolve and to dispose of its consequences. He could have avoided this by first asking before the action, understanding the Sharia before being in such a situation. We plead to the most Praised One for success and guidance; surely He suffices us.

Q1: What is your opinion about being employed by Western governments and being a candidate for a seat in their parliament?

A: If the intention of the person in such a position is to serve the interests of the believers, then it is permissible.

Q2: Is one who has a law degree permitted to work as a lawyer in a non-Muslim country representing his clients in court according to the laws of that country?

A: No, it is not permissible unless doing so defends a believer from injustice. Apparently, it is permissible to defend a non-believer from injustice as well if the injustice is truly so according to the Sharia, not an injustice according to man-made laws.

Q3: Is it permissible for one with a law degree to be a judge in a non-Muslim country where he gives his decisions and verdicts to the people according to that country's laws?

A: It is not permissible, and he will be ruling according to laws which Allah Almighty did not reveal, something which Islam emphatically denounces.

Q4: Is it permissible for a Muslim builder or contractor to build a non-Muslim place of worship in a non-Muslim or a Muslim country? Is he permitted to repair or maintain it?

A: He is not permitted to build the said place of worship, nor is he permitted to repair or maintain it unless it is no longer a place of worship and has become a historical relic.

Q5: A Muslim buys a building not knowing that it contains a liquor store and he cannot get the tenant out, which he came to know about later:

A. Is he permitted to collect the rent for that liquor store from the tenant?

A: Yes, he is permitted to collect the rent from him.

B. If we suppose that he knew about the liquor store being in the building before buying it, is it permissible for him to buy the building while being unable to get the store's tenant out of it?

A: Yes, he is allowed to buy it.

Q6: An electrical engineer in a European country is sometimes asked to work on or repair loudspeakers and associated items, and sometimes he is asked to work in nightclubs; so, is he still permitted to repair them or set up new equipment in such places?

A: If the place is not dedicated exclusively to prohibited night clubs, but they only happen to take place in them, there is no problem with such work. But if it is dedicated exclusively for them, it is a mandatory precaution to avoid it. Yes, if he is brought a loudspeaker which is separated from the said place, so it can be made use of outside it in a lawful way, he is permitted to repair it even if he knows that its owners will take it back to that place and they will not benefit from it except in a prohibited way.

Q7: In some European countries, there are places that sell home appliances. The buyer buys their goods and may return them within two weeks from the date of purchase. Is it permissible to buy an item with the intention to benefit from it during this period of time, then returning it after that, so as the purpose of the transaction is the said benefit? Is the ruling different if the seller is a Muslim?

A: Obviously, this is contrary to the terms of purchase, and if the seller knew about the said intention, he would not agree to hand over the merchandise. Rather, he agrees to take it back if the purpose of the transaction was to buy it, and returning it is only because there is something wrong with it. He would not agree to take it back if this was the buyer's intention from the beginning.

The seller agrees to hand over the merchandise to the buyer relying on good faith. So it is not permissible to take the merchandise with such an intention if the seller is a Muslim; and it is a mandatory precaution not to do so if the seller is a non-Muslim because there is a strong possibility that this is a sort of breach of trust. If it is supposed that this does not reach the extent of prohibition, believers are encouraged to refrain from doing so to adhere to the ideal principles and to follow moral ethics.

Q8: The owner of a printing press in the West prints menus of foods and drinks of a restaurant which include pork, wine and such prohibited things. Is he permitted to do so? Is he allowed to print promotional materials for places that sell liquors or places of other prohibitions, keeping in mind that he claims that his business will be affected [negatively] if he does not print such material?

A: It is permissible to print menus of foods and drinks for a restaurant although a believer would do better to rise above doing so. As regarding printing promotional materials for unlawful things, doing so is prohibited and cannot be permitted under any circumstance.

Q9: A Muslim calligrapher is asked to inscribe a sign for advertising the drinking of wine, a dance party or for a restaurant where pork, wine or some other prohibited things are served; is he permitted to do so?

A: He is not permitted to do so in the first two scenarios and their likes which are based on promoting and encouraging the doing of something prohibited. As regarding the restaurant, it may be promoted unless it is exclusively for serving what is prohibited.

Q10: Is work permissible at shops that sell magazines with nude pictures in them? Is trading in them lawful? Is printing them permissible?

A: Printing and trading in the said magazines is prohibited if there is no considerable lawful benefit in them other than promoting what is prohibited and what causes moral degradation, as it is mostly the case.

As regarding working in shops where such magazines are sold, it is also not permissible if it involves selling them or handing them over to the buyers on behalf of the store owner. But if working there does not involve this, it is permissible, such as if one works as an accountant for the store, as a janitor or as a salesman for other things which do not include prohibited things.

Q11: What is the ruling relevant to one who works in a company, whether it is privately owned or owned by the government, and his job is to print promotional materials such as the picture of a dog on clothes or of a tiger on a wine bottle?

A: It is permissible if one works for a privately-owned company except in two situations:

(i) If working there encourages what is prohibited, such that if one refuses to do the said work it will have an effect in minimizing the committing of prohibited actions and in rejecting them; this is as opposed to where this is not the case due to the fact that there is a sufficient number of people who are undertaking this responsibly and the position of the said individual is insignificant so his refusal to do such a job will not affect the work process.

(ii) If the performance of such a person results in the insulting of the Islamic religion or of himself since he is known to belong to the Islamic faith, and his doing so will be a manifestation of him being a non-practicing Muslim or of him being lowly in such a way that he is forced to do such work which is not suitable for him as a Muslim. In the twelfth chapter of the Introduction, there is useful material in this regard, so it is good to refer to it and to act upon it.

Q12: What is the ruling regarding a Muslim worker who works at a Western restaurant as a washer of dishes which contain some prohibited drinks?

A: It is permissible with the exception of the two situations mentioned to in the answer to the previous question.

Q13: What is the ruling relevant to those who work in hotels in preparing rooms knowing that these chairs and other items are used for dancing, wine drinking and the like?

A: It is permissible with the exception of the two situations mentioned in the answer to question eleven.

Q14: What is the ruling relevant to one who works as a cashier at a gas station, since these stations sell prohibited drinks and sometimes he has to hold the bottle from the buyer and put it in a bag?

Q15: Is it permissible to work at a restaurant that serves wine if the worker does not serve the wine himself but may help clean the glasses?

A: It is permissible with the exception of the two situations referred to in the answer to the eleventh question.

Q16: Is it permissible for a Muslim to work at grocery stores in a corner of which wine is sold, but his job is only to take payments?

A: It is permissible if the buyer is a non-Muslim, and it is also permissible if he is a Muslim who is aware that money should not be paid for wine since Muslims are not permitted by the Sharia to own wine, and he still pays it willingly.

Q17: Is it permissible to work at places where meat of animals not slaughtered in accordance to Sharia, wine, different newspapers, things that are associated with gambling and the like, are sold at large supermarkets, meat plants and the like?

A: It is prohibited to sell in person gambling-related things, newspapers which promote what is prohibited, and other unlawful things with the exception of meat of animals not slaughtered in accordance to Sharia and pork: It is permissible for one to work as an agent of a non-Muslim in selling such meat to a non-Muslim. As regarding wine, it is prohibited to sell it based on mandatory precaution. Also, there is no harm in working at the said places if work does not require doing what is unlawful such as serving wine. However, if the said job causes insult to the individual or to his [Islamic] faith, it is prohibited similarly to what has already been indicated in the previous questions.

Q18: An individual buys a franchise of a famous restaurant in a non-Muslim country and offers in it goods which include meat of animals not slaughtered in accordance to Sharia. Is this permissible on the basis that he takes the said meat from the original source without intending to form a religiously recognized transaction and does not appoint his workers to sell this meat, but they undertake the invalid transactions of this meat with the customers and then he takes ownership of the money which accumulates every day or month without

intending to form a religiously recognized transaction, especially since the sum is deposited at his bank account. Does this make it permissible to buy the said restaurant? What is the ruling if the main item sold at it is the said meat? Is it still permissible to buy the restaurant as it is?

A: Buying the said franchise by itself is not prohibited, nor is taking the said meat without intending to form a religiously recognized transaction. But making it available to those who eat it while he is its owner violates the obligatory precaution. Not appointing the workers to sell this meat on his behalf is not factual because he hires them to serve the customers and to give them what they want, including this meat. If the workers fall short of doing so, he will hold them accountable or he may fire them; so, how can he not then be appointing them to act on his behalf?!

Q19: Is it permissible to serve meat of animals not slaughtered in accordance to Sharia to those who believe it to be permissible to eat? Is it permissible to make it available to them? Is it permissible to receive money from a non-Muslim or [even] from a Muslim, in return for surrendering one's right over the item – since the Muslim is not recognized by the Sharia as an owner of meat of animals not slaughtered in accordance to Sharia, rather he merely has the right of possession – or in return for making it available to him?

A: Apparently, a Muslim serving it by itself is permissible except if doing so results in weakening Islam or Muslims or it promotes what is prohibited, so as one who does it will be promoting or encouraging committing it, or abandoning it will result in prohibiting the doing of what is wrong even if it may be for one who is not directly involved in actually doing it.

As regarding money received in exchange for authority over it, it is permissible, whether it is taken from a Muslim or a non-Muslim. However, based on mandatory precaution dealing in the way stated above by a Muslim is not sound if the purpose behind taking it is to use it for what is prohibited, such as to consume the non-halal meat. At the same time placing it under the person's authority is prohibited based on compulsory precaution. It is then that the money taken would be unlawful, unless one who pays it is a non-believer so the money becomes lawful due to the legality of the transaction according to him.

Q20: In the same previous supposition: Is it permissible if the money is taken from a non-Muslim without intending to form a religiously recognized transaction, rather than that of compensation in return for lifting the right of possession?

A: There is no problem with taking the money from a non-Muslim. The problem is in granting him authority over the non-halal meat by a Muslim that is not recognized as an owner of it.

Q21: Some believers work in shops where wine and pork are sold, that is, they contain some lawful products and some unlawful products. What is the ruling relevant to the wages they receive? Are they lawful or not? Is there a difference in the ruling between the employee's wages and the shop owner's income in this regard?

A: The wages they receive are lawful for them, unless a portion of it is specifically received in return for doing something prohibited – as referred to in the answer to the previous question – then this portion will then be unlawful. Hiring someone to work in the shop without specifying the type of work he will be required to do, while the shop contains some prohibited duties, this does not prohibit receipt of any wages. However, the person employed is not permitted to do the prohibited act on his own accord. This is in regards to the employee.

As regarding the owner of the shop, it is unlawful for him to provide in his shop what is prohibited, and whatever money he receives in lieu of them is unlawful.

Q22: Someone works at a restaurant which serves non halal meat to non-Muslims and he serves pork to non-Muslims as well; is this allowed? In the case of his refusal to serve this food, he will be subjected to dismissal from the restaurant.

A: The said type of work is by itself permissible, but it may not be so if it is a manifestation of a Muslim taking his religion and dignity lightly especially when it comes to pork if he is known to be a Muslim. In any case, this is not good. Allah, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, is the One Who has secured the sustenance of everyone and everything: "... He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Him (Allah), and He provides for him from (sources) which he can never imagine" (Qur'an, 65:2-3). It has already been stated in answers to some past questions, and in several places in the Introduction, what is useful in this regard.

Q23: A refugee in Switzerland has a specific job which is to transport empty bottles which used to be filled with wine and take them outside the place of business. Is this permissible?

A: The said work is by itself permissible, but if he is able to leave it, it will be better.

Q24: Someone works at a car garage for a boat which is a floating casino frequented by individuals who gamble and do other prohibited things. Is this type of work allowed in Islam? Are the wages permissible?

A: Working in the garage to look after the car is permissible and so are the wages received for doing so. The owner of the car, after having left it at the garage, going and doing prohibited things on board the ship does not necessitate the labeling of the work at the garage as prohibited, nor are the wages for such work unlawful.

Q25: Is a Muslim permitted to work at a slaughterhouse for pigs, slaughtering them in exchange for a wage?

A: Apparently, this is permissible in itself. However, it may be prohibited due to other factors, such as this will weaken himself or weaken his religion, similarly to what has been stated above.

Q26: Is it permissible for the Muslim owner of a business to employ non-Muslims to work for him while there are Muslims who need work?

A: Yes, it is permissible for him, if there are qualifications in non-Muslims that are not present in Muslims, although it would be better for him to hire Muslims whenever possible. But if this is based on his lack of care for his believing brothers, this by itself is unlawful.

Q27: Some individuals buy clothes in wholesale from merchants. When they open the merchandise to sell it, they find some clothes having nude pictures on them.

A. Is the sale of these clothes permissible?

A: Their sale is permissible unless it results in promoting corruption.

B. In case, their sale is not permissible, this will result in a financial harm for them, and so is it permissible if they are used for purposes other than such sale, for example?

A: Yes, it is permissible if it does not result in corruption or in the promotion thereof.

C. Is buying this bulk clothes permissible while the buyer does not know their contents in detail?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

Q28: Some items enter some countries after being smuggled from another country, and they are foodstuffs that are sold here cheaper. Is it permissible for Muslims who own grocery stores to buy these items to sell them?

A: This is related to the violation of the law of the land and does not relate to the religious law.

Q29: Is it permissible to sell items associated with gambling and night clubs, wines and other *Najis* things to some non-Muslims, People of the Book, atheists and the like who see them as being lawful?

A: All of this is prohibited and in all cases.

Q30: I own a business for videotaping wedding parties, and I have foreign photographers, Muslims and non-Muslims. Am I permitted to charge a fee for videotaping a wedding some activities of which include a dance during which men stand raising swords and repeating some poems while drums are beaten?

A: The videotaping by itself is permissible unless it necessitates something prohibited such as listening to unlawful music; it then becomes impermissible.

Q31: Is buying guard dogs permissible? Is it permissible to trade in them? Is it permissible to lease them?

A: Buying and selling them are not permissible, but they can be leased. However, the money can be paid, not as their price but in order to forfeit their ownership so the one who pays the money takes ownership of them; the same can be said if their original owner did not want them and turned away from them.

Q32: Is it lawful to sell dogs such as guard or hunting dogs, meat of animals that are not slaughtered according to the Islamic Sharia and pork to non-Muslims who make use of them?

A: None of these are lawful to sell to Muslims or to others except for the hunting dogs which may be sold to them. However, it is permissible to sell meat of lawfully slaughtered animal that is mixed with the meat of an animal that is not slaughtered in accordance to the Sharia if they were not distinguishable for the one who deems the latter as permissible.

Q33: What is the ruling regarding fishing for catfish and selling them to those who regard eating it as lawful, or if there is a lawful benefit out of it such as using it as animal feed for cattle or for fertilization and the like?

A: It is not permissible to sell it to those who regard it as lawful, but if there is a permissible considerable benefit in it, such as fertilization or animal feed, it is then permissible to sell it to everybody.

Q34: Are chickens and meats imported from non-Muslim countries lawful to sell to those who regard them as lawful such as Christians, Muslims who differ from us in their jurisprudence and the like? Does the ruling also cover pork and wine?

A: The sale of these things and other prohibited items is not permissible to those who regard them as being lawful, let alone those who do not.

Q35: Is it permissible to sell books of misguidance to those who themselves are originally misguided?

A: No, this is not permissible if their sale and purchase are based on recognizing and strengthening the entity of misguidance, as is the most likely the case. But if this is not the case, there is no harm in it, such as if the sale and purchase are for the purpose of studying the negativities of the said books and the contradictions and superstitions in them.

Q36: Can a Muslim sell copies of the Holy Qur'an or give them as gifts to non-Muslims during these times when some people like to learn about the Holy Qur'an?

A: Yes, this is permissible if the Holy Qur'an is not exposed to disrespect.

Q37: Is it permissible to sell some religious books if this results in guiding people, or is it not permissible since it is considered to be trading of obligatory guidance, as some people think?

A: Their sale is permissible, and the notion referred to is groundless.

Q38: As the market normalizes in its sales and purchases, is it permissible to charge a profit that is double the price of purchase or more? And what is the limit of exorbitant profit?

A: Yes, it is permissible, but it is better to lower the profit margin.

Q39: The law in some countries grants the citizen, within certain terms, the right to bring in non-citizen through work visas. The sponsoring citizen pays the relevant fees and takes upon himself the responsibility of the workers. He can then sell this visa to another citizen when he no longer needs the workers:

A. Is the money received from selling this visa permissible, and what is the justification from the jurisprudential standpoint?

B. Is it permissible to take a fee or a sum of money from the workers in exchange for bringing them in to the country and arranging for them what is known as a "free visa" so they may do any free work while they pay the citizen a fee or a monthly sum or any other agreement?

A: There is no harm in doing so since it is a sort of imbursement in exchange for the effort exerted to get the work visa and bearing its responsibility, or for benefiting from the visa after obtaining it and bearing its responsibility.

Q40: What is the ruling relevant to life, health and other types of insurance?

A: Such a transaction is permissible if it is based on an agreement that the insurance policy holder pays a particular amount of money in an exchange for the insurer to pay for loss and damage as stipulated in the contract.

Q41: Is it permissible to purchase treasury bonds from the government-owned national bank?

A: It is permissible to do so but with applying the law of "*Majhool Al-Malik*" - as previously explained in the answer to the eighth question of the *Khums* chapter – if the money passed through Muslim hands. If it did not pass through their hands, then it can be taken and owned.

Q42: A Muslim in the West can open different types of bank accounts with a choice of opening ones with higher interest rates. Is he allowed to do so considering that he intentionally seeks to benefit himself?

A: It is permissible to open an account in order to receive the interest if the bank is privately owned and no Muslim is a shareholder in its capital, or if it is government-owned. But in the latter case, one must apply the law of "*Majhool Al-Malik*" to the money taken from it, whether the withdrawals are from the capital deposited in the account or the interests accumulated on it.

Q43: Is it permissible to ask for interest from non-Muslim banks?

A: We permit the asking for the bank-set interest based on what the bank agreed to give in the contract that exists between the two parties.

[Rather than depositing money in such banks], it would be good if Muslim-owned banks understood the religious rulings and announced to the people who deposit in their banks that the extra money that the banks distribute is lawful since they are given as gifts, not as interest. However this gift should not be part of the agreement of lending – as depositing money with a bank is actually lending money to it; he should similarly intend to lend the bank the deposited money without the condition of interest.

Q44: Is it lawful to place funds at interest-based banks in the West keeping in mind that they [the banks] invest the money in the purchase or in making some prohibited things, weapons, and the like?

A: Yes, it is permissible if it does not consist of what encourages the committing of prohibited things.

Q45: Is a Muslim permitted to cooperate with someone else in the use of his name, benefiting from doing so in buying shares in banks, companies, etc. in exchange for a sum of money agreed upon by both parties?

A: Yes, it is permissible. However, if the Sharia recognizes the ownership of the other party of the transactions, then the ruling is that a contract is to be formed between the latter and the person whose name is used rather than the person using his name. After completing the transaction, the owner of the name passes the money over to the person using his name.

But, if the other party to the transaction as mentioned above becomes familiar with the status and accepts to deal directly with the person using the name, there is no problem with this.

Q46: Do actual money bills, such as dollars or pounds or the like, by themselves have financial value? Or is their value measured according to their buying power? If they have a value by themselves, is this ruling applicable to all currencies, including unstable ones?

A: Yes, they have by themselves their financial value, including unstable currencies. The unstable currencies are not measured by their buying power or by foreign currencies; if one owes a sum of money in a stable or unstable currency, his debt is

not affected by the change in the purchasing power of the currency, nor by the fluctuation in the value of that currency compared with another.

Q47: Is paying with a check equivalent to paying in cash, so the payer's responsibility is cleared by merely handing it over to the seller?

A: If the payer is in debt to the recipient and the payment by check is based on shifting his debt to the bank, he is cleared of any responsibility even if the debt is not physically received.

However, if the payment by the check is not based on shifting the debt, but on merely authorizing another entity to receive the debt from the payer's account, the responsibility is not cleared until the money is received or the sum is transferred from the bank account which belongs to the check payer to that of the recipient. Apparently, this kind of transaction falls under the second scenario.

All of this applies to a privately owned bank. But if the bank is government-owned, there must be an agreement between the two parties that the burden of the payer's debt is cleared once the check is cleared and the amount has reached his account. If the recipient decided to cash the check or withdraw any amount from such a bank he should apply the law of "*Majhool Al-Malik*" to it as previously explained.

Q48: The tax in some countries is not levied directly from people. Rather, it is imposed on the sellers themselves. The seller adds the tax percentage to the prices of the merchandise and passes the tax received to the government; what is the ruling of the Sharia regarding these sellers being tax collectors on behalf of the government, considering that this is a general law which covers all types of goods and services?

A: If the seller is not legally obligated to take the tax from the buyer, he is not allowed to do so. But if he is legally obligated to do it to the extent that he cannot sell without so doing, it will then be lawful for him in order to avoid harm, although the collected tax is still owned by the payer but the seller is not responsible for it.

Q49: In the west, there are certain new trade methods called pyramid schemes. Briefly, it involves a seller (a company or its agent) and the customer, and the goods being sold are permissible such as jewelry, gold coins, cosmetics, hygiene materials or the like. They are sold and bought, and there are commissions paid by the company (or its agent) according to certain terms and conditions for a network of customers who are connected to each other. Both parties, the seller

and the buyer, are in agreement. Now, is this sale, purchase and process of earning commissions in this way accepted by the Sharia?

A: Apparently, such dealing in all its ways is permissible and there are no Sharia-imposed restrictions.

Q50: Some students in the West, who wish to continue their university studies, get a loan from the government with a fixed interest. Without this loan, they cannot, or it is very difficult for them to, continue their studies. What is the ruling regarding taking this loan with interest?

A: Taking such a loan in itself is not allowed because it is an interest-based loan. But since the lender is the government, this can be validated and legitimized by taking the amount without intending to form a Sharia- recognized transaction.

Q51: Nowadays, credit cards have become quite widespread. A bank may give this card to its customer for an annual fee in exchange for putting at his disposal a large sum of money from which he can use as a loan whenever he wishes provided that he pays it off within a month. Interest will be charged on any late payments. What is the ruling regarding dealing with these cards and the interest relevant to them?

A: The payment of the annual fee by itself is permissible because it is not an interest on the loan but a charge in exchange for his right to borrow the sum put at his disposal, and this is not prohibited. What is prohibited is a loan that involves interest such as in this case, since the usage of this card is offered with a condition that interest is payable for late payments. However, the money can be taken and owned without the intention of forming a religiously recognized transaction. Paying back this amount with the interest will be to avoid harm resulting from non-payment.

Q52: Some companies give someone a store credit card. He has the right to buy with it some items from the same company but with interests which may reach 30% or more; is this regarded as usury?

A: This is permissible and it is not considered as usury because usury is taking interest on a loan. The question supposes the price increases from the beginning; so, it is similar to increasing the price in the case of delaying payment; in fact it is the same thing. This applies to buying from stores owned by the company that issues the card.

Q53: There is here in the West a way to buy homes known as mortgages. A bank lends its customer a loan to buy a house provided he pays it back in installments

with interest imposed by the bank. The loan is secured on the house so the bank has the right to take it, sell it and get its money back from its value if the buyer defaults on paying the installments. So, what is the ruling about buying homes through this method?

A: There is no objection to the buying of the house itself, but the problem lies in the loan as explained above: What has already been stated in answering the previous questions apply to it. This is so if the bank is owned by a government or a private non-Muslim entity. But if the bank is privately owned by Muslims, there is no possibility for the permissibility of such a transaction.

Q54: In the situations where the mortgage method is not lawful, can there be an agreement made with the bank such that the bank buys the house, then the customer buys it from the bank for a higher price where the bank's profit is equivalent to that same interest, on the condition that the amount is paid in installments? Is this lawful?

A: Yes, there can be such an agreement made with the bank in this way. But if the seller of the house is a Muslim and the bank buying it from him is government-owned, then the transaction is not recognized by the Sharia. Therefore, the buyer, in this case, must seek the agreement of the original seller to take ownership of the house.

Q55: Is it permissible to invest money in companies among the products of which are wines, with the inability for one to separate his invested money from that of others?

A: No, it is not permissible.

Q56: Thousands of people own shares in a shareholding company. If this company owns a bank, what is the ruling regarding dealing with this bank? Are its monies unlawful, knowing that it deals in usury and some of those who own shares in the company are Muslims?

A: The bank's ownership of the money is recognized by the Sharia, because some of the transactions which it undertakes and some of the money at its disposal being unlawful due to such transactions does not necessitate the illegitimacy of the rest of its money, according to the Sharia, after it used to be at the hands of Muslims.

Q57: We work in a company that pays financial incentives to its employees from the total profits accrued from a group of projects which the company

implements. If one of these projects is alcohol production, and a portion of the incentives we receive comes from this project:

A. What is the ruling regarding the financial incentives which I receive from this company keeping in mind that I am not participating in the project which produces alcohol?

A: Receipt of the said incentives is permissible but only after receiving them on our behalf so they will belong to us according to our own intention, then you can take them as our gift to you.

B. What is the ruling regarding the individual who participates in implementing this project that produces alcohol if he has no way of avoiding having to work in it?

A: The sale of alcohol and all intoxicants, though it is absolutely forbidden and taking proceeds from selling it is likewise prohibited, its production is prohibited only if it is for the purpose of drinking it. But if it is for some other purposes, it is allowed. Therefore if the purpose of the production of alcohol in this case was for drinking then such production is prohibited, otherwise it is not. Producing it after this stage and preparing it for consumption is prohibited.

Q58: In some contest television programs, they ask questions to the viewers, and the viewers participate by calling and submitting their answers. When the correct answers are many, they resort to drawing lots and the winners receive prizes. The contestant loses only the cost for the telephone call. Are we permitted to participate through this method and is the prize money permissible or not? What is the Sharia ruling in regards to *Khums* and other matters?

A: There is no harm in participating in the said contest, and the money won from it is lawful and *Khums* is not obligatory unless it or some of it remains unspent when the *Khums* year ends, as is the case with all other profits of the said year.

Q59: There is a popular game in many countries called the Lottery. A company prints tickets with a list of numbers on it and sells each ticket for a small price. The participant in the game buys this ticket, choosing a certain amount of numbers from the list, with the condition that if the selected numbers match the numbers drawn in a lot by the company, the latter will give the winning participant a prize. Is it lawful for a Muslim to buy such a ticket?

A: Participation in this transaction through buying the ticket is permissible.

Q60: What is the ruling about buying the said tickets if some or all of their revenues is spent for homosexuals?

A: One is prohibited from participating in the game with the assumption that some of its profits will be spent on homosexuals in order to encourage and support this great abomination, unless such spending is not official or made public in such a way that participation will not promote it.

Q61: Is it permissible for a Muslim to ask a non-Muslim to buy a lottery ticket on his behalf with the intention that he may win its prize?

A: There is no difference between buying it himself and asking someone else to buy it for him, whether he asks a Muslim or not. The criterion in the legality or prohibition is based on what we have mentioned above.

Q62: Is it permissible to buy honey, for example, with which there is a lottery ticket, with the intention to win its prize?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

[i] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 12, p. 11.

[ii] *Ibid.*

[iii] *Ibid.*

[iv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 16.

[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 3.

[vi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 5.

[vii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 6.

[viii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 37.

[ix] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 36.

[x] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 37.

[xi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 52.

[xii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 53.

[xiii] *Ibid.*

[xiv] *Ibid.*

[xv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 282.

[xvi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, p. 283.

COMPUTERS AND INTERNET

Q1: We ask Your Eminence about the religious rulings about computers, since dealing with the computer programs is widespread. Many non-Muslim companies that produce them prohibit their exchange except with certain guidelines that those companies specify. However, there is a way to duplicate these programs and even operating systems like “Windows” and the like. Some people copy them into a non-original disk and sell them at reasonable prices without the permission of the production companies. The said companies consider this action as stealing the programs and violating the copyrights.

The questions about this are the following:

(A) For the person who deals with these international companies directly, is this condition considered religiously binding?

A: Apparently the mentioned condition is a religious obligation, since it is a kind of covenant. Verses and traditions confirm the binding nature of the covenant. Almighty Allah said: “And fulfill the covenant; verily the covenant shall be questioned about”. (Qur'an, 17:34). In the tradition narrated by Hussain bin Mus'ab that Imam al Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: "Three (things) have no excuse: returning the trust to the duteous and the dissolute, fulfilling the covenant to the duteous and the dissolute and to be dutiful to one's parents whether they were duteous or dissolute."ⁱⁱ Similar in meaning to this tradition is the tradition narrated by Mus'ab bin 'Ambasa. However, if the companies themselves broke the covenant by not following some of the conditions, then this condition is not binding anymore.

If the mentioned prohibition was not a condition during the transaction, then it would not be binding from the beginning.

(B) Is it considered a binding duty on the person that bought the original copy not to duplicate it in the following cases:

(i): There was a specific condition to that effect.

(ii): There was a general prohibition but not a particular one directed to the person whom they dealt with.

(iii): There was an oral warning but not by the original company.

(iv): There was an understanding in the policies of the programming and production companies.

(v): There was none of the above and a prohibition was not conveyed.

A: It is obligatory not to duplicate it if the mentioned prohibition was a condition, whether explicit or implied, during the transaction in all the mentioned scenarios. Otherwise, it is not obligatory to bind oneself to the said conditions.

(C)What are the rulings for all the previous cases based on duplicating from the non-original copy?

A: It is prohibited to duplicate from the non-original copy if this was part of a condition in the transaction of the original copy, but this prohibition is limited to the person who formed the transaction. Therefore, he is not allowed to let others do so. It is not prohibited to duplicate from the non-original copy if it was done without being allowed by the person who formed the original transaction.

(D) Based on the fact that a person obtained the original program or the non-original copy, is he obligated by the Sharia to find out the source of the programs or the way they were obtained before using them, although these companies sometimes advise their consumers to check the source and sometimes oblige them to do so. Is usage of such products prohibited assuming that the source is unknown? What is the ruling if the person knows that the production company does not accept such usage? It is prohibited to use them?

A: It is not prohibited and the person does not have to check the source.

(E) All these questions were based on the fact that the companies were owned by non-Muslims. Now, assuming that the programs – whether they were computer operating systems or other kinds – were produced by companies owned by Muslims, Shias or even if the company is under the supervision of one of our scholars (may Allah protect them). The question is: what are the rulings in all the mentioned cases in the previous questions about Muslim owned companies?

A: There is no difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in these cases in all the previous rulings.

(F) If Shia-owned companies are generally satisfied regarding the usage and reproduction of their products but without declaring it, is it allowed? It is noticeable that some of the reproducers are merchandising and making profits

from trading with non-original copies without giving away some of the profits to the production or programming companies or establishments. What is the ruling if we are not certain that satisfaction existed?

A: If they were satisfied, there is no prohibition to reproduce or trade.

(G) If there are negative effects, due to duplication, on the program's efficiency or its ability in such a way that the company's reputation is tarnished, or if it affects the essentials of the program's quality as a product, what is the ruling?

A: This does not prohibit the merchandising or the usage if it was after informing the owners of the company and getting their approval. If it was without their approval, then it is only unlawful for the person who accepted the condition of not duplicating. So he is not allowed to reproduce or allow others to do so. There is no prohibition for others, even with the existence of such a condition.

Q2: Some Shia establishments produced computer programs comprising of books to make it easier for the researchers to benefit from them. They wrote a sentence on the program stating that it is not allowed to duplicate the program or reproduce it.

- (A) Is it prohibited to copy the program?**
- (B) Is it prohibited to give it to someone who wants to copy it?**
- (C) What is the ruling in both cases if the establishment was not Shia?**

A: If this was actually a condition in the contract of the sale or the gift, then it is prohibited for the buyer or the gift receiver to copy the program or permit others and make it accessible for them to do so, as per the mentioned condition. This ruling does not differ between Shia establishment and others since the mentioned condition is a covenant that should be binding to everyone.

If this was not a condition in the contract but to express the legal copyright laws of the country, then reproduction is not prohibited by the Sharia, but one will bear the legal responsibility if violating them.

Q3: What is the religious principle law regarding what is permitted and prohibited in visiting websites on the internet? As their aims and what is being presented vary; some of them are cultural and educational material that strengthens the religion and similar subjects; others are for entertainment and the like, while some others consist of debauchery and slandering scholars and the right path.

A: It is permissible to visit all websites except in two cases:

(i) When learning what is being presented on the internet results in committing the forbidden, like when the presented material leads to misguidance or debauchery such that the viewer is affected by it and may react to it. If it was feared that this is happening, then it is rationally prohibited to proceed in visiting them, as avoiding them prevents probable harm.

(ii) If visiting the site is considered as encouragement of falsehood or the forbidden and spreading them, like if:

(a) the person has social rank or respect - even within a small group of people - in such a way that visiting such websites encourages others to do so, who might commit sins because of such visits; or

(b) if the person's visit would be a reason for an increase in the importance of such a website and its esteem or the esteem of the launchers of the website, even by merely increasing traffic; or

(c) if the avoidance of the person would be considered as forbidding of evil with respect to the website, its sponsor and with respect to other websites or others who visit the sites.

Visiting a website in other than these two cases is not prohibited by itself since it is not prohibited to learn about falsehood, the forbidden or any other material.

Q4: What is the religious principle ruling about dialogue over the Internet? Such dialogue may be with people who are injurious to the followers of the Infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), whether their harm is by deliberate insult to them, or by creating doubts in the dignity of their great scholars such as al-Tusi and al Kulayni, and the like.

A: There is no doubt that the dialogue with people from which good is expected is recommended. It might even be mandatory since it is promoting the truth and raising its esteem, or defending it and preventing the attacks of the offenders against it.

The dialogue with one from which good is not expected is not prohibited by itself; the fear is that it could cause religious obstacles such as

(i) Increasing the propagation of falsehood as a reaction to conducting the dialogue.

(ii) Encouraging the site and increasing its esteem – where such dialogue takes place through websites – even by criticizing it, since having dialogue with them might be the reason for them to feel that the website is so important that the adversary needs to criticize it and try to refute it. It is not the same if they were ignored since this might make them feel their insignificance in such a way that the adversary does not see them worth criticizing or having a dialogue with. This is similar to what the Almighty said: “And when they hear any vain talk, they withdraw from it, and they say: For us shall be our deeds, and for you shall be your deeds, peace be on you, we don’t desire the ignorant people” (Qur'an, 28:55).

This might make them feel disappointed and it may be the reason for the decrease in their extremism. This is what we recommend usually with respect to people that disfigure the truth with stubbornness and determination outside the borders of logic and common sense.

Q5: Is it permissible for a person to teach another how to use chat programs and websites if they are commonly used by sinners for unlawful purposes like presenting debauchery by words, pictures, exchange of telephone numbers and other kinds of promiscuity? What if the case is that one is sure that the person he is going to teach is dishonest?

A: Teaching by itself is not prohibited; however it is forbidden for other reasons like encouraging and propagating promiscuity. It is then a precaution not to teach, or even to avoid visiting the site and chatting in it. It might be obligatory to avoid it if it serves to forbid the wrong-doing.

Q6: What is the religious ruling regarding participating in internet chatting? What is the ruling regarding listening or seeing forbidden things between the chatters? What if he was subjected to be sworn at, insulted or similar things whether he was known or whether he was anonymous by using nicknames? What is the religious principle for what is allowed and what is forbidden? What kind of participation would be allowed with those kinds of people?

A: Listening or seeing such things by themselves is not prohibited. They might be forbidden for other reasons like encouraging and propagating wrong-doing if the person’s visit would result in that and also if it causes sexual excitation.

It is allowed to answer the swearing and insults that is equal in proportion without the usage of obscene words. It is better for the believer to walk away from this as Almighty Allah disciplined them when He says: “And when they hear any vain talk, they withdraw from it, and they say: For us shall be our deeds, and for you shall be

your deeds, peace be on you, we do not desire the ignorant people” (Qur'an, 28:55). Or one should respond in the best way as Almighty Allah said: “And the good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel though (evil) with what is the best, when lo! He between whom and thee was enmity, shall be as though he were a warm friend and none are granted it but those who are steadfast, and none are granted it but the owners of great happiness. And if an enticement from Satan entices you, then seek refuge in Allah; verily, he is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing” (Qur'an, 41:34-36).

Q7: What is the ruling of conducting transactions through the internet using banking cards?

A: Performing transactions through such means is valid if other conditions are met, since the mentioned connection is sufficient to form the contract. Therefore, this type of transaction falls under the general laws of validity of contracts making it binding on all parties concerned.

Q8: What is the religious ruling in regards to forming marriage contracts over the internet?

A: It would not be sufficient when forming marriage contracts through the internet, since verbal pronunciation is a condition in them, in such a way that the acceptance (of the man) is based on the offer (of the woman) and this cannot be achieved through such means. It would be sufficient and the contract is valid if the dialogue was live and verbal between the two sides, like a telephone conversation.

Q9: What is the ruling of representing others and mediating between them in transactions over the internet? Nowadays, the individual can propose to one side and link him with the other side and deserve to charge a commission, even if only one side knows that the individual was mediating. Similar kinds of mediation are there throughout the internet. What is the ruling of the financial profit that can be generated this way?

A: There is nothing wrong with all of this and money can be charged in return for this work after agreement with the intended party.

As for the party that does not know, it is not permissible to charge him except if the said party obligated himself to pay whoever finds and connects him to another party of the transaction through the internet, as this is a form of unilateral contracts. Taking money from him in such a case is permissible due to his mentioned obligation.

Q10: What is the ruling on earning money by surfing the internet where the individual creates an account and certain amount of money is deposited in it for each visit he makes to certain websites?

A: Nothing is wrong by taking the money if visiting the particular page is allowed and if there is no religious obstacle against this act – like the propagation of falsehood – whether the money is paid in lieu of visiting the site or like a gift of encouragement.

If visiting the site is forbidden, then taking the money is not allowed if it was in lieu of such a visit since it is would be taking money falsely. However, it is allowed if it was as a gift or prize. However, it might be allowed to take the money regardless if the recipient does not intend to form a religiously recognized transaction when the Sharia does not recognize the ownership of the other party. The same thing can be said if the payer's ownership is recognized but his creed obligated him to pay the money.

Q11: Is it obligatory for the individual to respond to fallacies posted on the internet especially if they were false accusations against Almighty Allah, the Messenger, the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) or our noble scholars for the sake of decreasing the esteem of truth and its people?

A: There are no specific rules regarding the obligation of responding to fallacies posted on the internet, as the same rules apply with regards to every fallacy against the truth and in any media.

There is no proof for the obligation to confront every fallacy and respond to it. The most that can be said is that the necessity to refute it depends on if it was strong enough to be difficult to answer and was so important that it is going to harm and weaken the religion. Since answering it would protect the religion, it is necessary to do so, as it is a kind of *Jihad*, which is *Wajib Kifai* (which refers to an obligation upon all aware Muslims but if some of them undertake it, the rest will no longer bear the religious responsibility).

If it does not reach this level of importance, responding to it is a sort of propagation and service for the religion, and it is undoubtedly recommended, but there is no way to consider it obligatory. The aforementioned details are about the necessity to explain and respond to fallacies initially even without being asked about it. It is so even if the truth is unknown to the individual if he could learn about it in order to explain it to others. However, if the individual was asked about a religious truth that he knows and there is no obstacle or embarrassment to explain it, then it should absolutely be

explained, even if it was not very important, since it is prohibited to hide religious knowledge.

Q12: If the individual was asked about addresses to websites that may serve the religious interests of those who asked, such as saving them from committing sins and answering claimed fallacies, and he knows if they – especially this particular group of believers – were not answered, they would definitely be subject to sinning and the like, can he neglect guiding them to the websites?

A: What appears to be the question is the request of a group of believers to learn how to reach websites on the internet that are beneficial to their religion, help responding to fallacies, explaining truths, reminding about Almighty Allah, approximating to Him and similar aims.

Apparently answering and guiding them is religiously much recommended to whoever can do so, as it is answering the need of a believer and especially this kind of need. It is feared that not explaining would lead to Allah's abandonment of the individual who was asked because such is considered as belittling the response to the believer's need when he is able to do so.

It is obligatory to pass the requested information when it is feared that not doing so and leaving the believers in their ignorance would allow the spreader of falsehood to take advantage of them and misguide them, thus supporting falsehood in a way that harms the religion and weakens it.

Q13: What are the religious rules in regards to protecting the believers and their webpages on the internet? For example, if I know that a believer is subjected to disclosure of his personal information and the like by the enemies of the sect of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) or subjected to disclosure of his personal matters. When I have sure knowledge of this, do I have to inform him or not? Also, do I have to inform the website's administrators or owners that someone is intending to destroy the website or steal the information of its visitors? Would the answer differ if the matter is personal or related to the prestige of the truth sect and similar cases?

A: There is no doubt that this is religiously highly recommended, since it is related in some religious texts that the believer is a brother of a believer and he is his eyes, his mirror and his guide, and it is among his responsibilities to defend him if he is not present.^[iii] But this duty does not reach the level of obligation.

Of course, if the harm is greater, it might be necessary to warn him about it. This right should not be neglected if it was generally easy to fulfill, since it is a part of the brotherhood of faith.

If not doing this is considered neglecting the affairs of the believers and not paying attention to them, then it is prohibited, because the religious texts indicate the necessity of paying attention to the issues of Muslims and that whoever is not paying attention to their issues is not one of themⁱⁱⁱⁱ.

This is more emphasized if the matter is related to the Shia sect in particular in such a way that it is considered as protecting it from a considerable harm.

Q14: What is the ruling regarding creating computer viruses whether the creator will use it or not but they are subject to possible usage by others? What about the creation of spy software for the person to use against others, or subject to be used by others?

A: Manufacturing viruses is not prohibited by itself. What is prohibited is using them to harm a Muslim. The same is the case when allowing others to use them for this purpose, which is undoubtedly prohibited.

If it is merely possible for others to use the viruses to harm Muslims without allowing them to do so, then this does not make creating and saving them unlawful. This is similar to manufacturing the whip while it is possible that it might be used to whip a Muslim with.

The same thing is said regarding allowing their usage without knowing for sure that any harm will come to a Muslim; it is similar to selling the whip to someone who might use it to harm a Muslim, because it was not intended to be used for any wrongdoing in all the previous cases.

As for the personal spying programs, if the question is referring to spy programs that are used to look into someone's confidential matters and behavior which he conceals and does not want others to know about, then the prohibition to spy on believers would also apply to whatever is related to him including his confidential information.

And if the question is referring to decoding and hacking the websites in order to obtain its scientific or cultural information, then it is not prohibited since it is not considered spying. There is no religious right for the person to keep such information to himself so no one can access them without his permission. However, if this action involves the usage of others' equipment in order to get this information from it, then

this is prohibited to do so without the consent of the owner if the ownership is recognized by the Sharia.

Q15: What is the ruling regarding the creation or the usage of viruses which protect one's computer from being attacked by viruses that may harm the programs in his computer, and to attack the other party's computer when attacked?

A: There is nothing wrong with that whether this was to protect the computer from the virus attack or to prepare a virus to attack the other party's computer when they are attacking his system, because of the absence of the attacker's sanctity due to his transgression. If the question refers to sending the deterrent virus to the other party before the attack takes place to damage his equipment in order to prevent him from carrying out the attack, then it is prohibited if the Sharia recognizes the ownership of the other party, since it is prohibited to punish before the crime is committed.

Q16: What is the ruling regarding voluntarily exposing the hackers?

A: If the hackers were harming the believers, then exposing them to prevent their harm or to forbid evil is allowed. If they were not so, then exposing them is not allowed if the hackers are believers since this would humiliate or harm them.

Q17: What is the ruling in regards to taking a case amongst believers to the courts, if it has been established that one of them transgressed against the other in a computer hacking matter or where it involved damaging it or its content and there is a possibility that the attacker may be subjected to financial or other kinds of punishment?

A: If the transgressor refuses to have the issue to be brought before the *Hakim Shar'i*, then it is allowed for the victim to take the case to the courts in order to get the compensation that he is entitled to. If the victim is compensated more than what he deserves, then the excess must be returned to the transgressor.

If this would result in a bodily punishment or financial penalty to be paid to the government instead of the victim getting compensation, then it is allowed if taking the case to the court was in order to receive the compensation, because of the absence of sanctity of the transgressor due to his refusal to pay the compensation.

If this was done in order to only punish him without receiving any compensation in addition to it, then taking the case to court is not allowed if there is a possibility for a believer to be punished, except for if it was for the sake of preventing him from

causing harm in the future or in order to forbidding the evil, if this is the only way to achieve these two objectives. However, in such a case, one must seek permission from the *Hakim Shar'i*.

Q18: What is the ruling regarding visiting internet cafés, even though they have become – in the place where the individual resides – a gathering place for those who seek to commit sins over the internet such as appointments for prohibited meetings and the like? What is the ruling regarding working in it? What is the ruling regarding establishing a business project like this?

A: The above necessitates that visiting the mentioned café amounts to participation in the forbidden or encouraging it, so it is then prohibited, and earning any money this way is prohibited too.

Q19: What are the rulings regarding advertisements placed on the individual's personal websites, whether he accepted them in return for certain financial payments or because the host of the webpage imposed it? Is it mandatory to refuse them, especially when some of them advertise prohibited things like wine, gambling and music or use lewd pictures and the like?

A: Allowing such advertisements is not prohibited by itself, whatever kind it may be, unless it is prohibited because of another reason like encouraging or promoting falsehood. This is similar to some of the previous answers. If it is prohibited then collecting money for it is prohibited too.

Q20: Do some of the internet webpages become subjected to the ruling of books of misguidance – which are prohibited to keep and read – with respect to the individual if he fears its negative effect on his beliefs or behavior and that of his children?

A: Yes, they have the same ruling as the books of misguidance, as what is prohibited is falling in misguidance through any means, books or otherwise.

Q21: If the person was a manager of a chat site or a moderator on the internet, what is his role with regards to what is happening on these forums? What should he do when dealing with issues like belittling and insulting the sect of the Ahl al-Bayt, the noble scholars and the believers and the like? What is the ruling regarding receiving wages in return for moderating and administrating these pages and sites, or even voluntarily? What is the ruling regarding being silent when dealing with such issues? Is deleting such statements obligatory if possible and within his powers?

A: All people who participate in managing, implementing, moderating or doing anything else, would share in the rewards of whatever is happening on the site if it consisted of obedience to Almighty Allah and his work was with the intention to seek closeness to Him. Likewise, all participants would deserve a share of the punishment if what is happening on the site consists of disobedience to Almighty Allah, since this is not only supporting the sins or supporting the righteousness; it is participating in them as running of the website cannot be done without a group of people involved in it. Almighty Allah said:” And help you one another unto righteousness and piety. Help not one another unto sin and aggression, but keep your duty to Allah. Verily, Allah is severe in punishment” (Qur'an, 5:2). Because of this, it is mandatory to delete the forbidden materials or stop working for the website, in order not to participate in its burden.

We ask Almighty Allah to guide us, you and all believers. We also ask Him for protection from misguidance after being guided. We seek refuge in Him from misguiding seductions, from our evil and the sins in our deeds. Almighty Allah says: “ And upon Allah rests the direction of the right way, and (some) of them are deviated; and had He willed He would guide you all aright” (Qur'an, 16:9).

He is sufficient for us and most excellent is He in Whom we trust.

[\[i\]](#) *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 13, p. 221.

[\[ii\]](#) *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 8, p. 542.

[\[iii\]](#) *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 559.

MEDICAL ISSUES

Q1: Currently there are discussions on the possibility of cloning some human parts in the laboratory and preserving them for one individual or another at the time of need. Is this permissible? Does permission apply to genital parts or does it not, since they belong to a particular individual and it is unlawful to uncover them?

A: All of these are permissible, including genitalia, and it is permissible to look at them since they are not attributed to a particular individual in such a way that there is a relationship of belonging which arises from it being a part of a man's or woman's body, such as a hand, a leg, etc., when they are attached to the body. But when they are separated from it, it is problematic to consider it prohibited. The relationship in the cloning process mentioned in the question is based on the fact that the cloned part's origin is a cell that belongs to the individual and there is no proof that such a relationship is a criterion in the said prohibition, and surely Allah is the One Who truly knows and who protects.

Q2: If a wife's ovary does not function, is it permissible to take an egg from another woman who is not his wife and fertilize it by the husband's sperms, then plant it in the ovary of his wife? If the birth takes place, will the newborn be theirs?

A: Based on an obligatory precaution, one should not do this. If it takes place and the fetus is formed, it will belong to the husband and to the other woman from whom the egg was taken. But it is problematic to apply the rules of inheritance between the child and them, and an agreement in distributing the inheritance must be in place.

Q3: A husband's sperm is healthy and so is his semen and a woman's ovary is also healthy, but her womb that feeds the baby does not function. In this case, the wife's egg can be fertilized with the husband's sperm externally. After that, the fertilized egg is planted in the healthy womb of another woman who is not his wife. Is this permissible? Who will claim the baby once it is born? Will it belong to the one whose egg it was, who is the wife, or the one who was the surrogate mother?

A: Based on an obligatory precaution, one should not do this, and a woman should not host in her womb an egg fertilized by the sperm of a man who is not her husband, unless the time that passes is so long that the egg and the sperm are no longer liquid but are conventionally described as a fetus outside the womb. It is then that the woman can incubate it.

In any case, the newborn is claimed by both parents to whom the egg and the sperm belonged to, and he inherits them both, whereas the surrogate woman does not.

Q4: Seminal liquid is taken from a man. Afterwards, he got married. Is it permissible to make his wife pregnant with his semen which was taken from him before he got married?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

Q5: What is the ruling relevant to a son born through the artificial fertilization process with regard to sonhood, sustenance, inheritance, custody and others matters?

A: If the fertilization took place between the wife's egg and the husband's sperm, all these rulings apply.

Q6: Does injecting a man's seminal liquid into the womb of another woman's ovary through the artificial insemination method result in mandating adultery-related rulings?

A: It is not considered as adultery, and there is no penalty required for it, but it is prohibited.

Q7: What is the opinion of Your Eminence about the process of transplanting the testicle of a man who is sexually potent to another impotent man who needs such a testicle if we suppose such a surgery succeeds? Who will be the father of the fetus born of the sperm produced in the transplanted testicle?

A: The process referred to is by itself permissible, but it requires the uncovering of one's private part by the treating doctor; so, it must not be done except when it is absolutely necessary. On the other hand, the fatherhood of the son belongs to the second man in whose body the potent testicle was planted.

Q8: In case of impotence, doctors examine the married couple, starting with the man. If he is healthy, the woman will be examined; otherwise, examining him only suffices.

(A) Is it permissible for the man to unveil his private parts to the doctor and give him sperm specimens for testing? Sometimes the sperms are taken through the method of masturbation; is this permissible?

A: Unveiling the private parts is permissible only if impotence causes a problem. Getting the sperms through masturbation is not lawful except if it is the only way available in this case.

(B) Is it permissible to take the husband's sperm and the wife's egg, and then insert the fertilized egg inside the woman's womb?

A: There is no objection to fertilizing the wife's egg with the husband's sperm in a tube and inserting it inside the wife's womb.

(C) Is it permissible to take the sperm from inside the testicle through a surgical process and fertilize the egg – also removed from the wife – with it? Later, the wife's fertilized egg is placed inside her. Is this permissible?

A: There is no objection if the sperm is taken from inside the testicle and the egg is fertilized with it, and then it is placed inside the womb.

Q9: Through the process of artificial fertilization more than one egg may be fertilized resulting in many embryos. This situation is different from the natural fertilization process in the womb where usually one embryo is formed; knowing that planting all of these embryos inside the mother's womb could lead to her death, is it permissible to choose one of them and destroy the rest?

A: There is no harm in eliminating these embryos if souls are yet to enter them. Yes, it is an obligatory precaution to plant inside her womb as many as possible if she agrees, and it is not obligatory for her to agree to this.

Q10: At some hospitals, a patient may be subject to female nurses touching him as they read his pulse, measure his blood pressure, etc. What is the ruling in this case?

A: If the matter reaches the extent of necessity, it is permissible; otherwise, it is not.

Q11: Is it permissible for a male doctor to examine a female patient in the case where she believes that there is an urgent necessity for it which cannot be delayed?

A: The criterion in permitting a male doctor to examine a female patient is his belief of a reasonable possibility that the woman's health condition requires it, such that a female doctor cannot do it. The female patient's certainty or her belief in the possibility in establishing his duty does not affect this matter. Rather, it effects the permissibility of allowing herself to be examined by him although it will not be obligatory for him to do so.

However, if her belief in the necessity of him examining her causes her not to be comfortable in being examined by the female doctor and not trusting her medical opinion, and she was in need of treatment, she will be considered to be in need of his examination and it is permissible for him then to examine her, even if he believes that the female doctor suffices for her.

The same applies if she was in a bad psychological condition which is feared to cause harm, because of the said belief, even if he believes that she does not need physical treatment, because she will be in need of his examination due to her psychological situation.

Q12: When a blood sample is taken out of a patient, a man may not find another man but a woman is present to take it, or vice versa.

(A) Is it permissible to take the specimen in the absence of an emergency, even in the case of a general check-up?

A: If there is no urgency, such examining is not permissible if it involves prohibited physical contact or a forbidden look.

(B) Suppose there is a state of doubt; does this constitute a necessity or not?

A: If the possibility of necessity is considerable in such a way that fear of harm arises from it, it is permissible.

(C) Should an individual visit a private medical facility in the case of necessity so one can get the service from medical staff of the same gender?

A: Yes, it is obligatory if making the payment does not harm him.

(D) What about in the case of treatment, is the permissibility of going to a hospital – where he does not have the choice of who will treat him - dependent on the absence of possibility of obtaining medical staff of same gender elsewhere?

A: Yes, it is dependent on not being able to get medical staff of the same gender if the treatment requires prohibited physical contact or forbidden look.

(E) Suppose it depends on going for quite a distance, such as traveling from Karbala to Najaf, is it obligatory if one can do so in order to be treated by a medical staff of the same gender?

A: Yes, it is obligatory, if undertaking such a distance does not over-burden him.

Q13: Because my wife fell sick, I had to let her be examined by more than one female doctor, but she did not recover, nor did her health condition improve. I came to know about a skilled doctor who had treated the same case successfully; so, am I permitted to let him examine her knowing that her illness is of a female nature and examining her requires uncovering and touching her private parts?

A: It is permissible in the presence of the aforementioned supposition.

Q14: Is a sterile woman allowed to be treated even if this leads to uncovering her private parts to a female or a male doctor?

A: Apparently, the said uncovering is permissible in order to receive treatment in this and other such cases, especially if being sterile causes problems, as is most likely.

Q15: After a surgical operation has been performed, health staff has to observe the patient, such as measuring his blood pressure, temperature, pulse, etc., knowing that the patient is under the influence of anesthesia. What is the ruling if the staff is a man while the patient is a woman or vice versa?

A: What is necessary is that this is restricted to the opposite sex performing it only when there is a health need that obligates it.

Q16: Genital operations are performed on males, such as the prostate gland, in the presence of female nurses who are anesthesia technicians. What is the ruling about their attendance to help in such circumstances?

A: The answer is similar to that for the previous question.

Q17: Some doctors ask the students to review some medical references which contain pictures and photographs of genitals of both genders for scientific benefit and research. What does the Sharia think of it?

A: There is no harm in looking at them in such cases except if it is done with a bad intention and with finding pleasure in doing so, in which case it is an obligatory precaution not to do so.

Q18: In the hospital, patients who cannot reproduce are asked to provide a specimen of their semen, and it is taken through one of the following ways:

A. What does the Sharia say about the use of masturbation in this case?

A: Masturbation is prohibited unless one has no other option in being treated for impotence.

B. What does the Sharia say about the use of a special massaging tool for the prostate gland?

A: It is permissible unless this leads to somebody else looking or touching [apart from his wife] at one's private parts; it's permissible only if being cured from impotence depends on it.

Q19: If one wishes to test his reproductive ability, so the doctor asks him to provide a semen specimen; what does the Sharia say about that?

A: As long as it is not necessary to do that, he is prohibited from masturbating.

Q20: A common method of women's contraception is through the widely used IUD (Intra-Uterine Device) coil method. Experts in this field have said that it does the following:

- 1. It prevents the sperm from reaching the egg.**
- 2. It reduces or changes uterine enzymes, thus preventing pregnancy.**
- 3. It blocks the fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus wall.**

So, could Your Eminence please explain the Sharia ruling in this issue, i.e. whether the use of the IUD coil is permissible or not?

A: Since preventing insemination and fertilization of the egg is permissible, while eliminating the egg after being fertilized is not, in the light of what has been stated above, it is unknown whether the use of the coil eliminates the egg after it is fertilized. Thereupon, the use of this coil is permissible, and surely Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, knows best.

Q21: Lately, the use of the IUD coil has been widespread; what is the Sharia ruling about it?

A: If it is not known that the coil kills the egg after being fertilized, it by itself is permissible. But since placing it inside the uterus requires the female gynecologist to uncover and touch the private parts, one must not resort to using it except when necessary. Or it may be placed during a routine checkup by the gynecologist when a physical examination of the private parts is required during such a visit and the uncovering and the touching is not because of the insertion of the coil.

Q22: Is it permissible to block the uterus if the married couple does not wish to have children?

A: Based on an obligatory precaution, one should not do this if it causes permanent infertility, although it is permissible if it only temporarily prevents pregnancy.

Q23: What is the ruling regarding the use of medications which prevent pregnancy while both parties agree to it or without their agreement, and is it permissible for those who have legitimate excuses such as sickness and the like?

A: Yes, it is permissible unless it leads to a serious health hazard. However, if there is no health-related necessity, based on an obligatory precaution, the husband must agree to this.

Q24: Are there cases in which abortion becomes permissible?

A: Abortion is not permissible unless the mother's life depends on it in such a way that the case revolves between the death of the mother and her fetus in one hand, and abortion on the other hand. The same is the case if the matter revolves between the life of the mother and the life of the fetus and it is known that the life of the mother has priority over the life of the fetus according to the Sharia. There is no general principle to determine this.

Q25: Is it permissible for a raped woman to abort the fetus?

A: Aborting the fetus is not permissible even if the woman was raped, because it means killing a human being, which is prohibited.

Q26: A woman became six months pregnant, and it was confirmed through ultrasound scan that the fetus was deformed, and the doctors said that as soon as it is born, it will die. As long as it is inside its mother's womb, its stay there causes abnormal liquids, and this is medically proven to be dangerous to the life of the mother. In this case, does the Sharia permit it to be aborted?

A: If it is confirmed that it will die at birth, the mother's life has priority over the life of the fetus.

Q27: At a college of medicine, the students train on performing autopsy on bodies of non-Muslims?

A. What is the Sharia ruling about performing autopsy on these bodies?

B. Should one who touches these bodies during the autopsy perform *Ghusl*? What is the ruling regarding one who sees the process of the autopsy?

A: Performing autopsy on these bodies is permissible if they belong to non-Muslims. It is also permissible to see the autopsy process. Whoever touches them must perform *Ghusl*.

Q28: Is the use of a dead person's body for autopsy permissible for educational purposes?

A: It is prohibited to perform autopsy on the body of a deceased Muslim person for educational purposes, but it is permissible if he is non-Muslim.

Q29: In some countries, autopsy on the body of a deceased person is performed after the agreement of his guardian. If he does not sign the agreement, the body will not be released but will be kept inside refrigerators. Is he permitted not to sign and, in this case, the body remains without being buried?

A: If burial without autopsy is not possible, and if waiting is of no avail, the guardian is permitted to agree to the autopsy.

Q30: If preserving a Muslim's life depends on performing autopsy on a dead Muslim's body, and it is not possible for the autopsy to be performed on a non-Muslim's body or that of one whose Islamic faith is in doubt, and if there is no other way to preserve it, is doing so permissible?

A: Yes, it is permissible; rather, it is obligatory. However, the blood money of the dead person must be paid by the person who performs the autopsy as a mandatory precaution.

Q31: A patient with a chronic illness needs an artificial respiratory system, so much so that the continuation of his heart's palpitation depends on this system and on medications that increase the pressure and pulse. Also, he reaches a status which is described as being "brain dead": He does not feel, and there is no movement. This is confirmed through cerebral scans which show that there are no electrical pulses in the brain. In this case, is it permissible to stop the use of the system and of treating him with medications?

A: If these systems and aids are keeping the heart beating and the blood circulating, it is permissible to turn them off, and if they help keep the heart functioning and the blood circulating while there is a remnant of one's life, turning them off is not permissible. With doubts as to which of these situations apply, the latter will apply, i.e. turning the machine off is not permissible.

Q32: One artificial respiration system is available and it is used for a patient for whose recovery there is no hope. If he becomes brain dead, and if another patient in whom there is hope of recovery and his life depends on the use of that respiration system, is it permissible in this case to take the system from the brain dead person and give it to the other patient?

A: Yes, it is permissible; actually, it is obligatory if the other patient's life must be preserved.

Q33: With regard to the brain dead person, is it permissible to donate his organs to patients who needs them desperately in the following cases:

A. If the brain dead person expressed his wish before his death to donate his organs and wrote this in his own handwriting, whether his family accepted this or not?

B. If the family of the deceased person wanted it in order to get money, and it is not known whether the brain dead person accepts or refuses?

C. If the doctor does so without the knowledge of the deceased person's family?

A: It is not permissible to move the organs of the deceased Muslim person to someone who is alive, even if he indicates so in his will unless the life of that living Muslim depends on it. In the latter case, there is no need for the deceased person's will or to the consent of his family. However, if the need can be met by taking organs from one of two persons; one of whom had stated it in his will or his family agreed to it while the other did not; it is a mandatory precaution to prefer the first one.

Q34: Is it permissible to transplant the liver of a pig into the body of a Muslim?

A: Yes, it is permissible if it is needed, such that another liver from a *Tahir* body is not available.

Q35: Is it permissible to sell blood if the buyer will benefit from it?

A: Yes, it is permissible to sell it if there is a lawful benefit from it, such as injecting it into the vein of one who needs it.

Q36: Is it lawful to sell a woman's eggs in order to benefit from them in medical experiments?

A: Yes, it is lawful, but it is prohibited to uncover her private parts if taking the eggs requires doing so.

Q37: Some individuals go through cosmetic surgeries to their noses, etc., does the Sharia prohibit this?

A: It is not prohibited.

Q38: Is it permissible for one to sell the organs?

A: Based on a mandatory precaution one should not sell the organs. If there is a fear about harm resulting from organ extraction, then it is unlawful.

Q39: Is a surgeon liable if his operation does not succeed, although he did his best and was not negligent? If people generally do not hold him liable, is this an implicit condition which negates his liability?

A: A surgeon is liable if he acts negligently, or even if he did not, except when the patient or his guardian – if the patient is a minor or is unconscious at the time of the operation – clears him of such liability. Normal conduct of people with respect to agreeing to the doctor not being liable is not sufficient to clear the latter from such liability, if the patient or his guardian does not agree to it.

Q40: A patient visited a doctor who gave him a prescription which he handed over to a pharmacist. But the pharmacist gave him someone else's medicine out of negligence, so the patient died because of this mistake. Is the dead patient's family entitled to blood money? Is this negligence categorized as accidental killing or is it intentional?

A: If this negligence is due to his carelessness in fulfilling his duty, the payment of blood money is due, since he was careless in giving the lethal medication. But a mere mistake without such negligence does not result in any liability.

Q41: In case of a Siamese twin birth, can the life of one of them be sacrificed in order to save that of the other?

A: If keeping them attached leads to the death of both of them, one of them has to be sacrificed in order to save the other's life; otherwise, it is prohibited.

Q42: Some people agree to donate their blood for the sake of gaining other benefits and they may even be unwilling to donate their blood:

What is the ruling about the blood taken from persons unwilling to donate it? What about the medical staff who extracts the blood?

A: Dealing with the blood is prohibited without the consent of the donor even if he consents to it after the blood is drawn out of him. Similarly, the medical staff is permitted to draw the blood after the owner of the blood agrees to it even if he does so in order to obtain other benefits.

Q43: What is the ruling regarding taking medicine that contains alcohol?

A: It is permitted to take them only in extreme necessity which reaches the extent of a life threatening risk and if there is no other permitted medication available to save the individual.

Q44: The insulin used in treating diabetes is sometimes extracted from a pig's pancreas; so, is a Muslim permitted to use it?

A: It may be used non-orally. As for oral use, it must be restricted to the amount that is necessary.

AIDS

Q1: Should one who is infected with AIDS [Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome] isolate himself from his family and relatives? If he is a child, should his family isolate him?

A: No, isolation is not obligatory except according to what is required to prevent others from being infected.

Q2: Is it permissible for one who knows that he is infected with AIDS to marry someone who is healthy?

A: Marriage is permissible, but sexual activity or any interaction is prohibited if it results in an infection.

Q3: Is it permissible for an AIDS patient to marry another person who also is infected with AIDS?

A: Marriage is permissible and so is sexual intercourse unless it increases the harm brought by the disease quite seriously.

Q4: If one person in a married couple is not infected with AIDS, does he have the right to avoid sexual intercourse?

A: Yes, he does, but it is best that the psychological condition of the patient is taken into consideration and his feelings must not be hurt as much as possible.

Q5: Is it permissible for the healthy spouse to ask for divorce from the other spouse who is infected with this disease?

A: A husband has the right to divorce his wife, whether she is infected or not, and the wife has the right to refuse sexual activities which result in infection while she is entitled to all her other rights.

Q6: Does a wife have the right to divorce her husband if he is sick with AIDS?

A: She does not have this right. However, she has the right to refuse such sexual contact which leads to being infected with it.

Q7: If the AIDS-infected woman is pregnant, is she permitted to abort her baby out of her fear that it may be infected by it too?

A: No, she is not allowed to do so.

Q8: Is an AIDS-infected woman permitted to breastfeed her healthy baby and continue to care for him?

A: A woman is prohibited from doing anything which results in transmitting the disease to her healthy baby; if it does not cause this, it is permissible.

Q9: Is it obligatory upon the doctor to inform the patient's relatives about him being infected with AIDS, so they may take precautions against being infected?

A: If there is no harm expected from doing so, the relatives of such a patient must be informed if this prevents their becoming infected with the disease.

Q10: Should an AIDS patient hide his ailment and continue to have sexual intercourse with his healthy wife?

A: He is prohibited from having sexual intercourse with her if it results in her infection with the disease.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is a sacred tie which Allah Almighty has legislated as mercy for His servants so that humankind may perpetuate, and the instincts which He instilled in it may be regulated. Thus, man's virtue and creed are safeguarded, he will have companionship in his solitude, his loneliness will thus be removed and life regulated.

Allah Almighty has said, "And Allah has made mates (and companions) of your own nature for you and made sons and daughters and grandchildren out of them for you, and provided of the best sustenance for you: Then will they [still] believe in vain things and be ungrateful to God's favors?" (Qur'an, 16:72). He has also said, "And among His Signs is this: He created mates for you from your own selves so that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); truly (there) are Signs in that for those who reflect" (Qur'an, 30:21).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said, "One who gets married acquired half of his religion; so, let him fear Allah with regard to the remaining half."^[i] Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him) has said, "A servant of Allah earns nothing better than a good wife: When he sees her, she pleases him, and when he is away from her, she safeguards him with regard to her own self and to his wealth."^[ii]

Marriage is one of the highly recommended acts; in fact, it is disliked to abandon it. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "There is no establishment in Islam more beloved to Almighty Allah than marriage" He also said: "One who likes to be like me in nature and character, he should follow my *Sunnah*, and my *Sunnah* includes marriage." He (peace be upon him and his progeny) has also said, "One who likes to meet Allah pure and purified, let him do so with a spouse." He (peace be upon him and his progeny) has also said, "Two *Rak'ahs* of prayer offered by a married man are better than a single man spending the whole night praying and the day fasting."^[iii] He (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said, "The wretched dead from among you are those who are unmarried."^[iv] There are many other such narrations from the Prophet and the Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

Some such texts have advised against refraining from marriage out of fear of poverty, and that one who does so thinks ill of Allah Almighty.^[v] Actually, they have stated that marriage is one of the means of sustenance, and that such sustenance is granted due to being with spouse and family dependents,^[vi] and so on. Above all this, Allah Almighty has made a promise to us in His Glorious Book: He says, "Marry those among you who are single, the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female: If they are in poverty, Allah will grant them means out of His grace, for Allah encompasses all, and He knows all things" (Qur'an, 24:32).

This is especially emphasized for expatriate men and women: They often live in societies in which they may encounter many temptations of various kinds to commit what is Islamically prohibited, openly offering them without modesty or a religious or ethical barrier. Rather, these immoralities have become commonplace and one has become used to them such that he has

forgotten about the motivations of modesty, thus killing the principles within him. So, if he is not shielded by a marriage that satisfies his desires and safeguards his virtues, he will be subject to fall into the abyss of sins and descend into the pits of decay from which one may not be able to return.

The believers, may Allah Almighty facilitate them, must pay heed to easing the matter of marriage by lightening its restrictions, minimizing its expenses and cooperating for its sake, so they may uphold the *Sunnah* and prevent moral corruption and sedition. In a tradition narrated by al-Sukuni from Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "The best women of my nation are the one whose faces are most beautiful and their dowers are the least."^[viii]

In a tradition narrated by Khalid Ibn Najeih, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, "As for a woman's ill fate, [it is due to] her dowry being too much, and ingratitude to her husband..."^[viii] In a tradition narrated by al-Sukuni, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) quotes the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) saying, "The best kind of intermediation is that you mediate between two individuals in a marriage until Allah brings them together."^[ix] There are many more such traditions.

If one is unable to get married, he should shield himself with the fear of God and patience, and keep himself away from the places of transgression and sedition. He should be aware of the schemes and deceptions of Satan. He should curb himself from persuasions towards evil, adorn himself with chastity and virtue, rise above falling into the abyss of shame and vice, uphold the advice of Allah Almighty in which He says, "Let those who do not find the means for marriage keep themselves chaste until Allah gives them means out of His grace" (Qur'an, 24:33).

The Imams from among the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are narrated to have said: that it is recommended while being single to seek help by fasting and allowing the hair to grow^[x]. Through these methods, the need for marriage is lessened. We plead to the most Praised One to help believing youths, to protect them during their hardship, to increase their faith and to protect them from wrongdoing.

"...and He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Allah. And He provides for him from (sources) which he can never imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, Allah suffices him. Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: Truly, Allah has appointed a due proportion for all things" (Qur'an, 65:2-3).

There are some marriage-related pieces of advice which concern all believers, especially for expatriates:

Firstly, Islam, through its Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and Imams from among his Progeny (peace be upon them), has emphasized on leaving aside differences related to lineage in marriage, that a believing male is the peer of a believing female, that attention should be paid to one's faith, ethical conduct, virtue and trustworthiness. The Infallible Ones (peace be upon them) have in numerous narrations been quoted as having said, "If someone comes to you seeking to marry, and if you are pleased with his conduct and adherence to religion, then marry

him; if you do not, there will be sedition in the land and a great corruption."^[xi] If a believer who seeks to get married adheres to the tenets of his creed, especially if he has means, so he can take care of his expenses and those of his dependents, then there is no excuse for rejecting him. Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said, "Compatibility [in marriage between spouses] is that he should be chaste and he should have means."^[xii]

Also, caution should be applied when marrying one who is ill mannered and who is not committed to his religion. The Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have forbidden it, especially with regard to one who takes intoxicants. Many traditions have clearly prohibited finding him a wife to marry.

This is especially emphasized for those who live in foreign lands. If the husband does not possess the strength of the creed, ethics, virtue and the sense of responsibility, the wife will be exposed to tragic conditions. She is bound with the marriage tie which prohibits her from managing her destiny if her husband does not safeguard her rights and be sensitive about her feelings. She is in the hand of one who does not safeguard her rights or respect her sanctity.

Secondly, Many traditions of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), including what we have cited above, emphasize early marriage for a man as well as women. Imam al-Ridha (peace be upon him) has said, "Gabriel descended once to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and said, 'O Muhammed! Your Lord greets you and says that the virgins among the women are like fruits on trees: if the fruits are ripe but find none to pick them, they will be spoiled by the sun and strewn by the wind ...' A man stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Who should we marry them off to?' The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, 'Marry them to those who are their peers.' The man asked who the peers might be, whereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, 'The believers are peers of each other. The believers are peers of one another.'"^[xiii]

It is natural that this especially applies to expatriates who live in some societies where sex is advertised in a blatant way through various methods of temptation and encouragement without a religious, moral or cultural deterrent. One's sexual instinct appears actively when he is a teenager, and it escalates to the peak when one has passed puberty, while he has not yet strengthened within himself religious and moral restraints from satisfying these desires by the available – and even promoted – illegitimate ways in such societies. This renders him prone to falling into the pitfall of vice in a way after which he cannot be saved once he becomes used to it and in harmony with it.

If we suppose that he is strong enough to avoid slipping into doing what is prohibited by the barriers which he has such as religion, morality and the effects of social norm established in his homeland, he will definitely be subjected to severe suffering and to bitter struggle within his self, which may disturb his life, beset his condition or drag him into complex repercussions and negativities. This is not the case if one is fortified – when the sexual instinct appears within him – by marriage which satisfies this instinct through the legitimate way. The individual may become used to such a lawful mean of sexual enjoyment in such a way that he does not seek prohibited ways. Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, is the One Who helps, Who protects.

Thirdly, The primary motives for getting married may include sexual pleasure and satisfaction of one's desires. However, the most important objective in building the home for marriage, as per the Sharia and humanity, is to form the family, organize its affairs, fortify its harmony, strengthen affection among them, make its members content and establish cooperation among the members of the family for their own goodness and wellbeing.

Both spouses have to pay due regard to this and bear its responsibility. They should be cautious against turning marriage into a door to dispute, discord and the attempt by each spouse to take advantage of the other, violate each other's right, and harm each other, for this is one of the most serious prohibitions.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said, "If one is married to a woman who harms him, Allah does not accept her prayers, nor does He accept her good deeds, until she helps him and pleases him, even if she fasts all the time, prays always, sets slaves free and spends money in the cause of Allah, yet she will be the first to enter the Fire." Then he (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "And the man bears the same burden and receives the same penalty if he harms and oppresses her."^[xiv]

Rather, each spouse has to perform the functions of his position in which Allah Almighty placed him and must not transgress it. Since Allah Almighty made the husband in charge, he is expected to do what suits this position in terms of what is required by wisdom and protection of his family's entity, by being patient, by trying to lighten the burden of crises, absorb problems and take the time to resolve them. He must be patient when harmed, overlook when mistakes happen and forgive when one slips. He should avoid anger, scolding, argumentation, miserliness, etc., all of which are the means of the accursed Satan. He should seek support and help from Allah Almighty and derive success from Him.

The woman, too, must know her position and bear her responsibility. She must not forget that her *Jihad* which Allah, the most Praised One, wants her to perform is to be a good companion of the husband, endeavor to please him, be responsive to him, be patient when troubled by him, for he has more rights over her than anyone else, so much so that it has been narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) said, "Had I ordered anybody to prostrate to somebody else, I would have ordered the woman to prostrate to her husband."^[xv]

Allah Almighty did not place each of the spouses in their respective positions, disciplining them through His own methods, except to safeguard the entity of the family, its solidarity, and to make its members blessed and righteous. They must derive the greatest lessons by observing some other societies where their divergence from the above has led to the destruction of homes, the breakdown of the family and its disintegration, the shattering of the family structure and its dispersal, and the actual abolishment of the family, thus causing its members to be at a loss, and to miss the objective.

Blessed is one who is admonished by what others do and who derives moral lessons from whatever surrounds him. Surely Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, is the One Who leads us to the Right Path.

Q1: Can we pay the share of the Imam (peace be upon him) from the *Khums* to help get a believer in the West married, while the same amount of money in the currency here can get many needy believers in several Islamic countries married?

A: If one has an urgent need to get married, and if the only help available at the time is the share of the Imam (peace be upon him), it is permissible to spend the said share for it without extensive spending. Such spending must be done only after consulting the *Hakim Shar'i* or his reliable agent, and after balancing the situation and seeing whether the circumstances that surround the case make him a valid beneficiary of the aforementioned share of *Khums*.

Q2: Should the wife obey her husband in regards to traveling far with him?

A: Yes, she should, unless she has a religiously-recognized excuse such as fear or the like.

Q3: In some Western countries, a daughter can separate from her father's home, financially and in terms of accommodation, when she is more than 16 years old. Then she becomes independent in administering her affairs. If she consults with her father or mother, she will only be soliciting their opinion or out of politeness and affection. Does a virgin daughter, such as this, have the right to get married without obtaining her father's permission in this regard, be it a temporary or a permanent marriage?

A: If this independence is by way of her father placing her in charge of her own affairs including the affairs of marriage in such a way that she is given permission by him to marry whomever she wants, then her marriage is valid without the requirement of obtaining special permission from him.

But if this independence is due to the imposition of man-made laws, rather than the father placing her in charge of her own affairs, then such a marriage is not valid. However, if the daughter's religion regards such a marriage as being valid, even if their religion accepts the man-made laws in this regard, it will then be valid.

Q4: A mature virgin woman, of the age of 25 years for example, gets married without referring to her guardian; is her marriage valid?

A: Her marriage contract is invalid without her guardian's permission. Therefore, if she knows that she has to refer to her guardian according to the Sharia, but she does not do so and the man has had intercourse with her, she will be an adulteress. But if she does not know about the requirement of obtaining permission, the intercourse will be the result of a misconception and she will not be an adulteress. However, if the guardian gives his permission afterwards, the contract becomes valid. The guardian should consider her best interests even after she gets involved in the said contract.

Q5: Is a Muslim man permitted to marry a non-Muslim woman from among the People of the Book, by way of a permanent or temporary marriage?

A: Yes, he is, but such a marriage is very much disliked especially if she is Magian. Yes, if he already is married to a Muslim woman, he is not allowed to marry a woman from among the People of the Book by way of a permanent marriage without the Muslim wife's consent.

Q6: Is a permanent marriage contract permissible with a woman who is not Jewish, Christian or Magians , such as an atheist, Buddhist or a follower of some other faith?

A: A Muslim man is not permitted to enter into a marriage contract with such a woman, be it a permanent or a temporary marriage; and permission in marrying non-Muslim women is restricted to Jewish, Christian or Magian women

Q7: In some countries in the West, marriage with a non-Muslim woman may pose a risk to the children, because of the pressure of the social conditions and the laws in effect in the land, as well as the differences in languages. A father may not be able to guarantee his children following Islam. Instead, they may follow their mother's religion, or they may distance themselves from religion altogether as a result of their parents having religious differences. Can this render it impermissible to marry a non-Muslim woman?

A: By itself, this does not prevent such a marriage and make it impermissible. However such a marriage is disliked, as mentioned already. Actually, having children by such a marriage may be disliked, but it does not reach the level of prohibition.

Nevertheless, if he does have children by such a marriage, he must, in his capacity as the father and the one in charge of his children's affairs, protect their religion and give them an Islamic upbringing no matter what efforts are exerted and hardships are borne. Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, says, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which stern (and) strong angels are appointed, (angels) who do not flinch (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah but do (precisely) what they are commanded" (Qur'an, 66:6).

The thirteenth chapter of the Introduction includes some advice which may be beneficial in this respect.

Q8: Some Muslims in non-Muslim countries get married in accordance to man-made laws or based on the woman's religion if the wife is not Muslim, after their agreement to get married. Is such a marriage regarded as being valid according to the Sharia, and do the rules of wedlock apply to it? If the answer is in the negative, what is the ruling relevant to his wife and children in such a case? What is their status with regard to inheritance when death takes place in this situation?

A: Firstly, two conditions have to be met with regard to marriage:

(1) A marriage contract is solemnized between a man and a woman through articulation in any language.

(2) The pronouncement of the marriage contract, if performed by someone other than the spouses by proxy, must be based on an authorization by the spouses to be represented. The individual who pronounces the marriage contract represents them in solemnizing the contract in his capacity as their agent. The marriage is not valid if it is pronounced by someone else if it is based on this being amongst his affairs that he undertakes it independently, even if he does so after they are satisfied with it. The marriage contract by the clergyman should be based on him being their appointed representative and not as him acting independently.

Secondly, a marriage contract is not valid if it is solemnized at government offices if the spouses only declare their agreement to get married. Rather, the marriage contract has to be solemnized by their own pronouncement or that of their appointed representative, even if one of them or both would authorize the government official who would pronounce the contract on behalf of one or both of them.

Thirdly, if the contract is not valid according to the Sharia, and if the spouses enjoy sexual activities with each other and have sexual intercourse knowing that it is not valid, such enjoyment is forbidden and the intercourse will be adultery. The children resulting from it will be illegitimate for one who knew the invalidity of the marriage; so they do not inherit him. If the spouses have intercourse out of ignorance, the children will be the result of a misconception, and they will inherit the one who is ignorant about the invalidity of his marriage.

If one of them knows that it is invalid whereas the other is ignorant about it, the children are regarded as illegitimate only in respect to the one who knows of the invalidity, and the children are a result of misconception in respect to the one who did not know of the invalidity, and they inherit him. Similarly, if the religion of one spouse recognized the marriage contract as valid, such as a Christian wife who sees her church marriage as being valid according to her faith, the children with respect to her will then be the outcome of a valid marriage, even if she believes the said marriage to be invalid according to Islam, because each nation has its customary marriage.

Q9: In some non-Muslim countries, there are relationships between a man and a woman who are recognized by the law and custom as spouses or partners without any form of marital contract. They live together and they may even have children together. Is it possible for the Sharia to consider such a relationship as marriage? What is the ruling regarding the children born out of it? Can a Muslim marry a woman from the People of the Book who is in this type of relationship?

A: If the couple was Muslim then cohabitation and sexual enjoyment is not valid between a man and a woman without a marriage tie, and this tie does not materialize unless the contract is articulated, pronounced. As regarding the relationship referred to in the question, it is not a marital relationship. It is not endorsed by the Sharia, nor does it impose rights on either party, nor does it justify for them to have any sexual activity.

The sexual intercourse through this relationship is adultery, and the children resulting from it are illegitimate who have no right to inherit their parents. This applies to Muslims.

As regarding non-Muslims, the matter is the same unless their religion regards it as marriage. The children who are born from a relationship which is recognized as marriage in the religion of the parents are considered to be of legitimate birth.

Q10: In some Western countries, one who seeks divorce, be it the husband or the wife, has to pay a percentage of his money to the other party. In some countries, the law obligates the divorce-seeker to pay the other party a sum of maintenance money for twenty years, for example. If a marriage is thus established, will the individual be obligated to comply at the time of divorce?

A: It is not obligatory unless it is agreed that it is a condition in the religious marriage contract. The mere existence of such a law does not mean that it is a Sharia-recognized condition of the marriage. If we suppose that both parties agree on such a condition in the marriage contract, it is binding even if the law changes or the divorce takes place in another country which does not have such a law.

Q11: If both sides are aware of the aforementioned law and they entered into the marriage contract, is this regarded as an implicit acceptance of it?

A: Mere knowledge of the law does not make it an implicit condition on which the contract is based. And therefore it is not binding according to the Sharia.

Q12: Is it correct to pronounce a marriage contract over the telephone?

A: Yes, it is.

Q13: Is it correct to make the dowry of the marriage the performance of *Hajj* or a copy of the Holy Qur'an?

A: This is permissible and it is obligatory to offer it in the way that is commonly done so.

Q14: With regard to a wife's deferred dowry, if it becomes due at the time of divorce, and its value at the time when they married greatly differs from its value at the time when it becomes due, either because the currency is devalued or for any other reason, what is the ruling in this case?

A: It remains as it is, without any increase or decrease, as is the case with all other debts.

Q15: A non-Muslim woman may declare the *Shahada* in order to get married to a Muslim, while those who hear her declaration do not see any credible possibility that she really believed in the Islamic faith; will those who hear her declaration have to treat her as a Muslim woman?

A: In entering Islam, it is not sufficient to declare the *Shahada* unless it is done with recognition of its content so as it appears from the status of the individual that he had indeed embraced Islam and recognized it, even if such conversion was not based on sufficient proof, since recognition is not necessarily believing in Islam out of full perception, but it is applying it and practically acting upon it.

Q16: A young Muslim girl wishes to get married to a person who, according to both Sharia and convention, is her peer. But her father refuses it completely; the father rejects everyone who seeks her hand unless he or one of his family members is wealthy even if he was not religious. Is the father permitted by the Sharia to marry his daughter off based on his own desire while ignoring her own wish?

A: The marriage of one's daughter is not valid without her consent. Yes, if she consents in order to fulfill her father's wish, her marriage will be valid. Also, he must not prevent her from marrying one who is compatible with her except if he is considering her best interest. If this takes place due to his control and without his consideration for her best interest, his guardianship over her will be void.

Q17: A non-Muslim woman married to a non-Muslim man wants to enter into the folds of Islam. She has children. Her husband threatened her that if she did embrace the Islamic faith, he would evict her and divorce her. He would then take her children from her and make her relatives go against her. What is the ruling and how can she deal with her situation knowing that she is convinced that she has to accept the Islamic creed?

A: Accepting Islam is mandatory upon her even if this leads to her separation from her husband. Actually, she is prohibited from staying with him as long as he remains a non-Muslim while she is a believer in Islam. She is prohibited from allowing him to have a sexual relationship with her. If he doesn't also accept Islam as his religion until the end of the waiting period specified for divorce, her separation from him is complete and her marriage to him has ended. "He (always) prepares a way out for those who fear Allah" (Qur'an, 65:2). Allah will compensate her for the loss of her clan with the clan of faith and Islam. The Almighty says, "Believers are but a single brotherhood" (Qur'an, 49:10).

However, if she fears for her life, that she may be killed or severely harmed, it is permissible for her to be discreet about being a Muslim and about performing its obligations as much as she can until Allah Almighty provides a way out for her.

Q18: In the chapter of marriage your treatise of practical Islamic laws, *Minhaj-ul-Saliheen*, at the end of the section of the etiquettes of marriage, there is the following text: "... Rather, it is recommended for her (i.e. wife) to beautify herself, to apply perfume and prepare herself for him (her husband)." And in a section dealing with disobedience (*Nushooz*), the text reads: "A wife has to permit her husband to enjoy her, with the exception of anal sex, to remove anything offensive; furthermore, she should prepare herself, wear perfume and embellish herself through the means her husband makes available for her and as he wants her to be." What is obligatory in this case and what is recommended?

A: What is obligatory on her is to respond to her husband with regard to what he asks her for and prepares for her embellishment. What is recommended is that she prepares and beautifies herself beforehand, even if he does not ask her to do so; rather, it is recommended for her to offer herself to him.

Q19: Since the laws in many countries do not obligate the husband to spend on his wife, these laws deal with the wife separately. On this basis, some countries pay a refugee wife a stipend just as they pay the refugee husband. In this case, does the wife have the right to receive and own the stipends assigned for her, and is her husband still obligated to provide for her despite that?

A: Yes, she has the right to receive the stipend set aside for her and to own it, while her husband is still obligated to provide for her.

Q20: What is meant by the duty of maintenance expenses which is obligatory on the husband and father? Does it mean what is suitable for the husband, or is it what suits the conditions of the wife, within the limits that can be met by the husband without causing difficulties for him?

A: The obligatory duty of maintenance expenses for the husband and father refers to expenses towards:

- (a) Accommodation which shelters the occupant and protects him from heat, cold, rain, etc., and protects him from harm of people and animals;
- (b) Food and drink in such amount which the body essentially requires,
- (c) Clothing as such that the body requires and does not lead to insult.

In the case of the wife in particular, she should be provided with that which enjoying her company and intercourse requires if her husband seeks it, such as the provision of adornment and beautification, and of water for bathing and cleansing that removes discomfort. In fact, based on an obligatory precaution, he is duty-bound to provide water for the *Ghusl* required for the state of *Janabah* which he caused.

As for any further expenses, it is due to one's generosity which is highly commended by the Sharia. It is a way that well maintains companionship on which the family is based: Each member of the family spends more money or service that he is obligated in order to please the rest, to create harmony and to firm their companionship.

Q21: Is the wife allowed to leave the house without the permission of her husband?

A: No, she is not allowed.

Q22: A girl loses her virginity through adultery or marriage without permission of her guardian. Is she regarded as a non-virgin now, while it is known that a non-virgin does not

need the permission of her guardian for future marriage? So, is a woman such as this, permitted to marry without first getting such permission?

A: She is still treated as a virgin. She is not permitted to get married without her father's permission because the ruling that applies to a virgin applies to her too, except through a valid marriage with the permission of her guardian followed by consummation.

However, in the case of marriage without permission, if her father accepted it after it taking place, this marriage will become valid and she will be considered then as non-virgin.

[i] *Bihar Al-Anwar*, Vol. 100, p. 219.

[ii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 14, p. 22.

[iii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 7.

[iv] *Ibid.*

[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 24.

[vi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 25.

[vii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 16.

[viii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 11.

[ix] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, pp. 16-17.

[x] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 178.

[xi] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 51.

[xii] *Ibid.*

[xiii] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 39.

[xiv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 116.

[xv] *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, p. 115.

TEMPORARY MARRIAGE

Q1: Is it permissible to conduct a temporary marriage with a woman who does not believe in temporary marriage due to her creed, such as a Sunni or one of the People of the Book, but she pronounces the [temporary] marriage contract for the sake of obtaining the money or for sexual enjoyment?

A: Marrying her temporarily is permissible if she understands the meaning of the contract and intends it in its reality, as a temporary marriage that requires a dowry and allows sexual enjoyment, not as an enjoyment for which a wage is paid as is the case with adultery. If she does not intend it in its true sense, marrying her temporarily is not permissible.

Q2: The Muslims have differed in the legislation of temporary marriage and its revocation. So, could you please provide us with an overall picture about the reality of the matter?

A: Muslims have agreed that temporary marriage was legislated and sanctioned by the Sharia during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), and it is known that the view of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) is that it continued and was never revoked. The other sects have maintained that it is prohibited despite the existence of many narrations in their books and authenticated compilations [Saheeh Books] which indicate the continuation of this law until the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab who frankly banned it. It has been narrated that he delivered a sermon in which he said, "There used to be two types of *Mut'a* during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) and I now ban both of them and punish anyone who undertakes them: *Mut'a* of women and the *Mut'a* of Hajj."^[ii] Many companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the subsequent generation of *Tabi'een* (followers of the companions) did not adhere to this prohibition, so much so that even Umar's son, Abdullah, is reported as having regarded temporary marriage as permissible, saying, "By Allah, during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), we were not fornicators, nor were we adulterers [in practicing temporary marriage]."^[iii]

Providing a detailed discussion on this matter is not possible here, but many authors have already done so. In fact, some authors have written complete books about it. Sheikh *Al-Amini* has provided some details about it in his book, *Al-Ghadir*.^[iiii]

Q3: There are some people who deny the temporary marriage having been legislated and say: if it was permissible, why did the noble people avoid it, and not undertake it?

A: Who said that noble men used to avoid it when it was newly legislated? In fact history affirms that some of them did undertake it. Maybe some may have refrained themselves from temporary marriage due to their lack of need for it, or due to the pressure of customs and traditions, or due to the ruler prohibiting it.

In any case, raising such objections against something that is proven to be sanctioned by the Sharia has no value, as the Sharia law is not taken from the nobles, nor anybody else, but it is taken from the valid sources, like the Holy Book and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), and the Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

As for the nobles, it is difficult for them to allow a woman to marry a man who is lesser than them in social standing, and it is difficult for them to allow a widow or a divorcee to marry again, especially if she is older than the age of marriage, and it is difficult for them to allow the marriage of a woman whose father has died without the acceptance of her other elders – and other such social taboos that cannot be considered as prohibited because of disapproval by some people.

Q4: What is the difference; in as far as the Sharia is concerned, between temporary marriage and adultery?

A: Temporary marriage is a legitimate contract which results in a marital relationship between two parties. It is similar to the permanent marriage and without any difference from the latter except in the continuation of marriage in permanent marriage and determining the end of the marriage term in the case of temporary marriage, in addition to some other particularities as the books of Islamic jurisprudence indicate.

There is the *Iddah* (waiting period), which is common between the permanent and the temporary marriage. A wife in both cases has to wait for four months and ten days when her husband passes away. If the woman is divorced, in the case of permanent marriage, or if her marriage term has ended, in the case of temporary marriage, she cannot marry another man during the *Iddah*, if the marriage was consummated, although the exact period of the *Iddah* differs between the two.

Similarly, the child is associated with both parents and inherits them both, and the child has to be looked after by both parents in permanent and temporary marriages. The rulings of in-laws apply to both permanent and temporary marriages.

All of this is not present in adultery. Thus, there is a big difference between both matters (adultery and temporary marriage).

Q5: If there is a woman who is over thirty years old, and she did not have the fortune of permanent marriage, and there is someone who is willing to marry her temporarily without informing her guardians, is her contract valid?

A: Temporary marriage is not valid without the permission of the guardian except if intercourse does not take place. It is necessary to obtain his permission in order for intercourse to be permissible in such a marriage.

[i] *Al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, Vol. 2, p. 392; Ibn Abd al-Birr, Al-Tamhid, Vol. 8, p. 355; al-Mazzi, Tahdhib Al-Kamal, Vol. 31, p. 214; Dar Qutni, Ilal Al-Dar, Vol. 2, p. 155; Ibn Hazm al-Zahiri, Al-Muhalla, Vol. 7, p. 107; Ibn Qudamah, Al-Mughni, Vol. 7, p. 136; Ibn Rushd, Bidayat Al-Mujtahid, Vol. 1, p. 244 and al-Tahawi, Ma'ani Al-Aathar, Vol. 2, p. 146.*

[ii] *Ahmed, Musnad, No. 2, p. 95; Ali ibn Abu Bakr al-Haithami, Mujma' Al-Zawaaid, Vol. 7, pp. 332-33; Sa'eed ibn Mansour, Sunan, Vol. 1, p. 252 and Abu Ya'li, Musnad, Vol. 10, p. 68.*

[iii] *Sheikh al-Amini, Al-Ghadir, Vol. 6, pp. 205-240.*

IDDAH (WAITING PERIOD)

Q1: Does a young woman who is not pregnant, who has been recently divorced after the marriage has been consummated have to wait for certain period of time before she can remarry?

A: In the said case, the divorce is invalid if it takes place during her menstrual period and if they had intercourse during the last *Tuhr* period, which is the time between menstrual periods. So after being divorced, a woman has to wait for two menstruation periods to pass and she is allowed to remarry when the third menstrual bleeding begins, although it is better for her to finish the third period and then remarry. This is called the *Iddah* of divorce.

Q2: How long does a widow have to wait before she can remarry? What is the Sharia ruling for her after the death of her husband?

A: The *Iddah* for the widow is the duration of four lunar months and ten days if she was not pregnant. If she was, then her *Iddah* is either the mentioned period or the time till birth, whichever is longer.

During this period, she has to observe *Hidad*, in which she abstains from wearing perfume and from anything used for beautification and embellishment whether it is on the body or clothes.

Q3: If a girl committed adultery and she was approached for marriage, does she have to observe the *Iddah*?

A: It is recommended that she seeks to distance herself from the semen of adultery by waiting for her next menstruation period before she marries. In fact it is a recommended precaution to do so, although the said is not obligatory.

Q4: If a medical test indicates that a woman is infertile and cannot have children, is she required to observe the *Iddah* in the case of divorce?

Q5: During the *Iddah* after divorce, a woman did a pregnancy test and found out that she was not pregnant. Is she still required to continue the *Iddah* period?

A: The *Iddah* remains obligatory in both cases.

Q6: If a woman knows that she committed adultery, but the man thinks that there was a valid marriage contract, does she have to observe the *Iddah*? Should one who wishes to marry her after that wait until she completes her *Iddah*, or is she regarded as an adulteress who has no *Iddah*? What is the ruling if the supposition is reversed, i.e. the man is the one who knows that what he is committing is adultery, while she believes that the marriage contract is valid?

A: The criterion that determines the obligation to observe the waiting period in such a situation is the man's ignorance and his lack of intention to commit an unlawful act, not the woman's ignorance of the matter and mistaken belief.

Based on this, the *Iddah* is mandatory if the man thought the marriage contract was valid, even if the woman knew it to be fornication; and *Iddah* is not obligatory if the man knew that their act was adultery, even if the woman thought it was a valid contract, and it is only recommended to wait for her next menstrual period and no more than that, as has been mentioned in the answer to a previous question.

The *Iddah* in such a situation is the same as the *Iddah* in the case of divorce. It begins when one comes to know the reality after the mistaken belief, not from the time of the last intercourse arisen out of the mistaken belief.

The mentioned ruling applies when the man realizes the invalidity of the contract. But if he died before realizing the truth, the *Iddah* will start from the time of his death.

RULINGS RELATED TO CHILDREN

Q1: What is the period during which the mother has the right of custody? When will this right pass to the father?

A: The mother has a greater right over her child, be it a male or a female, as long as she is breastfeeding him. When he is weaned, the father has more right to it. But this does not mean that one has the right to keep the child away from the other. Rather, during the suckling period, the father has the right to supervise his child with the mother. After the weaning begins, the father should allow the continuity of the relationship between the child and his mother in order to satisfy his needs for the motherly bond and as determined by the father who is in charge of his affairs, something which is mandated on him on account of his being the guardian. A child is not the property of either parent, that they can deal with him as they please.

Q2: If a child is under the custody of his divorced mother, is the right of custody surrendered if she travels far for a long period of time? Is the custody passed to the infant's maternal grandmother or to anybody else when his mother travels?

A: Custody is the right of the mother and continues to be so during the suckling period. If the child has passed the suckling period, the father will take custody, and this right is not shifted to the maternal grandmother or to anyone else. The same applies if the mother abandons nursing the child and travels.

Q3: Does the father have greater right of custody over the child than the mother or maternal grandmother if he wishes to get a wet-nurse for the child? Does his right of custody continue to apply if the wet-nurse is non-Muslim, with the possibility that her bringing up of the child may bear a negative impact and the child may abandon Islam altogether?

A: The father must look after the child's interests because he is the Sharia-appointed guardian, entrusted over him; therefore, he must prepare for him such care and nursing which does not harm his body or religion. If the matter of the child's proper nurturing – as per his satisfaction – is confined to the grandmother, for example, he must hand the child over to her. But this does not mean that the right and duty of the upbringing and custody of the child shifts to anybody else apart from him, such that it becomes someone else's right.

Q4: If the father, to whom custody rights have been passed, drinks alcohol and is ill-behaved, and if he has a bad history of theft, fraud and deception, whereas the mother is balanced in her conduct and is ready to take custody of her children, will custody rights belong to the father, or the mother? What is the ruling if the paternal grandfather is available and requests to have custody over his grandchildren with the consent of their father?

A: Guardianship is the right of the father and the paternal grandfather. If guardianship of the father is forfeited due to his incompetence or the like, it will belong exclusively to the grandfather, who will follow his own opinion with regard to bringing up the child and all matters related to him.

Q5: If the custody of the child belongs to the father – due to the mother's nursing period having come to an end – is it permissible for the mother to prevent her child from traveling with his father because she wants to see her child and be in his company?

A: The mother does not have such a right. Her entitlement to see her child is related to the interests of the child if he is in need of seeing her in order to meet his emotional needs. So, if the father sees the interests of the child to be in accompanying him on a trip, and that this is more important than satisfying his feeling by seeing his mother, he can act upon it, because he is the guardian of the child who refers to him in all affairs, while the mother has no right to object. But if the child reached the age of adulthood - as per the criteria of the Sharia – it is quite clear: his affairs are in his own hands, and he has the right to choose.

Q6: Is it obligatory on the custodian father to enable the divorced mother to see the children at their mother's house, or is it sufficient, as per the Sharia, to enable the mother to see them anywhere else even if she has to come to see them at his own house or at another house chosen by the father?

A: The father is under no obligation to let her see the children at a specific place. Rather, it is up to his own opinion regarding what the best interest of the children is.

Q7: Does a father have the right to prevent his son from doing something specific if he anticipates it to cause harm to the son?

A: Preventing the son by force is not permissible unless the harm is so serious that it is prohibited to subject anyone to it. As for preventing him from doing something without forcing him, it is permissible.

Q8: Should the son obey his parents?

A: It is obligatory to obey them and not go against their orders if such disobedience results in neglecting their rights and transgressing against them. It is also obligatory if the son expects harm to come to them as a result of his disobedience. Otherwise, it is not obligatory to obey them, although it is better to do so in all cases.

Q9: You have stated that a child should not be hit more than six times gently; is this an edict? Does the ruling remain standing if hitting him six times proves to be of no avail in disciplining the child?

A: It is an edict. However, it is permissible to increase this number if needed, and when necessary, if it is ineffective in disciplining the child and to stop his ill-deeds, as we pointed out

in our book *Minhaj al-Saliheen*. The restriction to five or six hits is the basic rule in order to discipline him if one does not know that less than that is sufficient or if he knows that less than that is insufficient.

Q10: You have stated that hitting a child is not permissible if it results from an emotional outburst or to simply vent one's anger; sometimes, the father may hit his son for various reasons like when he raises his voice, he bothers him, or he prevents some of his family members or a guest in the house from sleeping, or the like; is this permissible?

A: There is no harm if this is done for the sake of disciplining the child or to prevent him from causing harm and to stop his mischief. But if it is for merely out of malice or to vent one's anger, it is unlawful.

Q11: Someone hits his quarrelsome younger brother because of his disrespect and ill manners, but the father does not approve of it. Is this considered as disobedience to the father?

A: He is not permitted to hit his brother without his father's permission, because guardianship over his brother does not belong to him. If his father permits him, it must be restricted to a few hits unless more are needed.

Q12: A school has among its staff some teachers who do not believe in religion, and they deny the existence of Allah Almighty in front of the students. Is it permissible to keep the Muslim students there despite the great possibility of their falling under the influence of their teachers?

A: A student's guardian should fortify him against causes of misguidance. Allah Almighty has said, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which stern (and) strong angels are appointed, (angels) who do not flinch (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah but do (precisely) what they are commanded" (Qur'an, 66:6).

His guardian knows best how to fortify him. If he sees that fortifying him is done by getting him out of such a school, it is obligatory on him to do so. If he sees that fortifying him is through explaining the truth to him and firming it within him, he must do so. Perhaps some of those who have religious information and truly believe in it can teach their children some clear proofs about the fundamentals of Islamic faith so they may first be fortified and secondly respond to the teachers politely, debating and rebutting them in this regard. Thus, they will be callers to their religion. We have already mentioned some points which may be beneficial in this matter in the thirteenth and twentieth chapters of the Introduction.

However, the children must not be placed in such a school if it becomes a reason in promoting it and encouraging others to attend it, too, and if it becomes quite likely that misguidance will spread and be strengthened.

Q13: Is adoption permissible according to the Sharia?

A: Looking after and raising a non-*Mahram* child is permissible; actually, it is highly recommended if he needs such care. As a matter of fact, it may even become obligatory if the child's life depends on it.

Q14: Can an adopted child become related to the adopting father through the completion of formalities and does he inherit from the one who adopted him?

A: He cannot be related to his adopted parents in a way that leads to the loss of his real lineage. He does not inherit anything of the wealth of his adopted father, and none of the other rulings and obligations relevant to such kinship apply.

Q15: Should the adopting father tell his adopted son the truth of the matter? If his real parents show up, do they have the right to reclaim him? Can the adopting father return him to them? Is he eligible for being reimbursed by them for the money he spent on the child?

A: He must inform the child of his true parents if known. He is not entitled to demand the expenses which he had spent on him. And he must inform him that he is not his real father when he starts to understand matters so this may not be a cause for him getting his lineage confused.

Q16: Some families have become used to celebrating certain occasions such as birthdays of their children. We request Your Eminence to explain your opinion about this matter which has become a normal tradition in some families.

A: The said tradition is one of those that came to us from non-Muslim societies; otherwise, a rational person ought instead to feel sorry for what has already passed of his lifespan and diminished of it. He should feel sorry about the time that he wasted during the year. The believers, may Allah grant them success, should stay away from and abandon this tradition, replacing it by the commemorations of the religious occasions which continue all year long, such as the birth of the Greatest Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the birth anniversaries of the Pure Imams (peace be upon them), and the *Eid of Ghadeer*, and the like, because in these commemorations is the renewing of belief and faith, as well as the entertainment and fun, and the gatherings of the believers and acquainting with one another. This also results in the keeping of our identity and character alive, safeguarding it from loss and annihilation.

Q17: Is it permissible for a Muslim to give his children non-Muslim names such as those of Christians and others? Does the Sharia obligate one to give his children certain Islamic names or does he have the option to choose whatever name he prefers for them?

A: There is no compulsion in using particular names; rather, it is highly recommended to use names which indicate servitude to Allah Almighty, and the names of Muhammad, Ahmad, Ali,

Hasan, Husain, Ja'far, Talib, Abdullah, Hamzah, Fatimah and the names of Prophets, as has been related in narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

It is also disliked to name them after the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) such as the names of Hakam, Hakeem, Malik, Harith, Dharees, Dhirar, Murrah, Harb and Zalim.

As for naming them with Christian names, this is not permissible if a name promotes and supports non-belief and falsehood. Otherwise, this is permissible.

Q18: Is it permissible to name children with the names of the Imams (peace be upon them) with their titles, such as Muhammad al-Baqir, Ja'far al-Sadiq, Fatima al-Zahra?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

RULINGS RELATED TO WOMEN

Q1: In some societies, women are deprived of religious education; so, how can this be dealt with?

A: Attention should be paid to this matter. Women are half of the society. Religious scholars and preachers of the faith must look after this aspect either by setting aside time to guide and educate them, or by educating a special group of women so the latter may spread the religious education among the rest, or by offering them religious courses, or other steps may be undertaken according to abilities and circumstances. Men should also be made aware of the necessity for them to educate their women; this should be emphasized to them, in order to fulfill their obligation to guide their families and save them from the fire, about which Allah Almighty says, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which stern (and) strong angels are appointed, (angels) who do not flinch (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah but do (precisely) what they are commanded" (Qur'an, 66:6).

Q2: Some women's beauty shops need female staff. Does a believing woman have the right to work in beautifying women who do not observe *Hijab* and who adorn themselves before non-*Mahrims*?

A: Yes, she is permitted to do so.

Q3: Is it permissible for the woman who does not cover her face to apply light natural powders on her face?

A: Doing so is not permissible if it is considered to be self-beautification.

Q4: A woman improves her facial look, such as by fixing her eyebrows or applying the kohl, what is the ruling in her regard?

A: There is no harm in it, but she is not permitted to show her embellishment to non-*Mahram* men, other than applying kohl, wearing a ring and a bracelet.

Q5: Is it permissible for an unmarried virgin girl to apply makeup on her face such as the use of eyeliner, facial powders, lipstick, kohl, etc. in order to get someone interested in marrying her?

A: If she was not in the presence of non-*Mahram* men then there is no problem in doing so in itself.

Q6: Is it permissible for a man and woman to dye the hair with commonly known chemical dyes in order to hide grey hair? Is it permissible for a woman to do so with the intention to look good for her husband?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

Q7: What is the ruling about dying hair or the use of what is called "mesh" for a woman?

A: The dying referred to is permissible; it is neither prohibited nor does it void *Wudhu* because it does not prevent water from reaching the hair.

Q8: You mention in your treatise of Islamic laws that it is permissible to leave the face and hands uncovered. Is it permissible for a woman to uncover her face even if it is attractive in a way which may cause men to look at her with sexual excitement?

A: Yes, she is permitted to uncover her face without applying embellishment other than the use of kohl, and men should lower their gaze and not look at her with sexual excitement.

Q9: Should a woman cover her feet?

A: It is an obligatory precaution to cover them in the presence of non-*Mahram* men.

Q10: If a woman uses a wig to cover her real hair, is she permitted to show herself in a way which really is not her real self, seeking embellishment and veil at the same time?

A: By itself, the matter is permissible, but it is prohibited in the following cases:

- (i) If it encourages the doing of what is unlawful.
- (ii) If it is a manifestation of not following the creed.
- (iii) If it is a violation of the sanctity of Islamic law.
- (iv) If it sexually excites one who looks at her; and similar cases.

We have mentioned in more than one place of the Introduction what may be beneficial in this regard.

Q11: Some women's hair falls in certain cases. Are they permitted to let a male doctor examine their hair so he may treat them if falling hair causes difficulties for them as it is most likely?

A: Yes, it is permissible.

Q12: I am a young religious woman, and a young man wishes to marry me. Through his family, he asked to see my personal picture without the head covering.

A. Is it permissible to take the desired picture with such makeup and self-beautification as is commonly used by women in such situations, and without the said head covering?

B. Is it permissible to send the picture for the purpose referred to above?

A: It is permissible to send the picture for the said purpose, but it must be photographed by a woman or by a *Mahram* man. As for the embellishment, it is permissible if it is according to the common and usual way so as it does not mislead or deceive the man; otherwise, it is unlawful. In any case, it is best not to apply such makeup for the picture.

Q13: Is it permissible for a woman to wear colored head cover outside her home?

A: There is no harm in doing so unless they are unusually flashy to the extent they sexually arouse men. In the latter case, it is an obligatory precaution to avoid wearing such clothes.

Q14: We, Muslim women in the West, cannot or find it difficult to wear the black cloak (*Abaya*). Are we permitted to cover up with anything else, perhaps a loose overcoat and the like?

A: *Hijab* is not restricted to wearing the black cloak. Rather, *Hijab* suffices in any form as long as it is not excessive in the way it is cut, designed and decorated so it is likely to attract a man's sexual arousal; in the latter case, one should not wear it based on an obligatory precaution.

It is hoped that believing women, especially the youth amongst them, avoid places of sedition and sexual lust. They should keep themselves distant from lewdness and moral disintegration. They must care about their dignity and decency, especially in

foreign lands, for doing so protects women, thus protecting her respect, her honor and her dignity; it also protects her Islamic culture and her religious knowledge. They should be Islam's messengers in their conduct, and its advocates inviting others to it through their behavior. They should not fuse themselves into a corrupt society and dissolve into it. What has the Western woman gained from her culture and conduct?! What has she reached, that the Muslim woman may find her worthy of being emulated, of following her footsteps?!

We plead to the most Praised One to protect the believing women from the pitfalls of perdition, to make them the embellishment of Islam and faith; surely He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy.

Further beneficial advice has been given in the Introduction.

Q15: What is the ruling regarding a woman who wears or who beautifies herself with jewelry before a non-*Mahram* man while fully adhering to the *Hijab* clothing as required by the Sharia, keeping in mind that she does not do so in order to intentionally show her adornment?

A: A woman is prohibited from displaying her adornment to a non-*Mahram* man other than her kohl, ring and bracelet.

Q16: In the West, contact lenses can be placed on the eye's iris, changing its color to various colors. Does a Muslim woman have the right to put on such contact lenses in order to look beautiful and appear wearing them before non-*Mahram* men?

A: Such adornment is not permissible for displaying before non-*Mahram* men.

Q17: What is the ruling regarding a man tailoring clothes for a woman, taking her measurements from clothing which had been taken off?

A: Apparently, by itself it is permissible unless it results in something which the Sharia prohibits, such as arousing sexual desires or encouraging lewdness, especially if the woman enjoys a high social status to the extent that she is looked on as a role model. If she does so, other women who do not adhere to the legislated restrictions may be encouraged to do so. Rather, it is best for a believing woman to rise above doing this and its likes in any case, for this will be more fitting for her decency, and the furthestmost from implications of sedition and corruption. Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, is the One Who helps us achieve goodness, Who supports our steps towards the right guidance.

Q18: Is it permissible for a woman who observes *Hijab* to learn to drive a car if her trainer is non-*Mahram* man who remains alone with her during the lesson without this necessarily causing her to fall into doing what Islam prohibits?

A: Yes, it is permissible, although it is best to avoid it as much as possible. If we suppose that a pressing need imposes it, there must be precaution against falling into doing what is unlawful.

Q19: Is a woman allowed to look at what a man normally exposes of his body at public places?

A: Yes, it is permissible for her to look – within the conventionally understood limits – at what he exposes, which the usual coexisting and mixing of people requires. However, it is an obligatory precaution not to stare at him.

Q20: Are women allowed to look at football (soccer) games, boxing and the like, since some parts of the bodies of the players are uncovered?

A: Yes, it is permissible as explained in the answer to the previous question. If such is seen on television, there is no problem about watching it, even if one may stare at it, except if sexual arousing results from this.

Q21: Should a woman cover her hair and body before an insane person if his recovery is not expected? Should she cover up before such a person if there is a possibility that he sometimes recovers, although his recovery may be only partial?

A: She is absolutely prohibited from appearing without covering before an insane person, and she has to veil herself, unless he has no desire for women, for in this case she does not have to veil herself. However, it is an obligatory precaution to restrict oneself – in regards to the permissibility to not veil herself before such a person – to an individual who has always been in this condition [of insanity] since his childhood.

Q22: Is it permissible for both genders to work together in factories and offices? Is there anything unlawful or disliked in the contacts that take place among them in conversation, while eating together, or the like? What are the boundaries of this contact since they all work at the same workplace?

A: A woman is permitted to uncover her face and hands without embellishment other than the application of kohl – in the way as it has been traditionally applied – the ring

and the bracelet. She is prohibited from beautifying herself with anything else. She is also prohibited from uncovering anything besides the face and hands, not even the feet, for it is an obligatory precaution to cover them.

A man is prohibited from looking at a woman with lust and pleasure. It is also an obligatory precaution for the woman not to look at him studiously and stare at him.

Each gender is prohibited from touching the other, even by handshaking or kissing, even if it may be innocent and without sexual excitement, merely a greeting.

Both genders should seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed and avoid isolation with a member of the opposite sex, even if the door of the room is open. They should not talk too much amongst each other for this may drag one into sin. Surely Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, is the One Who protects, Who guides to the straight path.

RULINGS RELATED TO YOUTHS

Q1: What do you advise the youths of today and the future?

A: Our advice to the youths stems from the reality that they face: The youths are targeted by every call. Every call persuades them and tries to take advantage of their sentiments, minds, vitality and activity to promote his cause through them. The youth are inexperienced; therefore, it is easy to convince them. From this onset, we advise them to act cautiously in their affairs, discerning the consequences of following the calls, their benefits and harms. They must not be rash to follow a caller only because of his glitter and the beauty of the way it appears without deeply considering the consequences. How many rash people have gritted their teeth in regret when it was just too late, when regret was of no avail. We plead to Allah, the most Praised One, the most Exalted, to grant them guidance and success; He suffices us, and a great One He is to rely on.

Q2: Is it permissible to look at a man or a woman who is totally naked if the onlooker does so for a scientific reason, or he looks at them in order to learn, for example?

A: It is not permissible unless the scientific objective is necessary as is the case with an urgent medical treatment. In this case, the same gender is preferred to look at the body when possible. It also becomes permissible if achieving the scientific knowledge in the study of medical science requires such examination of naked bodies and results in meeting a believer's urgent need for religiously-minded physicians.

Q3: Is a man allowed to uncover his chest, thigh or leg before women?

A: Yes, it is permissible, although it is best to avoid it due to the possibility of its causing one to commit prohibited deeds.

Q4: Are Muslim men in the West permitted to look like the unbelievers by wearing shorts and undershirts, and walk like that in public places?

A: We do not advise such conduct which expresses weakness of personality towards the prevalent tradition in some non-Muslim societies that does not correspond with our Islamic traditions and values.

Q5: Is it permissible to wear clothes with advertisement of alcohol on them? Is it permissible to trade in them?

A: Trading in them is prohibited if they promote alcohol. Also, wearing them is in such case also prohibited. But if it does not promote alcohol drinking, wearing them is not prohibited. The same applies to clothes, hidden or not, in the presence of one who is not likely to be encouraged to drink alcohol. Yes, it is better to avoid wearing such clothes in any case, in order to firm a Muslim's religious personality and so one may rise above such lowliness.

Q6: What is the Sharia's ruling with respect to changing one's hairstyle and clothing in accordance to the fashion common in non-Muslim countries?

A: The said issue can lead to the loss of the Muslim individual's personality, to the loss of many honorable human qualities which Allah instilled in man when He created him. What is suitable for the believing youths is to avoid all of this and not be impressed by what comes to us from the foreigners so we may mimic them.

Q7: In the West, there is a fashion that prevails in which a man wears earrings in one or both of his ears; is this permissible?

A: If it is a manifestation of homosexuality and looking like women, it is prohibited, although it is best for the believers to avoid all such things in any case. We have already stated in the ninth and tenth chapters of the Introduction what is useful in this regard.

Q8: Is a man permitted to wear a watch decorated with gold? What is the ruling about wearing a ring made of silver and brocaded with gold?

A: It is prohibited to wear them and to use them to embellish oneself.

Q9: Is it permissible to carry a pen if it is decorated with gold?

A: Yes, it is.

Q10: Is it permissible for a man to decorate himself with gold, such as wearing gold medals?

A: Men are prohibited from decorating themselves with gold; such prohibition is not restricted to clothes only.

Q11: Are men permitted to wear rings that are gold-plated?

A: Yes, it is permissible if the plating results only in the change of color to gold without have a considerable layer of gold.

Q12: Are men permitted to look at women who do not observe *Hijab*?

A: Yes, they are permitted to look at them but without being sexually aroused.

Q13: Is it permissible for men to look at what non-Muslim women are used to keep uncovered?

A: Pleasurable looks are prohibited. Without deriving such pleasure, looking is not prohibited.

Q14: Is it permissible for men to look at photographs of non-*Mahram* women if they do not know who they are? What if he feels a sexual desire when looking at one but without desire when he looks at another?

A: Based on an obligatory precaution one should not look with a sexual desire, and it is permissible without such a desire. But if looking at her is shameful for her, as she observes the *Hijab* and is respected in the society and similar reasons, it is prohibited to look at the photograph even without lust.

Q15: Is a man permitted to look at the photograph of a woman who observes the *Hijab* and who adheres to the laws of the Sharia if she appears in the photograph without *Hijab*?

A: If the absence of the *Hijab* in the photograph was in a normal way, for a woman in the presence of other women or *Mahram* men then it is permissible to look at it. However, if doing so is shameful for her then it is not permissible to look at the photograph based on compulsory precaution.

Q16: Is it permissible for a man to look closely at the body of a woman, other than her private parts, whom he intends to marry?

A: As an obligatory precaution, one must restrict himself to looking at what is conventionally left uncovered when one puts on clothes such as the arms, legs, head and a portion of the chest, but not what is usually covered with clothes. There is no harm with wearing soft clothes which show the body's shape, but looks must be restricted to what needs to be seen in order to come to know about her physical status and nothing more.

Q17: A man wishes to marry a woman. Is he permitted to speak to her in order to convince her of the same although such talk might include expression of desire? What if meeting and talking to a woman is the only way to convince her of marriage?

A: Yes, it is permissible to talk to her to convince her. But one must avoid sexual pleasure during such meeting.

Q18: It is common nowadays to hire female servants who may not adhere to the *Hijab* required by the Sharia, is this permissible?

A: It is permissible to look at them if they would not observe the *Hijab* if one advises them to do so. This is true if looking at them was without illicit lust, otherwise it is prohibited to look at them.

Q19: In some societies, a person who enters a place shakes hands with all those who were present there before him, including women, without having illicit pleasure in the latter case. If he refuses to shake hands with women, his conduct will be considered rude, and most often it is regarded as an insult and humiliation for the woman. So, is he permitted to shake hands with them?

A: Shaking hands for this purpose is not permissible. What is mentioned in the question does not justify committing the sin. Rather, adhering to the tradition prevalent among the non-Muslims causes loss in the religious identity. So, what must be done is to safeguard the principles of the Sharia with tact and gentleness. One must explain to them the reason behind the refusal to shake hands with them, and that it is not due to disrespecting the women, but it is in order to follow the religious obligation which is meant to safeguard women's chastity and dignity. In the tenth chapter of the Introduction, we have mentioned what can benefit in this regard.

Q20: If we suppose in the previous question that such refusal to shake hands would lead to expulsion or the like, is permissible in this case?

A: If the handshaking is done in order to avoid being harmed by imprisonment, deportation or the like, there is no objection to it. But if it is done in order to achieve some benefit, it is unlawful and it is like one selling his religion for the sake of worldly gains.

Q21: Some families suffer in adhering to the Sharia in the matter of men shaking hands with non-*Mahram* women or vice versa. This prompts some non-*Mahram* relatives, such as cousins, the husband of the aunt, etc., to sever the

kinship, because a religious woman refused to shake hands with a non-*Mahram* man. What is the religious guideline in respect to this very important subject nowadays?

A: Handshaking between man and woman is one of the prohibited traditions brought to our society from some non-Muslim societies. A man must not come in contact with a non-*Mahram* woman's body. The believers should abandon such customs and traditions which do not correspond with our religion since habituating oneself to following their customs leads to the loss of our religious identity. The non-*Mahram* relatives must come to know this, so one's religious commitment should not become the reason behind severing kinship ties. If he does not recognize this, and he severed his ties on its account, he alone bears the burden of severing the tie of kinship and the sin of rejecting the doing of goodness.

Q22: What is the ruling of shaking hands of elderly women who are not-*Mahram*?

A: It is prohibited because touching a non-*Mahram* woman is unlawful under all circumstances.

Q23: Is it permissible to see a couple engaging in intimate acts in public?

A: It is unlawful if it causes sexual excitement and lust.

Q24: One of the most important and serious problems in the student community is young men mixing with young women in classes. As a result of this, students of opposite sex may become emotionally involved with each other. What is the ruling of the Sharia in this regard on one hand? On the other hand, what if such mixing is merely by way of fellowship and friendship?

A: The mixing of both sexes – especially in the said cases which continue and in which both sides are young – is one of the reasons behind the spread of corruption and of unlawful deeds. Therefore, the youths must stay away from anything which leads to what is unlawful and being swept in the torrent of permanent misguidance. So, the mixing between the man and woman is one of the things which the Sharia is very sensitive about.

Dialogue between a male and female is, too, one of the causes of sedition and corruption. Therefore, talk must be restricted to what is necessary and needed. One must have self-control against going too far in his talk and getting into the aspects of emotion and sentiment. All this also especially applies to the woman as her chastity,

decency and dignity are her greatest assets during her life. So, she has to protect them and keep herself distant from anything which may tarnish her image. She must be very cautious especially during these times in which few are those who guard principles and values, and trust is scarce. Allah is the One Who keeps us on the right path, the One Who helps us; surely we belong to Allah and to Him shall be our return.

Q25: Is it permissible to be in the company of non-*Mahram* ladies during a journey, etc., for example, in a university-arranged trip?

A: In itself, it is not prohibited, but if it results in committing a sin then it must be avoided.

Beware of such matters which are of no necessity and are full of religious, ethical and social negativities.

Q26: Is it permissible for a Muslim woman to attend mixed-sex colleges or schools although there is lewdness in the conduct of some male and female students there?

A: Mixing between two sexes by itself is permissible although it is disliked. However, if it causes sedition and corruption it must be avoided in order to avoid committing unlawful acts.

Q27: If mixing between women and men has some benefits although it may result in lawful or unlawful relationships sometimes, is it permissible?

A: Mixing, by itself is disliked. If it results in the doing of something prohibited, this in itself does not make it unlawful. It is like leaving the house or travelling which may result in doing something unlawful. However, if one knows that such mixing will result in committing prohibited acts, one should avoid it in order not to commit it.

Q28: Some youths resort to masturbation because they cannot get married, and they are unable to abandon such a habit. So can they do it once or twice a month to satisfy the desire?

A: They are not permitted to do it: Committing prohibited acts is not permissible, not even once in a lifetime. Allah Almighty has said, "Let those who do not find the means for marriage keep themselves chaste until Allah gives them means out of His grace" (Qur'an, 24:33). This is one of the application of the Greater *Jihad* which is the supreme struggle against the evil in oneself by being patient in not committing unlawful acts. The most Exalted One has also said, "And those who strive in Our

(cause)! We will certainly guide them to Our paths, for truly Allah is with those who do right” (Holy Qur'an, 29:69).

GENERAL MATTERS

Q1: What is the meaning of the phrase “*Ta`arrub ba`d al-hijra*” which is listed among the major sins?

A: It is a migration to a country where the religious knowledge of a Muslim decreases due to him being distant from the centers of religious knowledge and culture.

Q2: One who resides in non-Muslim countries feels he has become a stranger to the religious atmosphere in which he was born and raised: There is no sound of recitation of the Holy Qur'an, no *Adhan* and no sacred shrines to visit. Is such a migration considered as loss in his religion?

A: This by itself does not suffice to be regarded as a diminution in the creed if residing in those countries does not by necessity result in a decrease in one's knowledge of his creed.

Q3: If one's presence in a particular city results in his falling into doing what is unlawful, is he obligated to leave it?

A: What the Sharia mandates is abandonment of doing what is unlawful and nothing else. However, if this depends on him leaving that city then he must do so.

Q4: If an immigrant is concerned about the faith of his children weakening, is it unlawful for him to stay in countries such as these?

A: He must protect his children's religion through all means possible.

Q5: Should an individual in western countries express a keen interest in their children knowing the Arabic language since it is the language of the Holy Qur'an and the Sharia? Also, ignorance of it will lead in the future to ignorance of the basic sources of legislation which are recorded in Arabic. His religious knowledge will then decrease. Subsequently, so will his religion as a result.

A: One must learn what is required of the Arabic language in order to perform the daily prayers, such as the obligatory recitation of *Suratul-Fatiha* and another full chapter after it as well as the recitations in the prostrations and bowings. Actually, one should learn Arabic and stay connected with it in a way which facilitates for him understanding the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet and Infallible Imams (peace be upon them all), as well as their great legacies, which includes their supplications, sermons, ethical teaching, etc. This has a great impact on strengthening the roots of faith and on firming it in one's soul in a way which manifests itself in conduct and behavior. The thirteenth chapter of the Introduction contains useful information in this regard.

Q6: If backbiting and calumny spread and one finds himself unable to reform his society, should he keep himself distant from the society and prefer isolation?

A: He does not have to stay distant from the society, and he does not have to isolate himself. Yes, he is forbidden from listening in a way which helps the achievement of the purpose of one who is backbiting, i.e. paying him attention, listening to his talk and interacting with him. As for merely hearing someone backbiting without making him aware that someone is listening to him and paying attention to his words, it is not unlawful.

Q7: If I see somebody who is not a follower of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) who is doing something wrong, do the laws of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong apply in this case, if he might be influenced and I feel safe from any harm? What if this person was from the People of the Book?

A: Yes, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong becomes obligatory in such a case.

Q8: Is good companionship permissible with non-Muslims if they are neighbors, business partners or the like?

A: Yes, amicable companionship is permissible with them, actually the Sharia recommends it. Islam has urged good conduct, nobleness, honesty and good companionship. Abu al-Rabee' al-Shami narrates saying, "I visited Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) ... and he said, 'O Followers of the Progeny of Muhammed (peace be upon him and his progeny)! Be informed that there is nobody from us [our followers] who does not control himself when he is angry, nor one who is not a good companion to his companion, nor one who does not show good manners to those who show good manners to him, nor one who is not a good neighbor to his good neighbor ... O followers of the Family of Muhammed (peace be upon him and his progeny)! Fear Allah as much as you can, and there is no will and no power except that of Allah.'^[ii] In the eleventh chapter of the Introduction there is useful advice.

Q9: Is it permissible to annoy a neighbor who is Jewish, a Christian, or an atheist?

A: No, it is not permissible. Islam has emphasized on the right of neighbors. The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has been quoted as saying, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) wrote the following by way of a covenant between the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* and whoever lived in the city of Yathrib [Medina]: 'A neighbor is like oneself, who should not be harmed. The sanctity of a neighbor towards a neighbor is like that of his own mother.'^[iii] Zurarah quotes Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) in a tradition saying, "Fatima (peace be upon her) went to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) with a complaint. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) gave her a small sheet of paper and said, 'Learn what it contains.' This text was written on it: 'One who believes in Allah and in the Last Day must not harm his neighbor. One who believes in Allah and in the Last Day must be generous to his guest. One who believes in Allah and in the Last Day must say what is good or remain silent.'^[iv] In a tradition narrated by Abu Mas'ud, Imam al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) says, "Good neighborliness lengthens one's life and establishes homes."^[v] Such traditions are numerous. According to a tradition narrated by al-Hassan ibn Abdullah, Imam al-Kazim

(peace be upon him) said, "Good neighborliness is not just keeping harm away. Good neighborliness is patience when harm is inflicted."^[v]

Q10: How should we in non-Muslim countries deal with the non-Muslims?

A: You have to pay their trust back to them, fulfill your promises to them and be good neighbors to them. These matters are not restricted to only Muslims and the People of the Book. You must give them good company and give them a good impression about Islam and about the sect of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) who requested their followers to invite others to their creed with their actions rather than their words. In fact, it is unlawful to live and deal with them in such a way that harms Islam and reflects a bad image of it and of Muslims.

Q11: Is it permissible to congratulate non-Muslims on the festivals and occasions which they celebrate such as Christmas, Easter, New Year's Day, etc.?

A: There is no harm in acting courteously with them, as much as good fellowship and socializing requires, but one should not go too far. In fact, it is unlawful if it leads to promoting falsehood and dealing with it as an established recognized reality.

Q12: Is it permissible to attend their celebrations and exchange gifts with them as they do among themselves on such occasions?

A: It is not permissible as long as it can be avoided.

Q13: One became familiar with another's secret, so he started extorting the latter, telling him that he wanted a sum of money in exchange for not revealing that secret; otherwise, the secret would be revealed and spread. Does the Sharia permit such blackmailing? What is the ruling of the money taken?

A: It is unlawful to reveal the secret of a believer if it harms or shames him. But if the latter trusted him with it, then it is prohibited to reveal it regardless, even if it does not harm or shame him. When revealing it is unlawful, it is likewise unlawful to threaten him about it in order to get money, and the money taken this way is unlawful.

Q14: Does the ruling in the previous question differ if the secret belongs to a non-Muslim?

A: If a non-Muslim man entrusts someone with his secret, the latter is prohibited from betraying the trust and revealing the secret.

Q15: Is it permissible to offer charity to poor non-Muslims, be they from among the People of the Book or others?

A: Yes, it is permitted when there is necessity for it such as averting hunger or thirst because there is a reward for meeting the need of any living being.

Q16: What is the ruling in respect to the desertion between brothers in faith?

A: If the desertion is based on hostility towards a believer, or on insulting him, taking him lightly or shirking away from him, it is unlawful. There are two cases which are excluded from this rule:

- (i) If the cause of it is the ill conduct of one party from the religious viewpoint.
- (ii) If the relationship was a cause of humiliation and insult to the person who initiated the relationship.

However, quite often, there is confusion between avoiding humiliation, and egoism or stubbornness; so one must be cautious about it.

Q17: Should a believer sever his kinship ties with his female relatives if they insist on not wearing Hijab when they leave the house? Should one do the same with his relatives in general if they insist on drinking wine, abandoning the daily prayers or the like?

A: Yes, it is permissible to cut the ties with them; actually, it is obligatory if by doing so he is forbidding evil when its conditions are fulfilled.

Q18: If a man greets a non-Mahram woman, or if she greets him, should the greeting be answered?

A: It is obligatory to respond to the greeting.

Q19: A Muslim individual came to know another Muslim at a market in a western country. One of them had bought items which were perishable consumer goods. He placed the groceries temporarily inside the car that belonged to the other because they were heavy, and they both forgot about it. The car's owner remembered later on but did not know the name and address of the other person. What should he do with these items?

A: He must search and ask about their owner as far as possible, and when he loses hope that he will find him, he must donate them as charity on behalf of their owner. If they are subject to perish before hope is lost for finding their owner, they must be sold and their price is kept while one keeps looking for their owner. If he is found, the price must be paid to him; but if all hope is lost for finding him, the money is to be paid as charity on behalf of the owner.

Q20: If shaving the beard is common in a society, so a barber cannot refuse to shave it, is this profession still permissible for making a living?

A: A society's convention does not change the ruling of the Sharia. The prohibition of shaving the beard remains as it is. Therefore, one who is not allowed to shave his beard, the barber is prohibited from doing so for him, and the money he receives for shaving it is unlawful.

Q21: Is it permissible to take payment for shaving Muslims' beards:

A. If the individual has a valid excuse – like fear, illness and the like – for shaving the beard?

A: He may do so and may receive his fees for it.

B. What if he is not excused for shaving the beard?

A: It is not permissible and the fee is unlawful.

Q22: Is it permissible to receive the fee if the one having his beard shaven is non-Muslim?

A: Shaving the beard of a non-Muslim is not permissible. If a Muslim does so, he does not deserve the fee for it. But he can take it from him without an intention to form a Sharia-recognized transaction.

Q23: Should the barber find out if the one who is having his beard shaven is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, excused or not, if he does not know?

A: A barber is not permitted to shave anyone's beard except after his knowledge that he is permitted to do so and that he is excused for doing so, and one's faith has nothing to do with it.

Q24: What is the limit of the beard? Can I shave the hair on my cheeks leaving only the hair on the chin?

A: Shaving the hair in the mentioned area is permissible.

[i] Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 637.

[ii] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 11, p. 50.

[iii] *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 2, p. 667.

[iv] *Wasaail Al-Shi'a*, Vol. 8, p. 489.

[v] *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 484.

PROHIBITED ENTERTAINMENT

Q1: What is the definition of prohibited entertainment according to the Sharia?

A: Prohibited entertainment is all that is based on pleasure by leaving the state of solemnity and present reality to something trifling, based on directing attention to the soul, awakening its instincts and shaking its sentiments with musical rhythms in order to satisfy its desire for more excitement, grief, passion or anything else according to different pursuits.

Q2: What is the principle in recognizing the games of gambling? In other words, what does the Sharia mean by “gambling”? When it is said that playing with instruments prepared for gambling is prohibited, how can an instrument be distinguished as made for this purpose or not? Is it permissible to play with it?

A: The gambling game is one based on competition, and the goal behind it is to win money by winning and defeating. When there is doubt about a game being classified as gambling, it can be played, except what has been explicitly declared as being prohibited, such as chess and backgammon so they are prohibited regardless.

Q3: Is it permissible to play with the dice in a game?

A: Yes, it is permissible if the game is not a gambling game.

Q4: Is the domino game prohibited? What is the ruling relevant to playing it for fun rather than for gambling?

A: Domino is a gambling game, and playing it is prohibited with or without betting.

Q5: What is the ruling of playing at Arcade game centers, where children and youths attend to pass their time and play computer games, including chess, in exchange for payment?

A: The said games are permissible. Playing a gambling game is prohibited, based on obligatory precaution, as is the case with chess. Also, it is prohibited to form a legitimate transaction with a child without getting the permission of his guardian.

Q6: Nowadays, televised drama series are shown throughout the world, which propagate the culture of non-Muslims which conflicts to that of Islam. They portray marital infidelity as something quite normal as a result of which the

Muslim youth does not object to it; instead, he sympathizes with the married woman who cheats her husband. Since these series aim at corrupting society, what is the ruling regarding watching them?

A: After the Muslims have been invaded in their own homes with materialistic culture in general and with these programs in particular, which have dragged other societies towards disintegration and abandonment of human values and lofty principles, they are now targeting us with the same. Since those in authority did not restrict these things and did not think about protection from them, Muslims, individuals and groups, must deal with their problems by themselves and keep danger away from themselves by going back to the teachings of their religion, to their deeply rooted lofty principles. We feel obliged to say the following in this regard:

Firstly, every individual is prohibited from watching these devilish series and its likes in two situations:

(i) If he fears for his religion and principles, bearing in mind the fact that the effect of these things on the viewer is not immediate, taking place by just watching, so the individual can find out himself whether his religion and ethics are being harmed or not. Rather, the effect is gradual and does not surface except when it is too late, when the viewer is enticed to watching the events of the drama in such a way it controls his feelings, resulting in the loss of his religion and morality so he does not become aware of its harm in order to think about stop watching them. Even after he becomes aware of this, he may not be able to stop, as is the case with many dominant bad habits.

(ii) If his viewing of them becomes a reason for encouraging others who are weak before them and dazzled by them. Prohibiting what is wrong is one of the greatest obligations; likewise, encouraging what is wrong is one of the greatest prohibitions. This is a great responsibility which a Muslim has no right to overlook. Whenever his status in the society becomes greater, so does his responsibility in this regard.

Secondly, the head of the family, due to his responsibility, has to look after his family's condition. If the family members are not on the same level of responsibility – due to their young age, lack of experience and weakness of the religious and ethical impulse within them, and due to their weakness before temptations and publicity enshrouding these matters – the head of the family is the one who bears the greatest responsibility in guiding them, directing them, guarding them and being cautious about all of that. Allah Almighty says, "O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones, over which stern (and) strong angels are appointed, (angels) who do not flinch (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah but do (precisely) what they are commanded" (Qur'an, 66:6).

Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have said, "Each of you is like a shepherd and is responsible for his flock." Therefore, the head of the family must look with insightful eyes into the long term catastrophic outcomes and the danger awaiting his family members' religion, principles and behavior, the apples of his eyes that they are, the perpetuation of his existence. So, you see him compassionate towards them if a thorn harms them, or when they are in pain, yet he does not try to save them from Allah's wrath and the retribution which cannot be withstood by the heavens and the earth. And you see him pay attention to their dignity in the life of this world and among people, yet he does not care about their behavior and principles which complete their humanity and complement their personality and lifts their status and honor.

So, let heads of families look at how disintegration in their families finds its way to the society as a whole when the society turns into a disintegrated and bestial one. We should derive ample moral lessons from some contemporary Western societies that have lost their cohesion as a result of deserting their values and principles.

Thirdly, the sect of the followers of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them), may Allah increase its loftiness and dignity, has a strong propagation and guiding power which the other groups lack. This is due to their continuous religious occasions all year round, and due to the blessing of the teachings of its pure and purified Imams (peace be upon them). These teachings have urged the believers to get together to commemorate the Ahl al-Bayt, the occasions when orators and educators direct their criticism towards the culture of looseness in general and to these television drama series in particular. This could be done in the following ways:

- (i) by causing repulsion from them by explaining what the Sharia's rulings are in respect to them and the harms they inflict on the individual and the society.
- (ii) by belittling them, explaining how shallow they are and how shallow their sources are, that they represent a trivial lewd culture. Due to the strength and terseness of argument, these orators and educators are able to show these immoralities are so repulsive that only trivial individuals pay attention to them. Such psychological warfare is more effective on people than explaining to them how the Sharia prohibits them. By this, the value of these programs and their impact and control are weakened.

We still remember what some newspapers published on the occasion of the first campaign against *Hijab* in France. Some "educated" Frenchmen provided their argument against *Hijab* in order to ban it, saying that such a ban would be a victory for the dignity of the French, because through their *Hijab* the Muslims practically declare that the French society is morally loose, lewd and contemptible.

From the above, the importance of the psychological element becomes obvious in dropping the values of the loose Western culture versus the firmness of the honorable ethical values: The West portrayed the abandonment of *Hijab* as being the highest principle of sophistication, progress and civilization, whereas *Hijab* is the outcome of ignorance, lagging behind and backwardness. Yet, they fear *Hijab* and see in it a challenge to their dignity and a declaration of its fall and disintegration.

Orators and preachers have to pay attention to this aspect. We plead to the most Praised One to grant the believers success as they attempt to safeguard their religion and principles and to feel proud of them; surely my success comes from Allah; upon Him do I rely, and to Him is my ultimate return; surely there is neither will nor power save in Allah, the High, the Great.

Q7: What is the ruling regarding watching television series in which Muslim or non-Muslim women are shown uncovering their hair and parts of their bodies, in addition to the immoral context of some of them?

A: Looking at them while deriving sexual pleasure is unlawful. The same applies if a person watching these programs encourages others to commit sins and becomes a cause for propagating it and making it a usual norm.

Q8: Does the concept of singing revert to conventional understanding?

A: Singing is a sound which includes changes in the tone of the voice and vowel elongation in particular way that can potentially cause physical movement of the body in harmony with it with the intention of gaining pleasure in a way that the people of sin and pleasure are accustomed to. We do not mean by this that such sound is used currently by those people, such that it becomes permissible to listen to singing which those people abandoned; rather, it is anything based on deriving pleasure by leaving the state of seriousness and current reality towards something trifling, based on directing attention to the soul, awakening its instincts and shaking its sentiments with rhythms in order to satisfy its desire for more excitement, grief, passion, pride, love or anything else according to different pursuits.

Q9: We see how some of those who recite religious commemorations or birth anniversaries imitate songs' melodies while changing their wordings. How can one determine whether these are prohibited or not?

A: From what has already been mentioned, it appears that it is legitimate to imitate songs' melodies in the gatherings of mourning Imam Hussein (peace be upon to him). This is so because they intend neither to entertain nor to gain pleasure; rather, the

intention behind them is to draw tears due to the grief over the usurpation and injustice against him (peace be upon him) and to manifest the tragedy, and the like, which the Sharia permits.

Q10: Is it permissible to listen to singing which causes sadness and reminds us of our homeland and our people and it sometimes causes us to weep?

A: It is not permissible.

Q11: We are a group of female graduates of Physical Education and are working in the field of training women. The nature of our work is to conduct physical fitness exercises for women. These exercises require performance according to the rhythms of Western musical tracks specifically written for performing swaying movements that look like dancing. Most often, interaction and harmony take place between the musical note and the trainer as well as trainee alike. We ask your eminence to explain the ruling in this regards.

A: Listening to the music in the indicated way is prohibited, and it is not legitimized when the nature of work depends on it.

Muslims are supposed to choose their line of work based on what the Sharia rules in its regard, and in the appropriate way, not in the way it is imposed by intrusive averse cultures. We plead to the most Praised and Exalted One that the Muslim graduates and all the faithful would be committed to their religion and proud of their culture which raised them to the level of responsibility and noble humanity; surely, He is the Master of the believers.

Q12: Is it permissible for women to dance with women?

A: Based on an obligatory precaution, one should abandon anything that results from a systemized rhythm similar to a musical one even if it is not accompanied by music. However, if it is not done in the said way, there is no harm in it, and it may not be even labeled as dancing.

Q13: Does this include clapping, too?

A: Clapping by itself is lawful unless it is similar to a musical beat; in which case, based on compulsory precaution, one should abandon it.

Q14: Is it permissible for the wife, in order to excite and please her husband, to dance and sing [for him]?

A: The criterion in the prohibition has been clarified in the aforementioned guidelines. Exciting and pleasing the husband in this way does not make lawful what has been prohibited.

Q15: Does the woman have the right during weddings to dance and sing in the way whereby people of sin are accustomed to?

A: She is allowed to sing if no non-*Mahram* man hears her voice and without a musical beat in the case of weddings in particular. With respect to dancing, the ruling relevant to it is as has already been mentioned.

Q16: Is it permissible for women during the wedding to listen to common audiotapes of male and female singers if they are accompanied by music?

A: No, it is not permissible.

PROPAGATION OF RELIGION

Q1: Means of expression have developed in these days; so, do you encourage presenting some important Islamic events on the screen after filming them for example?

A: We do not find a reason for it to be impermissible if the presentation results in attracting the public towards the event in a better way, provided that the presentation is successful in expressing the particularities that make up its significance and in attracting the people to it without causing distortion or misrepresentation, and without consisting of obstacles, be they religious, ethical or otherwise. Before approaching it, the subject matter must be researched well from sincere people of knowledge. We plead to Allah Almighty to guide the steps of those who serve the religion and to crown their deeds with success; He is the most Merciful of those who have mercy.

Q2: After relying on Allah Almighty, we decided to produce narrative film that portrays the immortalized event of Karbala and shows the lofty Islamic values and great principles for which the Imam and grandson of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) was martyred. On this occasion, we will not present the character of Imam al-Hussein (peace be upon him) in the usual way. Rather, through photography, production and effects, we will show a halo-like effect. Before we start the subject, we wish to receive guidance from Your Eminence about the Sharia-approved way of showing the personality of Imam al-Hussein (peace be upon him) in the film?

A: We appreciate your noble interests and serious efforts to serve Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and propagate their lofty principles for which they sacrificed everything precious, and we would like to attract your attention to the following:

1. Attention must be paid not to show holy individuals, such as the character of Imam al-Hussein (peace be upon him), in a clearly-defined way with visible features, and it is not enough to give it a halo-effect while also showing clear features. However, there should be something in the film that symbolizes and points to him (peace be upon him).
2. There must be focus on how the Imam (peace be upon him) was wronged by first emphasizing his right and, then, by stressing the tremendous suffering he and his family had to undertake, the tragedies and calamities to which he was subjected, and the fact that many of these tragedies and calamities were not necessary for the opponents to achieve their goal in eliminating him, which shows that they had been stripped of their own humanity and become immersed in crime.
3. There must be focus on the Imam (peace be upon him) knowing about his end from the very beginning, and that he was determined from the beginning to welcome this end. This is testified by his speech at the Holy Mosque of Makkah which he delivered one day before starting his journey to Iraq, his dialogue with Abdullah ibn Abbas, his dialogue with his brother Muhammed ibn al-Hanafiyya, his letter to Muslim ibn Aqeel (peace be upon him), his

determination to continue his march after he knew about the martyrdom of Muslim ibn Aqeel (peace be upon him), his accompanying of al-Hurr al-Riyahi until he had reached deeply into the area under the command of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad [although he could return at this juncture], his letter to Banu Hashim in Medina in which he stated, "anyone who joins me will be martyred, and anyone who lags behind me will not obtain victory," and his emphasis in his dialogue with Umar ibn Sa'd that his martyrdom was a matter already decreed by the Almighty, and many other such instances, in addition to the knowledge of the unknown stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) and others that Imam al-Hussain (peace be upon him) would be killed. All this emphasizes that he (peace be upon him) sacrificed for a sublime goal, and that he succeeded in so doing. He was not a leader who attempted to do something in which he failed as a result of miscalculations, as the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) try to claim.

4. There must be focus on the ideals and principles in his life and that of his companions, on their being fully aware of the good outcome of their sacrifices and the success of their endeavor. This should be explained by showing their statements and norms of conduct which testify to it.

5. There must be focus on the necessity of this tragic renaissance and on the magnanimous sanctity violated and the ugliness of what happened. Doing so is for the sake of waking the conscience of the nation against the oppressors: Rulers always focused on the legitimacy of their ruling as caliphs and on the sacrosanctity of their rule. The sought objective of these rulers has been to legitimize their actions, decisions and legislations so these would become part of the religion and must be treated as the Sharia even if they violate the true Islamic Sharia derived from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. These rulers' actions have caused the creed to weaken until it is forgotten, as was the case with previous religions. There is a great impact in showing such ugliness of the violations of the magnanimous sanctities during the tragedy of Karbala in attracting the nation's attention to the reality of the rulers, in separating them from religion to another reality which represents crime and oppression, which does not have the power to change and distort the creed.

6. People's attention should be drawn towards the unknown elements relevant to the event, such as cosmic events before the battle took place, a change that took place to the cosmos, the severed head of Imam al-Hussain (peace be upon him) speaking and other such events which are beyond the norms of nature. All this emphasizes that it was a Divine Epic which Allah Almighty had decreed in order to benefit and serve the religion, the doctrine, firm the word of Allah Almighty and His call on earth.

7. It may be better to show the film after its completion to a number of well-known personalities from among the sincere people of expertise and specialization, so they may offer their comments about it before it is distributed among the public.

Q3: An immigrant preacher lives among people of various ideologies and doctrines, be they Islamic or non-Islamic; so, could Your Eminence please provide us with some guidelines

and directives that help him undertake the propagation of the Sharia-imposed obligations in an easier and more successful way?

A: There must be full caution against including something which is not Islamic in the process of propagation, or even deviated ideologies that are attributed to Islam and counted among its beliefs. The preacher will then bear the burden of the greatest crime, since it is a distortion of the fact and reality and misguidance and poisoning of people's minds.

We have the greatest assets of ideologies and concepts embedded in the Holy Qur'an, the teachings of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) in their statements, sermons and supplications as well as derived from their way of life, conduct and the behavior of their followers who followed their footsteps. All this provides sufficient explanations for the doctrines, Islamic laws, ethics and manners, for cultivating the souls and getting them to reach perfection. And all of these are already within our reach and are easy to access and benefit from. We have the right to raise our heads in pride and glory due to them. Through all of this, a researcher and a preacher are free of need from other ideologies and presentations no matter what they may be or where they come from. A little amount of truth suffices one from a great amount of falsehood, let alone the abundance of such noble concepts and lofty ideologies that we have. Allah Almighty has said, "Do you not see how Allah sets forth a parable? A goodly word is like a goodly tree the root of which is firmly fixed and branches reaching the heavens; it brings forth its fruit at all times, by its Lord's permission. Thus Allah sets forth parables for men so that they may receive admonishment. And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree. It is pulled up by the root from the surface of the earth: It has no stability" (Qur'an, 14:24-26). All praise is due to Allah for His blessings on us of guidance.

Q4: There are some preachers and students of religious sciences who were forced by circumstances to migrate to Western lands. They are torn between continuing to perform their Sharia-required function in propagation and the studying of the Islamic sciences on one hand, or looking for a job in some other field on the other hand. This is so because life here is hard, and it is difficult to combine both. So, is it permissible for them to desert their religious duties in propagation and look for another job, despite knowing the need for religious preachers?

A: Allah does not over-burden anybody, only what one is capable of bearing. However, the importance of propagation in these lands obligates its performance as much as possible, even if it may be with regard to some of its aspects if all of them cannot be performed. In this respect, one knows best what he can do; surely we belong to Allah, and to Him is our return.

Q5: In the tough circumstances through which our Islamic nation is passing, there is a trust crisis in some of our societies, between the society and some clerics from among the scholars and preachers in some countries. Numerous circumstances have contributed in creating this trust crisis. We wish you would be so kind to provide us with some pieces of advice and directives to alleviate this problem.

A: The said crisis is one of the most serious and complex problems this oppressed sect has passed through. Yet, it is an indication of a blessing on this sect which corresponds to its

resilience and immortality; because it shows that the society is free of blind following of clerics and preachers. This makes a cleric unable to derail the society away from the straight path of this sect, if he wants to do so for whatever reason, be it his ill intention subduing him, or if he is subjected to external pressures or temptations, as it has taken place to many sects and societies.

Also, if a cleric or a preacher is subject to criticism and scrutiny, he will remain cautious, vigilant and try to avoid slippery paths. He will keep himself distant from accusations; he will then be prompted to try to attain perfection and loftiness.

In any case, all sides must observe the limits set by Allah Almighty and beware of crossing them under the pretext of liberation or impulse. They must seek to please Allah Almighty while maintaining a true intention with Him.

A cleric and preacher must pay attention to performing his function in the best possible way. He must avoid negativities as much as possible and listen to constructive criticism. He must be responsive to it, without the matter causing him to attempt to please people at the expense of his principles and duties no matter what the cost may be.

Members of the society must encourage straightforwardness, the performance of duties, the rejection of deviation regardless of its source and caution against destructive, irresponsible and unfair criticism.

In so doing, first and foremost, the pleasure of Allah is obtained, which is the most important cause of success and blessings in one's work and in strengthening one's efforts. This in turn will strengthen people's trust in the clerics and preachers so they feel comfortable with the latter. They will listen to him, seek his guidance and directives, accept what he says, co-operate with him in order to serve this honorable sect, which is based on reality and truths and supported by clear and evident proofs, the efforts of its dignitaries and scholars, and their sacrifices, patience, steadfastness, perseverance throughout the ages, during the times of trials, tribulations and seditions.

We plead to Him, the most Praised One, to enable us to labor along His path, the path of those who always seek to please Him, those whose good deeds He accepts; surely He is the most Affectionate towards the believers, the most Merciful. Surely my success comes from Allah; on Him do I rely, and to Him shall I return.