Path of Eloquence

Nahjul-Balāğha

By

Imām Alī ibn Abū Tālib

VOLUME THREE

Translated from the Arabic

By

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Imām Alī ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ

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Let your blessing of Muhammed endure,
Without hesitation it is accepted for sure.
Between acceptance and rejection do our deeds swing,
But in the way of blessinging Prophet Muhammed stands nothing.
Amazing rulings and judgments of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abü Tālib 

Very Interesting Stories

من غرائب قضاء وأحكام أمير المؤمنين علي أبى طالب

قصص في غاية الروعة والتشويق

أم نكرت إبنها

في كتاب عجاب أحكامه، حدثني أبي، عن محمد بن أبي عمر، عن عمر بن يزيد، عن أبي المعلوي، عن أبي عبد الله الخ، ثم قال: وعنه عن أبي أسحاق السبيعي، عن عاصم بن ضمرة، قال: سمعت غلاماً بالمدينة وهو يقول: "يا أحكم الحاكمين، أحكم بيني وبين أمي بالحق". فقال عمر بن الأطفاب: "يا غلام، لم تدعو على أمك؟" قال: "يا أمير المؤمنين، أنها حملتني في بطنها تسعنا، وأرضعتني حولين كاملين، فلما تعرعت وعرفت الخبر من الشر، وعيني من شمالي، طردنتي وانتفنت مني، وزعمت أنها لا تعرفني". فقال عمر: "أين تكون الوالدة؟" قال: "في سفينة بني فلان".

"علي بام الغلام"، فأتوا بها مع أربعة أخوة لها واربعين قسامة يشهدون لها أنها لا تعرف الحصبي، وأن هذا الغلام لم يلمسها من قبل، ويريد أن يفضحها في عشيرتها، وأن هذه الجارية من قريش لم تتزوج قط، وأنها بخامت ربي. فقال عمر: "ما تقول، يا غلام؟" فقال الغلام: "يا أمير المؤمنين، هذه والله أمي، حملتني في بطنها تسنا، وأرضعتني حولين كاملين، فلما تعرعت وعرفت الخبر من الشر، وعيني من شمالي، طردنتي وانتفنت مني، وزعمت أنها لا تعرفني".

فقال عمر: "يا هذا، ما يقول الغلام؟" فقالت: "يا أمير المؤمنين، والذي احتجب بالنور ولا عين تراه، وحق محمد وما ولد، ما أعرفه، ولا أدرأ أي الناس هو. إنه غلام مدع يريد أن يفضحني في عشيرتي ونا، فأنا جارية من قريش لم تتزوج قط، وأنها بخامت ربي".

فقال عمر: "ألك شهود؟" قالت: "نعم، هؤلاء"، فتقدم الأربعة القسمة، فشهدوا عند عمر أن هذا الغلام مدع يريد أن يفضحها في عشيرتها، وأن هذه جارية من قريش بخامت
ربها، لم تتزوج قط. فقال عمر: "خذوا بيد الغلام فانطلقوا به إلى السجن حتى نسال عنه وعن الشهود. فنعلت شهادتهم جدلته حذ المفتري".

فأخذ بيد الغلام ينطلق به إلى السجن، فتقاتلم أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام في بعض الطريق فقال الغلام: "يا ابن عم محمد، اني غلام مظلوم، وهذا عمر قد أمر بي إلى السجن". فقال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: "أردوه إلى عمر". فردوه إليه. فقال عمر: "أمرت به إلى السجن فردتموه!" فقالوا: "يا أمير المؤمنين، أرينا برده عليه بن أبي طالب، وقد قلت أنت: لا تختصوا على أمرا".

فبينا هم كذلك، إذ أقبل أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام، فقال: "علي بأم الكلام"، فأتوا بها، فقال:
"يا غلام، ما تقول؟" فأعاد الكلام. فقال علي عليه السلام: "أتذن لي ان أقضي بينهم?" فقال عمر: "يا سبحان الله! وكيف لا وقد سمعت رسول الله (ص) يقول: أعلمكم علي بن أبي طالب!" ثم قال علي عليه السلام للمرأة: "يا هذه، ألك شهود؟" قالت: "نعم"، فتقدم الأربعون القسامة فشهدوا بالشهادة الأولى. فقال علي أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: "والله لأقضين اليوم بينما بقضية هي مرضى للرب من فوق عرشه عيني في حبيب رسول الله".

قال لهم: "أمي فيكم وفيها جائزة" قالوا: "نعم، يا ابن عم محمد، أمرك فينا وفي أختنا جائزة". فقال علي عليه السلام: "أشهد الله، وأشهد رسوله، ومن حضر من المسلمين، أني قد زوجت هذه الجارية من هذا الغلام بأربعمائة درهم، والرجل من مالي. يا قنبر، علي بالدراجهم"، فأتاه قنبر بها، فصمها في حجر الغلام، فقال: "خذها وصبيها في حجر إمرأتك، ولا تأتنا إلا ويك أثر العرس"، يعني الفصل.

فقال الغلام إلى المرأة قضى الدراج في حجرها، ثم أخذ يبيدها وقال لها: "قومي"، فنادت المرأة: "الأمن الأمان، يا ابن عم محمد! تريده أن تزوجني من ولدي؟! هذا والله ولدي، زوجوني هجينا فولدت منه هذا، فلما تزوج وشب أمراني أن أنفني منه وأطره، وهذا والله إبني، وفوادي يتقلح أسفا على ولي"، ثم أخذت بيد الغلام فانطلققت.

نادي عمر: "واعمراء! لولا علي لهلك عمر!

رواه ابن شهراشوب في المناقب (مناقب علي بن أبي طالب) باختصار عن حديث أبي تراب الخطيب، وكافي الكليني، وتهذيب أبي جعفر عن عاصم بن ضمرة.

معضلة في الرياضيات محيره للعقل يحلها أبو الحسن علي

ما ورد في المسائل القضائية عن الإمام علي عليه السلام:
كان هناك ثلاثة رجال يملكون 17 جملا، بحسب متفاوته، فكان الأول يملك نصفهما
والثاني ثلثها، والثالث تسعها، ولم يجدوا طريقة لتقسيم تلك الجمال فيما بينهم. وحسب
النسب، يكون التوزيع كالآتي:

ال первو يملك 17 ÷ 2 = 8.5
الثاني يملك 17 ÷ 3 = 5.67
الثالث يملك 17 ÷ 9 = 1.89

فقال لهم الإمام علي بن أبي طالب، "هل لي إضافة جملتي إلى القطيع؟" فوافقوا بعد الاستغراب.
الشد. فصار مجموع الجملا 18 جملا وقام بالتوزيع كالآتي:

ال первو يملك 18 ÷ 2 = 9
الثاني يملك 18 ÷ 3 = 6
الثالث يملك 18 ÷ 9 = 2

ولكن الغريب في الموضوع ان المجموع النهائي بعد التقسيم يكون المجموع 17 جملا;
فأخذ كل واحد منهم أكثر من حقه، ورجع الإمام جمله اليه....

رجل ضرب رجلًا على هامته

رفع إلى أمير المؤمنين صلوات الله عليه أن رجلًا ضرب رجلًا على هامته، فادعى
المضرب أنه لا يبصر شيئا بعينيه، وأنه لا يتملأ رأيته، وأنه قد خسر فلا ينطق. فقال
أمر المؤمنين عليه الصلاة والسلام: "إن كان صادقا فيما ادعاه، فقد وجبت له ثلاث ديانات.
فقيل: كيف يستبطر ذلك منه يا أمير المؤمنين حتى يعلموا أنه صادق؟" فقال: أما ما أدعاه في
عينيه وأنه لا يبصر بهما شيئا، فإنه يستبطر ذلك بعله. ارفع عينيك إلى عين
الجمس، فإن كان صحيحا، لم يتملأك أن يغمس في نظارك، وإن كان كما زعم لا يبصر بهما،
بقيت عيناه مفتوحتين. وأما ما أدعاه في خياله، فإنه لا ينعت رأيته، فإنه يستبطر ذلك
بفراغه بدنت من أنفه، فإن كان صحيحا، وصلى راحته والبراق إلى دماغه، ودمعت
عيناه، وإنما رأسه. وأما ما أدعاه في لسانه فإنه لا ينطق، فإنه يستبطر ذلك بابرة
تضرب على لسانه، فإن كان ينطق، خرج الدم أحمر؛ وإن كان كما أدعى لا ينطق، خرج
الدم أسود."

نزاع على صبي

تنازعت إمرأتان على طفلين رضيعين، أحدهما رضيع من الآخر، فادعت كل منهما بأنه
ولد هو ابنها، فجاجتها إلى عمر بن الخطاب للقضاء بينهما، فعجز عن حل المسألة، وقال
عمر: "أين أبو الحسن كاشف الدم والغم؟"
فأخبروا الإمام علي ﷺ بالأمر وطلبوا منه الحضور لحل هذه المسألة، فجاء الإمام علي ﷺ وقال: "أتوبي بالقولين: "أحسنت، فاعتنوا عليك، فوزن كلاً منهما ثم قال: "أعطوا هاتين القاريتين لكل من هاتين الأمراتين ليملئة من حليب شبيهما".

فملئت الأمراتين القوارير من الحليب وأعطتهما إلى الإمام علي ﷺ فوزن الإمام علي ﷺ كل من القاريتين، فشاد أن وزن الحليب في أحدى القاريتين أقل من وزن في القارورة الأخرى، فقال عليه السلام: "إني الهي هو ابن صاحب هذا القارورة التي تقل حليبها، والبنث هي بنت صاحبة القارورة الأخرى التي خف وزن حليبها". فقال عمر: "وأي حجة تفضي بذلك يا علي؟" فقال الإمام علي ﷺ: "لقد جعل الله للذكر حظاً كحظ الاثنين في الأرث.

وجعل الأطباء هذا الأمر ميزاناً لاستدلال على تشخيص الذكر من الأنثى.

(1) مناقب ابن شهرآبوب: ج 2، ص 367.

أمراتان تناؤعتا على طفل

كثيراً ما كان الإمام علي ﷺ يتبع الجواب النفسي ليعرف الصدق من الكذب. قال الإمام علي ﷺ: ((ما أضر أحد شيئاً إلا ظهر في فتائت لسانه وصفحات وجهه))

قال الشيخ المعيد: إن أمراتين تناؤعتا في عهد عمر بن الخطاب على طفل ادعته كل واحدة منهما بغير بينة. فألتبس الحكم على عمر وزع فيه إلى أمير المؤمنين الإمام علي عليه السلام. فقرر الخليفة أن يرسلوا المراتين والطفل إلى بيت الإمام علي ﷺ ليحكم بينهما. فاستجاب الإمام علي ﷺ، وتم إرسال أمراتي كل امرأة لوحدها، ولكن بدون جدوى لأن جوابهما كان جواباً واحداً.


من كتاب "الإعجاز العلمي عند الإمام علي ﷺ" تأليف لبيب بيضون (مؤسسة الأعلى للطبعات، بيروت، لبنان).

6
أسئلة وحكم

في كتاب الارشاد: حدثنا جعفر بن شريح الحضري عن مالك بن أعين الجهني عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: لما ولي عمر بن الخطاب، جاء رجل يهودي في المسجد وهو قاعد ومعه أبو أيوب (الأنصاري). قال اليهودي: أنت الذي يسأل الناس ولاتسأل، وأنت أمير المؤمنين تحكم ولا يحكم عليك؟ قال عمر: "نعم".

قال اليهودي: "أخبرني عن واحد ليس له ثان، واثنين ليس لهما ثالث، وثلاثة ليس لهم رابع، واربعة ليس لها خامس، وخمسة ليس لها سادس، وستة ليس لها سابع، وسبعة ليس لها ثامن، وثمانية ليس لها تاسع، وتسعة ليس لها عاشر، وعشرة ليس لها حادي عشر؟"

عجز عمر عن الإجابة، فلم يجب وأطرق. فقال أبو أيوب لليهودي: "عنك مشغول، ولكن انت ذلك الرجل القاعد"، و أشار إلى أمير المؤمنين على أبي أيوب طالب عليه، فجاءه اليهودي وسأله كما سأل عمر، فقال علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام: "أما الواحد الذي لا ثاني له فلا يكون تبارك وتعالى؛ وأما الاثنين اللذان ليس لهما ثالث فالشمس والقمر؛ وأما الثلاثة التي ليس لها رابع فالطلق؛ وأما الأربعة التي ليس لها خامس فالنساء؛ وأما الخمسة التي ليس لها سادس فالصلاة؛ وأما السدمة التي ليس لها سابع فالسماوات والأرض؛ وأما السبعة التي ليس لها ثامن فالسماوات السبع؛ وأما الثمانية التي ليس لها تاسع فحملة العرش؛ وأما التسعة التي ليس لها عاشر فحمل المرأة؛ وأما العشرة التي ليس لها حادي عشر فالعشرة أيام التي تتم الله بها ميقات موسيه"؛ فأسلّم اليهودي على يد أبي الحسن عليه السلام.

A Woman Who Disowned her Son

In a chapter about amazing rulings of the Imām, Ibn Shahr Āshūb narrates the following in his book Manāqib Ali ibn Abī Talib, and the same text exists in al-Kulayni’s Al-Kāfī and in Abū Ja’far’s Tahtheeb al-Tahtheeb, all quoting Āsim ibn Damrah, a companion of the Imām, as saying the following:

“A young man in Medīna was heard calling out thus: ‘O most just of all Rulers! Do judge between myself and my mother in truth.’ Omar ibn al-Khattāb asked him, ‘Young man! Why are you making an invocation against your own mother?!’ The youth said, ‘O Commander of the faithful! She carried me in her womb for nine months and breast-fed me for two full years. When I grew up and
came to distinguish between goodness and evil, right and left, she expelled me and disowned me, and she even claimed that she did not know me.”

Omar said, “Where is your mother?” He said, “She is at the shed of so-and-so.” Omar ordered his men to bring him the young man’s mother. She was brought to caliph Omar accompanied by four of her brothers and forty men swearing in testimony that she did not know who the young man was, and that he was a pretender, an unfair and an oppressive individual who wanted to scandalize her in her tribe, that the woman belonged to Quraish and was never married, that she was sealed (a virgin) just as her Lord created her. The young man, seeing his mother, said, “O Commander of the faithful! This by Allah is my mother who carried me in her womb for nine months and breast-fed me for two full years. Once I grew up and came to distinguish between goodness and evil, right and left, she expelled me and disowned me. She even claimed that she did not know me.” Omar said, “You, woman, what do you say about this youth’s statement?” She said, “O Commander of the faithful! I swear by the One Who is veiled by noor and Whom no eye can see, and by the righteousness of Muhammed and of his Progeny, I do not know him, I do not know who among the people he is. He is a youth who makes a claim desiring to scandalize me in my tribe. I am a woman from Quraish, and I never got married. I am sealed (with virginity) by my Lord.”

Omar asked the woman, “Do you have witnesses?” She said, “Yes, here they are.” The forty swearing men stepped forward and testified to Omar that the youth was a pretender who wanted to scandalize the women in her tribe, and that she was a woman from Quraish who was virgin and was never married. Omar said, “Take the youth by the hand to the prison so we may inquire about him and about the witnesses. If their testimony is just, I shall whip him as one who has committed calumny.”

The youth was taken by the hand to the prison. On the way, they were met by the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abū Talib  to whom the youth cried out, “O cousin of Muhammed! I am an oppressed young man, and this Omar has ordered me to be jailed.”
The Commander of the Faithful said to them (to the escorting policemen), “Take him back to Omar,” so they took him back. Seeing them, Omar said, “I ordered him jailed, yet you bring him back?!” They said, “O Commander of the faithful! Ali ibn Abū Tālib ordered us to send him back, and you yourself had told us not to disobey any order of Ali.”

As they were thus engaged, the Commander of the Faithful came. He said, “Bring me the youth’s mother.” She was brought to him. He asked the youth, “Young man! What do you have to say?” The youth repeated to Ali what he had said to Omar. Ali said to Omar, “Subhān-Allāh (Praise is due to Allāh)! Why not, since I have heard the Messenger of Allāh say, ‘The most knowledgeable man among you is Ali ibn Abū Tālib’?!” Ali asked the woman, “Do you have witnesses?” She said, “Yes,” whereupon the forty witnesses pronounced their oath as they had done the first time. Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, said, “By Allāh, I shall rule between you in a case wherein there is Pleasure for Allāh from above His `Arsh and which the one I love, the Messenger of Allāh, taught me.” He asked the woman, “Do you have a guardian?” She said, “Yes, these are my guardians, my brothers.”

Ali said to them, “Is my command regarding you all and regarding herself permissible?” They said, “Yes, O cousin of Muhammed; your command is obeyed by all of us and by our sister; it is permissible.” Ali said, “I invoke Allāh to testify, and I invoke His Messenger to testify as well as the Muslims who are present here, that I have married this woman off to this youth for (the dower of) four hundred dirhams, and the cash is of my own money. O Qanbar, bring me the dirhams.” Qanbar brought the Imam the cash which the Imam emptied in the youth’s lap saying, “Take these dirham and place them in the lap of your woman, and do not come back to us except so we would see the wedding’s sign,” meaning his having performed the ghusul (ceremonial post-intercourse bath).

The young man went out to the woman and dropped the dirhams in
Her lap, took her hand and said, “Stand up.” The woman screamed, “Security! Security (against the fire of Hell)! O cousin of Muhammed! Do you want to marry me off to my own son?! This by Allāh is my son. They married me off to a non-Arab man, so I gave birth by him to this youth. When he grew up and became an adult, they ordered me to disown him and to expel him. This, by Allāh, is my son, and my heart is burning in sorrow for my son.” She then took the youth’s hand and went away.

It was then that caliph Omar called out, “O Omar! Had it not been for Ali, Omar would have perished!”

This incident is also documented and traced, in addition to the above, by the author of Hadā’iq Abū Turāb al-Khatīb.

A Baffling Mathematical Problem Solved by Abul-Hassan

The following incident is included among judicial issues involving Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib:

Three men owned 17 camels in varying percentages. The first owned half of them, the third owned a third of them and the third owned a ninth of them. They found no way to divide those camels among them. According to the ratios, the distribution would be as follows:

The first owned $17 \div 2 = 8.5$
The second owned $17 \div 3 = 5.67$
The third owned $17 \div 9 = 1.89$

Imām Ali said to them, “May I add my own camel to the herd?” They agreed though with extreme amazement. The total number of the camels became 18 which the Imām distributed as follows:

The first owned $18 \div 2 = 9$
The second owned $18 \div 3 = 6$
The third owned $18 \div 9 = 2$
What is amazing in this regard is that the final total, after the distribution is made, totals 17 camels thus: $9 + 6 + 2 = 17$. The Imām, therefore, took his camel back.

A Man Hits another on the Head

A man who had hit another man on the head was brought to the Commander of the Faithful Ālī. The assaulted man claimed that he could neither see nor smell anything, and that he had lost his ability to speak. The Commander of the Faithful Ālī said, “If he is truthful in his claim, he should be compensated with three times the sum of blood money.” He was asked, “How can this be verified, O Commander of the Faithful Ālī, so we may know that he is truthful?” Ali said, “As regarding his eyes, his claim that he sees nothing, it is verified by his being told to raise his eyes towards the sun. If his claim is true, he will involuntarily have to close his eyes. But if he, as he claims, has lost his eyesight, his eyes will remain open. As regarding his claim that he has lost the ability to smell, he is to be tested by something burning brought near his nose. If he is healthy, the smell of burning will reach his head, so his eyes will be tearful and he will bend his head. As regarding his claim about having lost the ability to speak, he is to be tested by a needle hitting his tongue: If he does speak, red blood will come out. If he, as he claims, cannot speak, the color of the blood that will come out will be black.”

Conflict over a Boy

We read this incident on p. 367, Vol. 2 of Ibn Shahr Āshūb’s work titled Manāqib Āl Abī Tālib:

Two women disputed with each other about two suckling babies one of whom was a male and the other was a female. Each woman claimed that the boy was her son. They went to caliph Omar ibn al-Khattāb in order to judge between them, but he was unable to solve
the issue. Omar said, "Where is the father of al-Hassan, the one who removes the worry and the concern?"

Imām Ali  who was informed about the matter and he was requested to go to solve this issue. The Imām went and said, "Bring me two (empty) bottles." Two empty bottles were brought to the Imām which he weighed. He said, "Give each of these bottles to one of these women to fill with the milk of her breast." The women filled the small bottles with their breast milk, and the bottles were handed over to Imām Ali  who weighted each of them again, noticing that the milk in one of the bottles was heavier than that in the other. He said, "The son belongs to the women who filled this bottle and whose milk is heavier, while the girl belongs to the woman who filled the other bottle with lighter weight milk."

Omar then said, "What is the evidence which requires you to judge like that, O Ali?" Imām Ali  said, "Allāh has assigned for the male twice the inheritance which He assigned for the female."

Muslim doctors have since this incident used this criterion to identify the gender of a fetus.

**Two Women Dispute over a Child**

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib used quite often to follow the psychological route in order to distinguish between truth and falsehood. The Imām has said, "Nobody hides anything except that it comes out in slips of his tongue or it appears on his face."

The following incident is recorded in a book by Labeeb Baydoun titled *Al-I`jaz al-`Ilmi `inda al-Imām Ali* (scientific miracles by Imām Ali) which the A`lami Foundation of Beirut, Lebanon, published:

Mentor al-Mufid has said that two women disputed during the time of caliph Omar ibn al-Khattāb over a child: Each of them claimed him, but neither produced any evidence. The matter confused Omar,
so he sought the advice of Commander of the Faithful Imām Ali ﷺ. The caliph ordered the two men and the child to be sent to the Imām’s house so he would judge between them. Imām Ali ﷺ questioned each woman separately, but this was to no avail since the answer of each of them was the same.

The Imām ordered his servant to bring him his sword. Then the Imām said, “Give me the child.” One of them asked him, “What do you want to do, O Commander of the Faithful?!” Imām Ali ﷺ said, “I want to divide the child into two portions in order to give each of you her own share of him.” Hearing this, one of them screamed, “O Allāh! O Allāh! O father of al-Hassan! If this measure is unavoidable, I have relinquished my share of him to her.” It was then that Imām Ali ﷺ said, “It is now confirmed to me that the child is your son on account of your compassion and fear that he might be killed with the sword.” The other woman then admitted that the child was not her son, and that he had treated her as his mother because she had compassion for him, and she was feeding him.”

Tough Questions, Moral Lessons

This incident is recorded in the famous Al-Irshād book:

Ja`far ibn Shurayh al-Hadrami quotes Mālik ibn A`yan al-Juhni quoting Imām Abū Abdullāh (al-Sādiq ﷺ) as saying that when Omar ibn al-Khattāb became the caliph, a Jew went to meet him. He entered the (Prophet’s) Mosque as Omar was sitting in the company of Abū Ayyūb (al-Ansāri). The Jew asked Omar, “Are you the one who questions people without being himself questioned, the Commander of the Faithful who rules and is not ruled?” Omar said, “Yes.”

The Jew said, “Tell me about one who has no second, two who have no third, three who have no fourth, four who have no fifth, five who have no sixth, six who have no seventh, seven who have no eighth, eight who have no ninth, nine who have no tenth and ten who have
Omar could not answer. He lowered his head. Abū Ayyūb said to the Jew, “He is busy now, so go to that man who is sitting over there,” pointing at the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abū Tālib ابی‌طالب. The Jew went to the Imam ابی‌طالب and asked him just as he had asked Omar. Ali ibn Abū Tālib ابی‌طالب said, “As for the one who has no second, it is Allāh, the One and only, glorified and exalted is He. As for the two who have no third, they are the sun and the moon. As for the three who have no fourth, they are the three pronouncements of divorce. As for the fourth who have no fifth, they are women (since Islam, starting in the 8th Hijri year, which coincided with 629 A.D., restricted the number of women one man can marry to a maximum of four, putting conditions to be met for marriage with more than one wife). As regarding the five that have no sixth, they are the periods of the daily prayers. As for the six that have no seventh, they are the days (periods) during which Allāh created the heavens and the earth. As regarding the seven that have no eighth, they are the seven heavens (spheric strata). As regarding the eight that have no ninth, they are the bearers of the Arsh. As regarding the nine that have no tenth, they are the months of a woman’s pregnancy. As regarding the ten that have no eleventh, they are the days during which Allāh completed the term for Moses.” When the Jew heard all of this from al-Hassan’s father ابی‌طالب, he immediately converted to the Islamic faith.
In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

SELECTED SHORT STATEMENTS OF THE PROPHET ﷺ IN PRAISE OF ALI IBN ABŪ TĀLIB ﷺ FROM AUTHENTIC SUNNI REFERENCES

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه واله: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah with him and his Progeny, has said:

١- أشقى الأخرين الذي يطمنك يا علي. The worst wretch, O Ali, is one who stabs you.¹

٢- اعلم أمتي من بعدي علي. The most knowledgeable person in my nation, after me, is Ali.²

¹Ibn Sa`d, Al-Tabaqāt al-Kubra, Vol. 3, p. 35.
O Allah! Do not let me die before seeing Ali! ¹

Allah commanded me to marry Fatima off to Ali. ²

Allah has placed Muhammed’s progeny in Ali’s loins. ³

The first to enter Paradise is Ali. ⁴

The first person who prayed with me is Ali. ⁵

Ali is an obstacle on the Sirat which nobody can pass by except through a pass from Ali. ⁶

I commend everyone who believes in me and who holds me as truthful to accept the mastership of Ali. ⁷

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10 - أول ثلمة في الإسلام مخالفة علي.
The first crack in Islam is disobeying Ali.¹

11 - أولكم وارد علي الحوض اولكم إسلاما علي.
The first of you who meets me at the Pool (of Kawthar) is the one who was the first to accept Islam: Ali.²

12 - زينوا مجالسكم بذكر علي.
Decorate your gathering places by mentioning Ali.³

13 - سدوا أبواب المسجد كلها الا باب علي.
Shut down all mosque doors save that of Ali.⁴

14 - عنوان صحيحة المؤمن حب علي.
The label of a believer’s record of deeds is love for Ali.⁵

15 - لاسيف الا ذو الفقار ولا فتي الا علي.
There is no sword like Thul-Fiqar, and there is no youth like Ali.⁶

16 - لا يبلغ عني الا أنا أو علي.
Nobody speaks on my behalf save I or Ali.⁷

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³Ibn al-Maghāzli, Al-Manāqib, p. 211.
Nobody enters Paradise save one who brings a pass from Ali.¹

Nobody pays off my debt save I or Ali.²

Every prophet has a close friend, and my close friend and brother is Ali.³

Every prophet has a companion, and my confidant/companion is Ali.⁴

Every prophet has a wasi and an heir, and my wasi and heir is Ali.⁵

If one is pleased by looking at the master of the youths of the Arabs, let him look at Ali.⁶

Whoever accept me as his master, Ali is his master.⁷

O People! I commend you to love Ali.⁸

On the Judgment Day, Adam will be proud of his son Seth, and I will be proud of Ali.¹

Ali is my brother in the life of this world and in the Hereafter.²

Ali ibn Abu Talib is the most knowledgeable of all people of Allah.³

Ali is the Imam of the righteous, the fighter of the licentious.⁴

Ali is the Commander of the Faithful and the master of the Muslims.⁵

O Ali! You are the first to believe in me and to hold me as truthful.⁶

Ali ibn Abu Talib is the Gate of Hitta.⁷

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⁴Ibid., vol. 11, p. 602.
⁶Ibn Asākir, Mukhtasar Tāriḵ Dimashq, Vol. 1, p. 63
Ali is the gate of my knowledge and the one who, after my demise, explains to my nation the message I was sent to convey.¹

33 - علي خير البشر فمن أبي فقد كفر.
Ali is the best of humans; one who rejects it commits apostasy.²

4 - علي راية الهدى ومنار الإيمان.
Ali is the flag of guidance and the lighthouse of belief.³

35 - علي طاعته طاعتي ومعصيته معصيتي.
Obeying Ali is obeying me, and disobeying him disobeying me.⁴

36 - علي على بينة من ربه وأنا الشاهد منه.
Ali is on the right guidance of His Lord, and I am the witness from Him to it.⁵

37 - علي قسيم الجنة والنار.
Ali is the one who assigns Paradise and Hell.⁶

38 - علي مع الحق، والحق مع علي.
Ali is with the truth, and the truth is with Ali.⁷

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¹Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 614; Salmān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qandūzi al-Hanafi, Yanābee’ al-Mawaddah.
Ali is with the Qur’ân, and the Qur’ân is with Ali.¹

Ali is full of iman (conviction) up to his bones.²

Ali’s position to me is my head to my body.³

Ali’s status with me is like that of Aaron to Moses.⁴

Ali is of me, and I am of Ali.⁵

Ali of me, and I am of him; and he is the master of every believer after me.⁶

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⁴Ibn Asākir, Mukhtasar Tārīkh Dimashq; al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanzul-`Ummāl.

⁵Imām Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad; Ibn Asākir; Tārīkh Isfahān; Ibrāhīm ibn Muhammed al-Hamawayni, Farā`id al-Simtayn.

Ali is the master of everyone whose master is I.\(^1\)

Ali is my soul, and I am his soul.\(^2\)

Ali and his supporters are the winners.\(^3\)

Ali shines to the people of Paradise.\(^4\)

Ali is the chief of the faithful.\(^5\)

Ali pays off my debt and fulfills my pledge.\(^6\)

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Selected Sayings and Sermons of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ، Including His Replies to Questions as well as Maxims Made for Various Purposes

1. ١ - قال (عليه السلام): كُن في الفتنة كابن اللَّبُن: لا ظهر فَيُرَكِب، ولا ضَرَع فَيُحلِب.

1. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “During sedition (civil disturbance), be like an adolescent camel that has neither a back strong enough to ride nor udders to milk.”

“Labūn” [which exists in the original Arabic text] means a “milch camel” and “ibnul-labūn” means its two-year old young. In this age, the young is neither suitable for riding nor does it have udders which can be milked. It is called “ibnul-labūn” because during this two years period, its mother bears other young ones, and it begins yielding milk again.

The idea is that during a civil disturbance or trouble, a man should behave in such a manner that he may be regarded of no consequence and is thus ignored. No need should be felt for his participation in either contending party. This is so because during mischief making, only dissociation can save one from being targeted. Of course, when the clash is between right and wrong, it is not permissible to keep aloof, nor can it be called civil disturbance. But on such occasions, it is obligatory to rise up to support what is right and suppress what is wrong. For example, during the battles of Jamal and Siffin, it was obligatory to support what is right and to fight against wrongdoing.
2. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ᵃsuffix⁾ said the following: “Whoever adopts greed as a habit demeanes himself; whoever discloses his hardship agrees to be humiliated, and whoever allows his tongue to overpower his soul delittles the soul.”

3. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ᵃsuffix⁾ said the following: “Miserliness is a shame; cowardice is a defect; poverty disables an intelligent man from arguing his case, and a destitute person is a stranger in his own home town.”

4. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ᵃsuffix⁾ said the following: “Incapability is a catastrophe; endurance is bravery; abstinence is wealth; self-restraint is a shield (against sinning), and the best company is submission (to Allāh’s will).”

5. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ᵃsuffix⁾ said the following: “Knowledge is a venerable inheritance; good manners are ever-new outfits, and an intellect is a clear mirror.”

6. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ᵃsuffix⁾ said the following: “The wise man’s bosom is his secrets’ safe; cheerfulness is the bond of friendship, and
forbearance is the graveyard of shortcomings.”

It is narrated that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ said the following in order to explain the same thought: “A plea is the hiding place of shortcomings; whoever admires his own self increases the numer of those who condemn him.”

7. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ said the following: “Charity is an effective cure; people’s actions in their present life will stand before their eyes in the next.”

This saying incorporates two phrases:

The first sentence relates to charity. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ describes it as an effective cure, medicine, balsam. This is so because when a man helps the poor and the destitute with his wealth by way of charity, they pray for his health from the depths of their hearts; therefore, their prayer is granted by the Almighty, so it brings him a cure from whatever ails him. In this regard, there is this saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: “Cure your sick with charity.”

The second sentence relates to the disclosure of actions on the Day of Judgment: Good and bad actions which a person performs in this world cannot be perceived by human senses because of the veil of material elements. But on the Day of Judgment, when the curtains will be lifted, they will appear before one’s eyes, in forms, in shapes, in sizes, etc., so much so that there will be no possibility of any

١In the last phrase, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ describes the consequences and effects that result from self-admiration, conceit, arrogance, etc.: It brings about others’ hatred and contempt. Thus, the man who demonstrates his “greatness” through every pretext, in order to make himself conspicuous, is never regarded with esteem. People despise him because of his seeking self-elevation. They are not prepared to accord him the esteem which he claims to have. They regard him much less than what he regards himself.
denial. Allāh has said the following:

On that Day, people shall come out (of their graves) in (scattered) groups in order to be shown their own actions: Whoever has done an atom’s weight of goodness shall see it, and whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it (too) (Qur’ān, 99:6-8).

8. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib سلم said the following: “I wonder about this human being: He speaks with (a piece of) fat, talks with a piece of flesh, hears with a bone and breathes through a hole!”

9. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib سلم said the following: “When this world
advances towards anyone (with its riches), it attributes to him the good of others, and when it turns away from him, it deprives him of his own good."

They are friends of him whom the world favors, and they are foes of him whom the world hits.

10. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “Deal with people in such a manner that if you die, they weep over you, and if you live they long for (miss) you.”

11. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “When you gain the upper hand over your adversary, pardon him as your way of expressing thanks [to Allāh] for being able to overpower him.”

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1The meaning is that when a man’s fortune helps him and the world is favorable to him, people will describe his performances with exaggeration and give credit to him for others’ actions. But if a man loses the favor of the world and the clouds of ill-luck and misfortune engulf him, people ignore his virtues and do not at all tolerate even to recall his name.

2To the person who behaves with others with benignity and good manners, people extend their hand of cooperation. They honor and respect him and shed tears when he dies. Therefore, a person should lead such an agreeable life that no one should have any complaint against him, nor should he cause anyone harm so that during his life-time, he will attract others, and after his death, too, he will be well remembered.

3The occasion for pardoning and forgiving is when there is the ability to avenge. But when there is no such ability, pardon is just the result of helplessness for which there is no credit. However, to practice pardon despite having power and ability to avenge is the essence of human distinction and an expression of thanks to Allāh for bestowing such power. The feeling of gratefulness necessitates it. It is then that man should bow down to Allāh in humbleness and humility by which the delicate feeling of pity and kindness will rise in his heart. The rising flames of rage and anger
12. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The most helpless of all men is one who cannot find a few brothers during his lifetime, but still more helpless is whoever finds such a brother but loses him.”

13. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “When you get (only) small blessings, do not push their greatest away by being ungrateful.”

will cool down. Thereafter, there will be no urge to take revenge under the effect of which one will use his strength and ability to satisfy his anger instead of using it properly.

It is not difficult to attract others with good manners and cheerfulness and to befriend them by sweet talk because no physical exertion or mental worry is required for this. Having made friends, it is still easier to maintain the friendship and good relationship. For making real friends, some effort is needed, while for maintaining friendship, no difficulty is unsurmountable. Therefore, no one can be more wretched than one who cannot even retain a thing which could be retained just by keeping away from frowning. The idea here is that a man should meet everyone with good manners and cheerfulness so that people may like to associate with him and extend a hand of friendship to him.
14. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: "Whoever is abandoned by near ones is dear to distant ones."

15. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: "Not everyone who suffers from sedition is to be reproved."

16. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: "All matters are subject to destiny, so much so that sometimes death results from effort."

17. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked once to explain this saying of the Messenger of Allāh: "Change your gray hair (with dye) and do not acquire resemblance to the Jews." Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ replied: "The Prophet ﷺ said this at a time when the religion was confined to only a few, but now since its expanse has widened and it is firmly settled, everyone is free to choose."

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1Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ uttered this sentence when Sa`d ibn Abū Waqqās, Muhammed ibn Maslamah and Abdullāh ibn `Omar refused to support him against the people of the Jamal. He means to say that these people are so much against him that neither his words nor any evidence suffices to reproof, rebuke or correct them.

2The idea here is that since in the dawn of Islam the number of Muslims was limited, it was necessary to keep them distinct from the Jews in order to maintain their collective entity. The Prophet ﷺ, therefore, ordered the use of hair-dye which was not in use among the Jews. Besides, it was also
18. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following about those who avoided fighting on his side: “They abandoned righteousness but did not support wrong.”

19. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “Whoever gallops with a loose rein stumbles on death.”

the aim that when facing the enemy, people should not look old and weak.

1This saying is about those who claimed to be neutral, such as Abdullāh ibn ʿOmar, Saʿd ibn Abū Waqqās, Abū Mūsa al-Ashʿari, al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, Muḥammed ibn Maslamah, Usamah ibn Zaid and Anas ibn Mālik. Undoubtedly, these people did not openly support wrong but did not support right, either. Such a conduct is also a kind of support for wrong. Therefore, they will be counted among the opponents of what is right.
20. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “Forgive the shortcomings of people of esteem because when they fall into error, Allāh lifts them.”

21. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “The consequence of fear is disappointment and of bashfulness is frustration. Opportunity passes away like a cloud; therefore, make use of good opportunities.”

However bad a thing may be regarded among people, and however it may be looked down on; if it is not really bad, then to feel bashful about it is quite foolish because it will often cause deprivation from things which are the source of success and achievements in this as well as in the next world. For example, if a man fears lest people should regard him as being ignorant, he feels bashful in asking about an important and a necessary issue, then this misplaced bashfulness will result in his being deprived of knowledge. Hence, no sane person should feel bashful about making enquiries. Thus, an old man who was learning despite his old age was asked once whether he did not feel ashamed of learning in his old age. He replied in the following words: “I do not feel any shame for being ignorant in my old age. How can I feel shame for learning in old age? Of course, to feel shame in doing things which are really bad and mischievous is the essence of humanity and nobility. For instance, there are immoral deeds which are bad according to religion, intelligence and ethics. In any case, the first kind of bashfulness is bad and the second is good.” In this regard, the Holy Prophet’s saying is this: “Bashfulness is of two kinds: bashfulness of intelligence and bashfulness of foolishness. The bashfulness of intelligence is knowledge, whereas the bashfulness of foolishness is ignorance.”

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22. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “We have a right. If it is granted to us, that is good; otherwise, we will ride on the hind of the camel even though the night journey may be long.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “This is a very fine and eloquent expression. It means that if we are not allowed to enjoy our right, we will be regarded as weak. This meaning comes out of this expression because on the rear part of the camel only servants, prisoners or
other people of this type used to ride.”

23. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “If the actions of someone accord (him) a back status, he cannot be given a front status simply on account of his lineage.”

24. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “To render relief to the grief-stricken and to provide comfort in hardship is the atonement of great sins.”

25. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “O son of Adam! When you see that your Lord, the Glorified One, bestows His favors

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1The interpretation written by Sayyid ar-Radi is that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ intends to say that if our right, it lies with others in our status, as with the Imām whom it is obligatory to obey, is acknowledged and we are given the chance of worldly rule, it is well and good; otherwise, we will have to bear all sorts of hardships and ignominies, and we shall be compelled to live the life of ignominy and humiliation for some time to come. Some commentators have adopted a different meaning than this, namely that: “If our status is belittled and put aside while others are awarded precedence over us, we shall bear it patiently and agree to remain behind, and this is what is meant by riding on the hind part of the camel because the person who rides on the hind part is on the rear while the person who sits on its back is in the fore.” Some people take it to mean: If we are allowed our right, we will accept it, but if it is not given to us, we shall not behave like the rider who gives over the rein of his animal to someone else who is free to take him wherever he likes, but we shall stick to our right even though a long time may elapse, rather than surrender to the usurpers.
on you while you are disobeying Him, you should fear Him.”

26. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said the following: “Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart, it manifests itself through his unintentional words and (in the form of) expressions on his face.”

1When a person goes on receiving favors despite his accumulated sins, he develops a misconception that Allāh is pleased with him, and that this is the result of His pleasure because the increase in favors arises out of gratefulness. In the event of ungratefulness, the bestowal of favors stops. In this sense, Allāh says the following:

 mandated رَبَّكَ لَنِنَّ شَكْرَكُمْ لَأُزِيدَكُمْ، وَلَنِنَّ كَفْرَكُمْ إِنْ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدُ.

“Your Lord declared: ‘If you are grateful, I will increase (My favors) on you, and if you are ungrateful, verily, My torment is indeed severe” (Qurʾān, 14:7). Nevertheless, the continuous bestowal of favors, despite disobedience and ungratefulness, cannot be the result of Allāh’s pleasure, nor can it be said that in this way Allāh has put him under the misconception that he should regard this exuberance of favors as the result of Allāh’s pleasure because when he knows that he is a sinner and disobedient, fully recognizing his sins and vices, then there are no grounds for misconception on his part when assuming Allāh’s pleasure and consent. He should rather think that this is a sort of trial and a respite. When his sinfulness and high-handedness reaches its zenith, he will be caught at once. Therefore, in such a case, he should keep waiting as to when Allāh’s favors are taken away from him and he is punished with deprivation.

2The things which a man wants to conceal from others do, indeed, come out on his tongue one time or another, and his effort at concealment is unsuccessful. This is so because although the far-sighted mind desires to keep them concealed, sometimes it gets entangled in some more important matters and becomes careless on this score when the concealed thing comes out in articulated words. When the mind becomes attentive, it is not possible to undo the matter just as an arrow cannot be recalled after being shot. Even if this is not the case and the mind is fully cautious and attentive, the thing cannot remain concealed because the lines of the face are indicative of mental feelings and reflect the heart’s emotions;
27. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “Keep walking in your sickness as long as it carries you.”

consequently, redness of the face can easily point out to the sense of shame.

1The idea here is that as long as sickness does not become serious, do not give it importance because by giving it importance, the feelings get affected and the illness intensifies. Therefore, continue your activity and regard yourself as being well. This will dispel your sickness and also prevent the power of resistance from getting weak. It keeps up its
28. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “The best kind of asceticism is concealing it.”

29. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “When you are running away from the world and death is approaching you, there is no question of delay in the encounter.

“Endurance, again, has four aspects: eagerness, apprehension, abstention (from the allurements of the world) and anticipation (of death). So, whoever is eager for Paradise will ignore his passions; whoever fears the Fire (of Hell) will refrain from committing prohibited actions; whoever abstains from the world takes hardships lightly, and whoever anticipates death will hasten towards good deeds.
30. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following: “Beware! Beware! By Allāh, He has hidden your sins, so much so that it is as though He has forgiven them!”

Faith, Unbelief, Doubt and Their Pillars

31. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib was asked once about faith. He said the following: “Faith stands on four pillars: endurance, conviction, justice and jihād.”
"Conviction also has four aspects: prudent perception, intelligence and understanding, drawing lessons from instructive things and following the precedents of past people. So, whoever perceives with prudence, wise knowledge will be manifested to him. To whomsoever wise knowledge becomes manifest appreciates instructive objectives. Whoever appreciates instructive objectives is just like past people.

"Justice also has four aspects: keen understanding, deep knowledge, a good power of decision and firm forbearance. Therefore, whoever understands comes to acquire the depth of knowledge; whoever acquires the depth of knowledge drinks from the spring of judgment, and whoever exercises forbearance never commits evil actions in his affairs and leads a praiseworthy life among the people.

"Jihād, also, has four aspects: enjoining others to do good deeds, keeping others away from doing evil, fighting (in the way of Allāh)
sincerely and firmly on all occasions and detesting anyone who is vicious. So, whoever commends others to do good deeds provides strength to the believers; whoever dissuades others from committing evil humiliates the unbelievers; whoever fights sincerely on all occasions carries out all his obligations, and whoever detests the vicious folks and becomes angry for the sake of Allāh, then Allāh will be angry in favor of him and will keep him pleased on the Day of Judgment.

"Unbelief stands on four pillars: hankering after whims, quarreling with others, deviating from the truth and dissenting. So, whoever hankers after whims does not incline towards righteousness; whoever quarrels much on account of ignorance remains permanently blinded from what is right; whoever deviates from the truth, for him good becomes evil and evil becomes good. He remains intoxicated with misguidance. Whoever makes a breach (with Allāh and His Messenger), his path becomes difficult, his affairs become complicated and his way of escape becomes narrow.

"Doubt has also four aspects: irrationality, fear, wavering and undue surrender to everything. So, whoever adopts irrationality as his way of life, for him there is no dawn after the night; whoever is afraid of what befalls him has to run on his heels; whoever wavers in doubt, the demons trample on him with their feet, and whoever surrenders to the destruction of all of this, his Hereafter succumbs to it."

Sayyid ar-Radi adds the following: “We have left out the remaining portion of this statement for fear of being too lengthy and for being outside the scope of this chapter.”

٣٢ - وقال (عليه السلام): فاعلن الخير خير مئة، وفاعلن الشر شر مئة.

32. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The doer of goodness is better than goodness itself, and the doer of evil is worse than evil itself.”

٣٣ - وقال (عليه السلام): كن سمنحا ولا تكن مبذاة، وكن معدرا ولا تكن مفترا.
33. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib رضي الله عنه said the following: “Be generous but not extravagant; be thrifty but not stingy.”

34. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib رضي الله عنه said the following: “The best of riches is the abandonment of desires.”

35. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib رضي الله عنه said the following: “If someone is quick in saying about people what they dislike, they will speak about him that with which they have no knowledge.”

36. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib رضي الله عنه said the following: “Whoever prolongs his desire ruins his actions.”
37. Once Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was proceeding to Syria when the Anbār\(^1\) countrymen met him. Seeing him, they began to walk on foot then ran in front of him. He inquired why they were doing so. They replied that this was the way they expressed respect for their chiefs. He ﷺ said the following: “By Allāh, this does not benefit your chiefs. You are belaboring yourselves in this world and earning misery for the next by thus behaving. How harmful the labor in the wake of which there is punishment, and how profitable the case with which there is deliverance from the Fire (of Hell) is!”

The Imam admonishing his son:

38. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following to his son al-Hassan ﷺ: “O son! Learn four things and (a further) four things from me: Nothing will harm you if you practice them. The richest of all riches is intelligence; the biggest destitution is foolishness; the most wild of the wild is vanity, and the best achievement is goodness of the moral character.

“O my son! You should avoid making friends with a fool because if he intends to benefit you, he harms you. You should avoid making friends with a miser because he will run away from you when you need him the most. You should avoid making friends with a sinful person because he will sell you for naught. And you should avoid making friends with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you see far things as near and near things as far.”

\(^1\)The vast Anbār area is now the largest western governorate in Iraq, about one third of the entire country with the exclusion of northern Iraq (Kurdistan), and its population—mostly tribal—is predominantly Sunni. Its metropolis is Ramadi City, 110 km west of Baghdad.
39. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “Supererogatory worship cannot bring about nearness to Allāh if it hampers what is obligatory.”

40. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following: “The tongue of the wise man is behind his heart, while the heart of the fool is behind his tongue.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “This sentence has an unusual and beautiful meaning. It means that the wise man does not speak with his tongue except after consulting his mind and exercising his imagination, but the fool quickly utters whatever comes to his
tongue without pondering on it. In this way, the tongue of the wise man follows his heart while the heart of the fool follows his tongue.”

41. This very thought has been related from Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib in a different way thus: “The heart of a fool is in his mouth, while the tongue of the wise man is in his heart.” The meaning of both sayings (40 and 41) is the same.

42. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following to one of his companions during the latter’s sickness: “May Allāh make your illness a means for wiping out your sins because there is no reward for sickness except that it obliterates sins and makes them fall like (dried) leaves. Reward lies in saying by the tongue and doing something with the limbs. Certainly, Allāh, the Glorified One, admits into Paradise, by virtue of truthfulness of intention and purity of the heart, whomsoever He pleases from among His servants.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib is right in saying that there is no reward for sickness as such because compensation is admissible with regard to how Allāh, the Sublime One, deals with His creatures such as causing them grief, illness and the like. However, reward and recompense become admissible with regard to the actions of a creature. This is the difference between the two. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib has clarified it through his lustrous
knowledge and sound view.”

43. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said the following about Khabbāb ibn al-`Arātt: “May Allāh have mercy on Khabbāb ibn al-`Arātt, for he accepted Islam willingly, immigrated (from Mecca) obediently, remained content with what sufficed him, was pleased with Allāh and lived the life of a mujāhid.”

Khabbāb ibn al-`Arātt (586 – 659 A.D.) was a distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet  and an early Muhājir. He suffered various sorts of hardships at the hands of the tribesmen of Quraish. He was made to stand in the scorching sun and to lie down on burning pieces of timber, but he did not at all abandon his support for the Holy Prophet . He accompanied the Holy Prophet  in Badr and other battles. He supported Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  in Sīffin and Nahrawān. He left Medīna and settled in Kūfa. Thus, he died there in 39 A.H./659 A.D. at the age of 73. Imām Ali ibn Abū
Tālib led his funeral prayer service, and he was buried outside Kūfa. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib uttered these mercy-invoking words above as he stood at his grave.

44. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following: “Blessed is the person who keeps the next life in mind, acts so as to be able to render his account, remains contented with what suffices him and remains pleased with Allāh.”

45. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following: “Even if I strike the nose of a believer with my sword, so he may hate me, he will not hate me, and even if I pile all the wealth of the world before a hypocrite (Muslim) so he may love me, he will not love me. This is
so because it is a verdict pronounced by the tongue of the revered Prophet ﷺ, who said the following: 'O Ali! A believer will never hate you and a hypocrite (Muslim) will never love you.'

46. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 安宁 привилегии said the following: “The sin that displeases you is better in the view of Allāh than the virtue that makes you proud.”

47. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 安宁 привилегии said the following: “The virtue that makes you proud is better in the view of Allāh than the sin that displeases you.”

48. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 安宁 привилегии said the following: “The worth of a man is according to his courage, his truthfulness is according to his balance of temper, his valor is according to his self-respect and his chastity is according to his sense of shame.”

49. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 安宁 привилегии said the following: “Victory is (won) with determination; determina-tion is pondering over thoughts and thoughts are formed by guarding secrets.”

47

49. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 安宁 привилегии said the following: “Beware of the might of a noble person when he is hungry and of an ignoble one when his belly is full.”

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1The person who feels ashamed and repentant after committing a sin and offers repentance before Allāh remains safe from the penalty of that sin and deserves the reward of repentance. But the person who, having done a virtuous deed, begins to feel his “superiority” over others and becomes proud of his virtues thinks that he has no apprehension whatever. Thus, he destroys his virtue and remains deprived of the reward of that virtuous deed. Obviously, whoever has erased the shame of his sin by repentance will be better than one who ruins his action by being proud of it without having repented.

2The meaning is that a man of prestige and esteem never tolerates humiliation or disgrace. If his honor is assailed, he will leap like a hungry lion and break away the shackles of humiliation. If a low and narrow minded person is raised in status above what he deserves, he will not be able to contain himself but, regarding himself very high, he will assail the
50. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following: “People’s hearts are like wild beasts. If someone tries to tame them, they will pounce back on him.”

51. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following: “So long as your status is good, your defects will remain covered.”

52. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The most capable of pardoning is one who is the ablest to punish.”

53. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Generosity is that which is by one’s own initiative because giving on being asked is either due to one’s esteem or to avoid rebuke.”

54. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “There is no wealth like wisdom, no destitution like ignorance, no inheritance like refinement and no support like consultation.”

status of others.

1This statement confirms the theory that by nature, human hearts love wildness and that the feeling of love and affection in them is an acquired attribute. Consequently, when elements and causes of love and affection crop up, they are tamed. But when these elements disappear, or when the feelings of hatred are created against them, people return to wildness and thereafter return to the path of love and affection but with a great deal of difficulty. Do not tease the heart because it is a wild bird. If once it flies away, it will come down with a great deal of difficulty, if at all.
55. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib  said: “Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience regarding what you covet.”

56. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib  said: “With wealth, a strange land is a homeland, while with destitution, even a homeland is a strange land. With destitution, one is a stranger even in his own homeland.”

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1A person who has wealth and riches will get friends and acquaintances wherever he may be. He, therefore, will not feel strange in any foreign land. But if he is poor and destitute, he will have no friends even in his homeland because people do not like to make friends with the poor and the destitute, nor do they establish relationships with them. He is, therefore, a stranger even at home and has no friends or well-wishers.

One who has no worldly successor remains unknown.
57.  

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Contentment is wealth that never diminishes.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “This saying has also been related from the Prophet .”

58.  

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Wealth is the substance of passions.”

59.  

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “One who warns you is like one who gives you glad tidings (of safety).”

60.  

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The tongue is a beast; when it is let loose, it devours.”

61.  

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Woman is a scorpion whose

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"Contentment means that a man should remain satisfied with what he gets and should not complain if he gets less. If he is not so contented, he will try to satisfy his greed by committing social crimes such as misappropriation, cheating and deceiving others because greed compels one to satisfy one’s needs by any means whatever. Then the satisfaction of one’s need opens the gate for another need, and so on. As a man’s needs get satisfied, his craving increases, and he can never get rid of his needs or dissatisfaction. The increasing dissatisfaction can be stopped only by contentment which makes a man carefree from all wants except the most essential ones. Such is everlasting wealth that gives satisfaction for good."
touch is pleasant.”

62. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If you are met with a greeting, give a better greeting in return. If a helping hand is extended to you, do a better favor in return, although the credit will remain with the one who was the first.

63. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One who intercedes is the wing of one who seeks.”

64. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The people of the world are like travelers who are being carried away as they asleep.”
65. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The loss of friends is estrangement.”

66. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “To miss what one needs is easier than to beg the wrong person.”

67. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Do not feel ashamed of giving little because refusal is even less than that.”

68. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Charity is the adornment of destitution, while gratefulness (to Allāh) is the adornment of riches.”

69. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “If what you aim at does not come about, then do not worry as to what you were.”

70. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “You will not find an ignorant person but at one extreme: exaggerating or neglecting.”

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1The shame that is felt in putting a request before an inappropriate person gives more mental pain than the grief in not obtaining its fulfillment. That is why non-fulfillment of a request can be tolerated, but the obligation of a low and humble person is intolerable. Every self-respecting person will, therefore, prefer deprivation to being under obligation to an inappropriate man and will not tolerate placing his request before a low and mean person.
71. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “As intelligence increases, speech decreases.”

72. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Time wears out bodies, renews desires, brings death nearer and takes away aspirations. Whoever is successful with it encounters grief, and whoever misses its favors also undergoes hardships.”

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1 Being talkative is an indication of a diffused thinking, while diffusion of thought is the result of immaturity. When wisdom attains perfection and understanding ripens, one’s mind and thoughts are balanced. Wisdom acquires power and control over the tongue. As over other parts of the body, the tongue does not need any thinking or anything outside the dictates of wisdom. Obviously, uttering after thinking is short and free from extras. As a man’s intelligence increases, his speech decreases and he does not speak save at the opportune moment.
73. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Whoever places himself as a leader of the people should commence with educating his own self before educating others, and his teaching should be by his own conduct before teaching by the tongue. The person who teaches and instructs his own self is more entitled to esteem than whoever teaches and instructs others."

74. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Each breath taken by a man is a step towards his death."¹

¹That is just as each step makes way for the other, and this exercise by steps is the means of nearing the goal. Similarly, every breath of life serves as a death-knell for the previous one and carries life towards death, as if the breath the motion of which is regarded as a sign of life is, in fact, the sign of the passing away of one moment of life and a means of nearing death because each breath is death for the previous one, and life is the name of those very death-carrying breaths. Every breath is a dead body of the life that passed by. Life is the name of living by facing successive deaths.
75. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Every countable thing is to pass away; every expected thing must come about.”

76. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If matters get mixed up, the last ones should be appreciated compared to the previous ones.”

1 By looking at a seed, a cultivator can say what plant will come out of it,
77. It is related that when Dirār ibn Hamzah (the correct is "Damrah") ad-Dibabi (or as-Suda’ī) went to Mu’āwiyah, and the latter inquired what fruits, flowers or leaves it will bring about, and what its expanse will be. Likewise, a guess can be made about the success of a student by looking at his endeavor and effort. The same applies to the failure of some other student by looking at his leisureliness and idleness. This is so because the beginning is indicative of the end and the premises of the conclusion. Therefore, if the end of any matter is not visible, its beginning should be looked at. If its beginning is bad, the end, too, will be bad, and if the beginning is good, the end, too, will be good. An auspicious river begins from the very spring.

Dirār ibn Damrah was one of the companions of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ. After the death of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ, he went to Syria where he met Mu’āwiyah. The latter said to him, “Describe Ali to me.” He replied, “Will you please excuse me from answering?” But Mu’āwiyah insisted, “You must describe him,” whereupon Dirār said the following: “If there is no alternative, then you should know that Ali ﷺ was a man whose personality knew no limits, terrific in power, his speech was decisive, his judgments based on justice, his knowledge spread out in all directions and wisdom manifested itself on all his behavior. Among the food he liked the most was the coarse kind, and among the clothes, the short (and humble) ones. By Allāh, he was among us like one of us. He used to respond to our questions and fulfill all our requests. By Allāh, although he used to let us get close to him and he himself was close to us, we did not dare address him due to our feeling of awe towards him, nor did we dare to speak first due to his greatness in our hearts. His smile displayed a row of pearls. He used to honor the pious. He liked to be kind to the needy, to feed the orphans, the near of kin or the needy in the day of hunger, clothe bare ones and help the vulnerable person. He used to detest the world and its flowering. I testify to all of this.” So far, the testimony is as quoted above by Sayyid ar-Radi. When Mu’āwiyah heard this from Dirār, his eyes became full of tears and he said: “May Allāh have mercy on
from him about Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ۸۷۸, he said the following: "I testify that I have seen him on several occasions when night had spread and he was standing in the niche (of the mosque) holding his beard, groaning like a man bitten by a snake and weeping as a grieved man, saying: O world, O world! Get away from me! Why do you present yourself to me? Or are you eager for me? You may not get that opportunity to impress me. Deceive some other person. I have no concern with you. I have divorced you thrice after which there is no restitution. Your life is short, your importance is little and your liking is humble. Alas! The provision is little, the way is long, the journey is far and the goal is hard to reach."

On the Topic of Predestination

78. A man inquired from Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ۸۷۸ saying, "Was our going to fight the Syrians destined by Allāh?" Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ۸۷۸ detailed his reply, a selection from which is here:

Woe to you! You take it as a final and un-avoidable des-tiny (ac-


The end of this story is that after this encounter, the man inquired, "What kind of destiny it was by which we had to go?" Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ۸۷۸ said, "Quṣṣā (destiny) means the command of Allāh." For example, He has said: "And your Lord commanded that you shall worship none but Him [Qur’ān, 57,
cording to which we are bound to act). If it were so, there will have been no question of reward or chastisement, and there will have been no sense in Allāh’s promises or warnings. (On the other hand) Allāh, the Glori-fied One, has ordered His ser-vants to act according to their free will and has cautioned them and protected them (from evil). He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much (reward) in return for little action. He is disobeyed, not because He is overpowered. He is obeyed but not by force. He did not send prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without a purpose. He did not create the heavens, the earth and all that is in between them in vain. That is the imagination of those who disbelieve: \[ قُوَّٰلَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ الْدَّارِ ... \]

then woe to those who disbelieve because of the Fire (Qur’ān, 38:27).”

17:23]). Here, the Arabic word قضاء qadā’ (in the original text) stands for destiny, fate, Divine command.
79. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Take wisdom from wherever it may be because if a wise saying is in the bosom of a hypocrite, it flutters in his bosom till it comes out and settles with others of its own category: in the bosom of the believer.”

80. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Wisdom is the believer’s pursuit; therefore, attain wisdom even if it may be from the people of hypocrisy.”
Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The worth of every man lies in his accomplishments.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is the statement the value of which is too precious to assess, one compared to which no wise saying can be weighed and with which no other sentence can be matched.

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “I impart to you five things which, if you ride your camels fast in search of them, you will find them worth the effort: None of you should rest his hope save on his Lord (Allāh); none of you should fear anything save his sin; none of you should feel ashamed of saying, ‘I do not know’ when asked about a matter which he does not know; none of you should feel ashamed of learning a thing that he does not know and you should practice endurance because endurance is for belief what the head is for the body: Just as there is no good in a body without the head, there is no good in belief without endurance.

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1The real value of a person is his knowledge (and perfection of attainment). His worth and status will be in accordance with the status of knowledge and attainment which he holds. Eyes that are conscious of real values do not look at the face, features, tallness of stature, size or worldly pomp and status. Rather, they look at the attainments of a person and assess his worth according to these attainments. The conclusion is that a man should strive to acquire distinction and be admonished. The worth of every person is according to the extent of his knowledge.
83. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  ﷺ said the following about a man who praised him much, although he did not admire him: “I am below what you express and above what you feel in your heart.”

84. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  ﷺ said: “The survivors of the sword are large in number and have many offspring.”


86. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  ﷺ said: “I love the opinion of an old man more than the determination of a young man: (or according to another version: more than the martyrdom of a young man).
87. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ said: “I wonder about one who loses hope despite his ability to seek forgiveness.”

88. And he said: “Abū Ja`far” Muhammed ibn Ali al-Bāqir ﷺ has related from Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ that the Imam had said: “There are two sources of deliverance from the punishment of Allāh: one of them has been raised up, while the other is before you. You should, therefore, adhere to it. The source of deliverance, which has been raised up is the Messenger of Allāh Muhammed ﷺ, while the source of deliverance that remains is the seeking of forgiveness. Allāh, the Glorified One, has said the following: And Allāh is not to chastise them while you are among them, nor is Allāh to chastise them while yet they seek [His] forgiveness (Qur’ān, 8:33).”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is one of the most beautiful ways of
deriving the meaning and a most delicate manner of an interpretation.

89. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If a man behaves properly in matters between himself and Allāh, then Allāh will keep proper the matters between him and others. And if a man keeps proper the affairs of his next life, Allāh will keep proper for him the affairs of this world. Whoever admonishes himself is protected by Allāh.”

90. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The perfect jurist of Islam is whoever does not let people lose hope of the mercy of Allāh, does not make him despondent of Allāh’s kindness and does not make them feel safe from Allāh’s punishment.”

91. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The hearts become bored as bodies become bored; so look for beautiful wise sayings for them.”

92. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The most humble knowledge is that which remains on the tongue, and the most honorable one is that which manifests itself through (the action of) the limbs and the organs of the body.”
Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: ‘None of you should say, ‘O Allāh! I seek Your protection against affliction’ because there is none who is not afflicted. But whoever seeks Allāh’s protection should seek it from misguiding troubles because Allāh, the Glorified One, says the following: *And be admonished that your wealth and children are a trial* (Qur’ān, 8:28). It means that He tries people with wealth and progeny in order to distinguish one who is displeased with his livelihood from one who is happy with what he has been given. Even though Allāh, the Glorified One, knows them more than they know themselves, He does so in order to let them perform actions with which they earn rewards or penalties. This is so because some of them like to have male (children) and dislike to have females, whereas some like to amass wealth and dislike adversity.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is a wonderful interpretation related from the Imām ﷺ.

١٤٠ - وسْتَبِئَ عَنَّ الْخَيْرِ مَا هُوَ. فقَالَ: لَيْسَ الْخَيْرُ أَن يَكْثَرَ مَا لَكَ وَلَدًّا، وَلَكِنَّ الْخَيْرُ أَن يَكْثَرَ عَلَمَكَ وَأَنْ يَعْظَمَ حَمْلَكَ وَأَنْ تَبَاهَى النَّاسِ بِبَعْدَهُ. فَإِنَّ أَخْسَنَتْ حَمْلَتِ اللَّهِ، وَإِنَّ أَسَاتِذَةِ أَسْتَغْفَرُوْتُ اللَّهِ. وَلَا خَيْرٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لِلرَّجُلِينِ: رَجُلٌ أَذْنُبَ ذِلُوَّةٌ فَهُوَ يَتَدَارَكُهَا بِالْقُوَّةِ، وَرَجُلٌ يُسَارِعُ فِي الْخَيرَاتِ.

١٤١ - Имāм Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked what goodness is. He replied thus:” Goodness is not that your wealth and progeny should be much, but goodness is that your knowledge should be much, your forbearance should be great and that you should vie with other people in worshipping Allāh. If you do good deeds, you should thank Allāh, but if you commit evil, you should seek forgiveness of Allāh. In this world, goodness is for two persons only: the man who commits sins but rectifies them by repentance, and the man who hastens towards good deeds.”
95. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺑ. ﺱ. said: “Action accompanied by fear for
Allāh does not fail; how can a thing fail that has been accepted?!”

96. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥṣ said: “The persons who are attracted to the prophets the most are those who know the most what the prophets have brought.” Then Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥṣ recited this verse: Verily, of men, the nearest to Abraham are surely those who followed him and this (Our) Prophet (Muhammed) and those who believe (Qur‘ān, 3:68). Then he said the following: “The friend of Muhammed Ḥṣ is whoever obeys Allāh, even though he may have no blood relationship [with him], and the enemy of Muhammed Ḥṣ is whoever disobeys Allāh even though he may have near kinship [with the Prophet Ḥṣ].”

1Allāh says the following: “Verily, Allāh does accept (an offering only) from those who guard (themselves against evil)” (Holy Qur‘ān, 5:27).
97. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  heard a Khārijite performing mid-night prayers and reciting the Qur'ān, so he said: “Sleeping in a state of firm belief is better than praying in a state of doubt.”

98. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “When you hear a tradition, test it according to the criterion of intelligence, not to that of mere hearsay, because those who relate knowledge are numerous, but those who safe-guard it are few.”

99. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  heard a man reciting the following: “Verily, we are Allāh’s, and verily to Him shall we return” (Qur’ān, 2:156). The Imām  said, “Our saying, Inna lillah (Verily we are Allāh’s) is an admission of His majesty over us, while our saying, Wa inna ilayhi raji’un (and verily to Him shall we return) is an admission of our being mortal.”

100. Some people praised Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  in his presence. The Imām  said: “O Lord! You know me better than I know myself, and I know myself better than they know. O Lord! Make us better people than what they think and forgive what they do not know.”
101. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The fulfillment of (others’) needs becomes a lasting virtue in three ways: regarding it as small, so that it attains greatness, concealing it so that it may manifest itself, and doing it quickly so that it may please them.”

102. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Shortly, a period of time will come for people when high [government] posts will be given only to those who defame others, when vicious people will be regarded as witty, whereas the fair ones will be regarded as weak. People will regard charity as a loss, consider kinship as a burden and worship as grounds for gaining prestige among others. At such a time, authority will be exercised through the counsel of women, and there will be posting of young boys in high places, and the administration will be run by eunuchs.”

١٠١ - وقال (عليه السلام): يأتي على الناس زمن لا يُقرب فيه إلا المجّل ولا يُنظر فيه إلا الفاجر ولا يضطغد فيه إلا المنصف، يُعذون الصدقة فيه عزما، وصلة الرجم منه، والعبادة استبطالة على الناس؛ فقد ذلك يكون السلطان بمشورة النساء وإمارة الصبيان وتدبير الخصيان.

١٠٢ - ورُبَّى عليه إزار خلق مرفوع، فقبل له في ذلك، فقال: يخشى له القلب وتدلل به النفس ويقندي به المؤمنون، إن الذنبا والآخرة عدوان متفاوتان وسبيلان مختلفان، فمن...
103. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was publicly seen wearing worn-out clothes with patches. When it was pointed out to him, he said, “With it [such shabbiness of dressing] the heart fears, the mind feels humble and the believers emulate. Certainly this world and the next are enemies of each other, two paths in opposite directions. Whoever likes this world and loves it hates the next and is its enemy. These two are like the East and the West. If the walker between them gets close to one, he gets farther from the other. After all, they are like two fellow-wives.”

104. It is related by Nawf al-Bikali that: “One night, I saw Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ coming out of his bed and looking at the stars. Then he said to me: ‘O Nawf! Are you awake or asleep?’ I said: ‘I am awake, O Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ!’ whereupon the Imam ﷺ said the following: ‘O Nawf! Blessed be those who abstain from this world and are eager for the next. They are the people who regard this earth as the floor, its dust as their mattress and its water as their perfume. They recite the Holy Qur’ān in low tones and supplicate in high tones, then they are cut off from the world as Isa (Jesus) used to be.”

“O Nawf! Prophet Dawūd (David) ﷺ rose up at a similar hour one night and said: This is the hour when whatever a person pleads, his plea is granted unless he is a tax-collector, an intelligence collector, a policeman, a lute player or a drummer.”
Sayyid ar-Radi says the following: “It is also said that ‘artabah’ means طبل (drum) and ‘kubah’ means lute.”

5 105 - وقال (عليه السلام): إن الله افترض عليكُم فرائض فلا تضيعوهما، وحذركُم حذَّة فلا تعتدوها، ونهاكم عن أشياء فلا تن nyeها، وسكت لكم عن أشياء ولم يدعها بسياذا، فلا تتكلفوها.

105. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Allāh has placed on you some obligations which you should not ignore, has laid down for you limits which you should not transgress, has prohibited you from certain things which you should not violate and has kept quiet about certain things, but He has not left them out by mistake so that you should not find them.”

6 106 - وقال (عليه السلام): لا ي ترك الناس شيئاً من أمر دينهم لاستُصالح ذُنياهم إلا فتح الله عليهم ما هو أضر مئة.

106. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If people abandon the doing of something related to the creed for the benefit of their worldly affairs, Allāh will inflict on them something more harmful than it.”

7 107 - وقال (عليه السلام): زُبّ عالم قد قتله جهالة وعلمته معة لا يفعه.

107. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Often, the ignorance of a learned man ruins him, while the knowledge he has does not avail him.”
108. Imām Ali ibn Abū Talib said: "In man, there is a piece of flesh attached to him which is the most amazing thing in him. It is the heart. It has a store of wisdom and things contrary to wisdom. If it sees a ray of hope, eagerness humiliates it, and when eagerness intensifies, greed ruins it. If disappointment overtakes it, grief kills it. If anger rises in it, a serious rage develops. If it is blessed with pleasure, it forgets to be cautious. If it is apprehensive, it becomes heedless. If peace extends all around it, it becomes neglectful. If it earns wealth, freedom from care places it in the wrong. If trouble befalls it, impatience makes it humble. If it faces starvation, distress overtakes it. If hunger attacks it, weakness seats it. If its food increases, heaviness of stomach pains it. Thus, every diminution harms it, and every excess is harmful."
109. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 战火 said: “We (members of the Prophet’s family щение) are like the pillow in the middle: Whoever lags behind has to come forward to meet it, while whoever exceeds the bounds has to return to it.”

110. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 战火 said: “None can establish the rule of Allāh, the Glorified One, except whoever shows no relenting (in the matter of what is right), who does not behave like wrong doers and who does not run to satisfy his greed.”
111. Sahl ibn Hunayf al-Ansāri died in Kūfah after his return from the battle of Siffin, and he was very much loved by Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib. On this occasion, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Even if a mountain had loved me, it will have now crumbled.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that the meaning of this statement is that since the trial of the man who loves Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib will be so, severe troubles will leap towards him, and this is not the case except with the God-fearing, the virtuous and the select good ones.” He adds saying that there is another similar saying of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib about certain individuals, and it is cited below:

112. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Whoever loves us, we members of the Household (of the Prophet), should be prepared to face destitution.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this has been interpreted in a different way as well, but on this occasion, it is not fit to mention here.¹

¹Perhaps the other meaning of this saying is this: “Whoever loves us should not hanker after worldly matters even though in consequence he may have to face destitution and poverty. He should rather remain content and avoid seeking worldly benefits.”
Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “No wealth is more profitable than wisdom; no loneliness is more estranging than vanity; no wisdom is as good as tact; no honor is like fearing Allah; no companion is like the goodness of moral character; no inheritance is like civility; no guide is like promptitude; no trade is like the doing of deeds of virtue; no profit is like a Divine reward; no self-control is like inaction in time of doubt; no abstention is like that from prohibitions; no knowledge is like thinking; no worship is like the carrying out of obligations; no belief is like modesty and endurance; no attainment is like humility; no honor is like knowledge; no power is like forbearance and no support is more reliable than a good piece of advice.”

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “At a time when virtue is in vogue in the world and among people, if a person entertains an evil suspicion about another person from whom nothing evil has ever been seen, he becomes unjust. And at a time when vice is in vogue in the world and among people, if a man entertains a good impression about another person, he hurls himself into peril.”

It was said to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ: “How are you, O Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ?” He replied: How can he be well whom life is driving towards death, whose state of health can change into sickness any moment and who is to be caught (by death) from his place of safety?”
116. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “There are many people who are given time (by Allāh) through good treatment towards them. Many are deceived because their sinful activities are veiled. There are many who are impressed by good talk about themselves. And Allāh does not try anyone as seriously as He tries one whom He allows time (to remain sinful).”

117. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Two categories of persons will face ruin on my account: one who exaggerates in loving me and one who hates me intensely.”

118. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “To miss an opportunity is to be choked by grief.”

119. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The example of the world is like a snake: It is soft in touch but its inside is full of venom. An ignorant person who has fallen into deceit is attracted to it, but a wise and intelligent man stays on guard against it.”
110 - وسَيلُ (عليه السلام) عنّ قَريش فقال: أَمَّا بِيُو منْحِرُومٍ فِرَحٌ فَقَريش، ثُمَّ جِبَحُ حَدِيثٍ رَجالهُمْ واَلْتِكاحٍ فِي نَسائِهِمْ؛ وَأَمَا بِيُو عِبْدُ شَمسٍ فَايْتُهُمَا رَأْيًا وأَمْتَعَهَا لَمْ أَرَاهَا وَرَأَاهُ الْيَوْمَ ظَهْرَهُمْ؛ وَأَمَا نَحْنُ فَأَبِيْنَا لَمْ أَرْبَعَ حَيَاةٌ فِي أَفِينَا وَأَسْمَحَ عَندَ الْمَوْتِ بَلْفِوأَنَا وَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ وَأَمْكِرُ وَأَنْخَرُ وَنَحْنُ أَفْصِحْ وَأَنْصِحْ وَأَصْبِحُ.
120. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib Ṣallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam was asked about the tribesmen of Quraish. He replied as follows: “As for Banū Makhzūm, they are the blossoms of the tribesmen of Quraish. It is delightful to talk to their men and to marry their women. As for Banū Abd Shams, they are far-sighted and cautious about all that is hidden from them. As for ourselves (Banū Hashim), we spend whatever we get and are very generous in offering ourselves to death. Consequently, those (other) people are more numerous, more contriving and more ugly, while we are most eloquent, well-wishing and handsome!”

121. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib Ṣallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam said: “What a difference there is between two kinds of actions: an action the pleasure of which passes away but its (ill) consequence remains, and an action the hardship of which passes away but its reward stays.”
122. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib was walking once behind a borne coffin when he heard someone laughing. He, therefore, said: “Is it that death has been ordained only for others? Is it that right is obligatory only on others? Is it that those whom we see departing on their death journey will come back to us? We place them in their graves then enjoy their estate (as if we will live for good after them). We have ignored every preacher, man or woman, exposing ourselves to every type of catastrophe.”

123. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Blessed be whoever humbles himself, whose livelihood is pure, whose heart is pure, whose habits are virtuous, who spends his savings (in the cause of Allāh), who prevents his tongue from speaking nonsense, who keeps people safe from his evil, who is pleased with the (Prophet’s) Sunnah and who is unconnected with innovation (in religion).”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that some people attribute this and the previous saying to the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallī Allāh ‘alayhi wa ‘alā).
125. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “I am defining Islam as none has defined it before: Islam is submission, submission is conviction, conviction is affirmation, affirmation is acknowledgment, acknowledgment is carrying out (obligations) and carrying out obligations is action.”

126. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “I wonder about a miser who hastens towards the very destitution from which he wants to run away, missing the very ease of life which he covets. Consequently, he passes his life in this world like the destitute but will have to render an account (of it) in the Hereafter like the rich.

I wonder about a proud man who was just a drop of semen the other day and will turn into a corpse tomorrow. I wonder about a man who doubts Allāh although He sees what He has created. I wonder about one who has forgotten death although he sees people dying. I wonder about one who denies the second life although he has seen the first. I wonder about one who inhabits this transient abode but ignores the everlasting one.”

127. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Whoever falls short of good deeds falls into grief, and Allāh has nothing to do with one who sets aside nothing of his wealth for the sake of Allāh.”
128. Imām Ali ibn Abū Taʿlīb said: “Protect yourselves from cold in its (season’s) beginning and welcome it towards its end because it affects bodies in the same way as it affects plants: In the beginning, it destroys them, but in the end it gives them fresh leaves.”

During autumn (fall), protection from cold is necessary because with the change of weather, the body’s temperature also changes and ailments such as flu, catarrh, cough, etc. take place. This is so because bodies are accustomed to warm weather. When suddenly cold comes, the tissue becomes contracted, and cold dryness increases in the body. Thus, bathing with cold water soon after bathing with hot water is harmful for this very reason. With hot water, the tissues expand, so they at once admit the effect of cold water and, in consequence, the natural heat of the body is affected. On the other hand, there is no need for protection from cold during spring season, nor is it harmful for the health because the body is already accustomed to cold prior to that. Thus, the cold temperate of the spring is not unpleasant to the body. Rather, with the decline of cold, there is an increase of heat and dampness in the body as a result of which growth is stimulated, natural heat rises, the body cells multiply, the temperaments feel pleasant and the spirit is joyful. Similarly, there is the same effect in the plant world. Thus, during autumn, due to the prevalence of coldness and dryness, leaves wither, the vegetative power decreases, the freshness of the plants fades and there is a death-like effect on the green areas. Spring brings the message of life for them. Then with the blowing of healthy winds, blossoms begin to sprout, plants become fresh and healthy, and forests and wildernesses are all painted green.

129. Imām Ali ibn Abū Taʿlīb said: “The Greatness of the Creator appreciated by you will belittle the creatures in your view.”
130. When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ returned from (the battle of) Siffin and noticed the graves outside Kūfa, he said: 

"O residents of houses which give a sense of loneliness, of areas depopulated, of gloomy graves! O people of the dust! O victims of strangeness! O people of loneliness and O people of desolation! You have gone ahead and preceded us while we are following you and will join you. The houses (you left) have been inhabited by others; the wives (you left) have been married by others; the properties (you left) have been distributed (among heirs).

“This is the news about those around us; what is the news about things around you?”

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ then turned to his companions and said: 

“Beware! If they were allowed to speak, they will inform you that: Verily, the best provision is fear of Allāh (Qur'ān, 2:197).”
131. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān heard a man speaking ill of life in this world, so he said to him: “O you, the man who abuses the world! O you who has been deceived by it and is cheated by its wrongs! Do you thus covet the world then abuse it?! Do you accuse it or should it accuse you?! When did it bewilder you or deceive you, whether by the decay and fall of your forefathers, or by the sleeping places of your mothers deep under the ground? How much did you look after them in their illness and nursed them during sickness, desiring them to be cured and consulting physicians for them in the morning when your medicine did not avail them and your wailing for them did not benefit them? Your mourning over them did not prove useful to them, and you could not achieve your aim. You could not ward off (death) from them with all your power. In fact, through the dying man, the world presented an illustration for you by the example of his falling down how you, too, will fall.

“Certainly, this world is a house of truth for whoever appreciates it, a place of safety for whoever understands it, a house of riches for whoever gathers provision from it (for the Hereafter), and a house of instructions for whoever draws instruction from it. It is the place of worship for those who love Allāh, the place of praying for the angels of Allāh, the place where the revelation of Allāh descends, and the trading place for those devoted to Allāh. Herein, they earned mercy
and herein they acquired Paradise by way of profit.

“Therefore, who can abuse it when it has announced its departure, calling out that it will leave?! It had given news of its own destruction and the death of its own people. By its hardship, it set an example of their hardships. By its pleasures, it created eagerness for the pleasures (of the Hereafter). It brings ease in the evening and grief in the morning by way of persuading, dissuading, alarming and warning. People abuse it on the morning of their repentance, but there are others who will praise it on the Day of Judgment. The world recalled to them the next life and they bore it in mind. It related to them (things of the next life) and they acknowledged them. It preached to them and they derived lessons from them.1

132. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “There is an angel of Allāh who calls out every day: “Beget children for death! Gather wealth for destruction and raise construction for ruin!”

133. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “This world is a transient place,

1Every speaker and preacher manifests the force of his speech in subjects in which he is well-versed. If he has to change the subject, neither will his mind move, nor will his tongue be able to speak out. But anyone’s intellect has the capability of adaptation: His mind has the power of imagination. It can turn around his utterances in whatever manner he likes and can show the excellence of speech on whatever subject he desires. Consequently, when the tongue, which had for so long been abusing the world and unveiling its deceitfulness, starts praising the world, it shows the same mastery of speech and power of argument, something which has always been its main distinction. Then, the use of commendatory words does not alter the principle. Although the ways are different, the objective remains one and the same.
not a place of stay. The people herein are of two types: One is a man who sold away his soul (to his passions) and thus ruined it, and the other is a man who purchased his soul (by controlling his desires) and freed it.”

134. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “A friend is not a friend unless he affords protection to his comrade on three occasions: in his adversity, in his absence and at the time of his death.”

135. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Whoever is bestowed four things is not disallowed four things: Whoever is allowed to pray is not deprived of the response; whoever is allowed to offer repentance is not deprived of acceptance; whoever is allowed to seek forgiveness is not deprived of forgiveness, and whoever is allowed to be grateful is not deprived of furtherance of favors.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that this is confirmed by the Book of Allāh. About praying, Allāh says, “Call to Me, I will answer you” (Qur’ān, 4:60). About forgiveness Allāh says, “And whoever does evil, or wrongs his own self and thereafter seeks Allāh’s forgiveness shall find Allāh oft-Forgiving, most Merciful” (Qur’ān, 4:110). About gratefulness He says, “If you show gratitude, I will increase (my favors) to you” (Qur’ān, 14:7). About repentance He says, “Verily, repentance (acceptable) with Allāh is only for those who do evil out of ignorance then turn (to Allāh) soon (thereafter); to these, Allāh
will turn mercifully, and Allāh is all-Knowing, all-Wise” (Qurʾān, 4:17).

136. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “For the God-fearing, prayers is a means of seeking nearness to Allāh, and for the weak, the hajj is as good as jihad. For everything there is a tax, and the tax of the body is fasting. The jihad of a woman is to afford pleasant company to her husband.”

137. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Seek livelihood by giving charity.”

138. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Whoever is sure of a good return is generous in giving.”
139. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Assistance is allowed according to (one’s) need.”

140. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Whoever is moderate does not become a destitute.”

141. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “A small family is one of the ways of (securing) ease.”

142. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Loving one another is half the measure of wisdom.”

143. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Grief is half the old age.”¹

144. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Endurance comes according to affliction. Whoever beats his hand on the thigh in his affliction ruins his good deeds.”

145. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “There are many who fast but

¹I think the other half is sickness.
whose fast is nothing more than hunger and thirst. There are many who pray and whose prayer is not better than wakefulness and hardship: The sleep as well as the eating and drinking of the intelligent (God-fearing) individual is far better.”

١٤٦ - وقال (عليه السلام): سُوْسُوا إيمانكُمّ بالصدقة، وحصّنوا أموالكُم بالزكاة، وانفعوا أمواج البلاء بالدعاء.

146. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Protect your belief through charity; guard your wealth by paying Allāh’s share thereof, and repel the waves of calamity with supplication.”
People are of three kinds:

147. Kumayl ibn Ziyād has related saying that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib

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1 Famous for “Du’a Kumayl,” Kumayl’s Supplication, Kumayl ibn Ziyād an-Nakh’i was the holder of the secrets of the Imāmate and one of the most prominent companions of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib. He held a great status in knowledge and attainment, occupying a sublime position due to abstinence and Godliness. He was Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib’s governor of Hit (a city 190 km northwest of Baghdad, Iraq) for some time. He was killed by blood-thirsty al-Hajjāj ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi in 83 A.H./702 A.D. although he was ninety years old.... He was buried in Kūfa’s outskirts.
caught hold of his hand and took him to the graveyard. When the Imām had passed through the graveyard, leaving the city (Kūfa) behind, he let a deep sigh and said the following:

"O Kumayl! These hearts are containers: The best of them is that which preserves (its contents); so, preserve what I say to you:

"People are of three types: One is the scholar and the Divine. Another is the seeker of knowledge who is also on the way to deliverance. The third is the common rot that runs after every caller and bends in the direction of every wind, seeking no light from the glory of knowledge taking no protection from any reliable support.

"O Kumayl! Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you have to guard wealth. Wealth decreases by spending, while knowledge multiplies through dissemination, and the results of wealth die as wealth decays.

"O Kumayl! Knowledge is belief which is acted on. With it, man acquires obedience during his life and a good name after his death. Knowledge rules whereas wealth is ruled.

"O Kumayl! Those who amass wealth are dead even though they may be living, while those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives. Their bodies are not available but their figures exist in the hearts. Look, here is a heap of knowledge (Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib then pointed to his bosom). I wish I could get someone to bear it. Yes, I did find (such a person): He either is one on whom nobody can rely, or he is one who exploits religion for worldly gains. By virtue of Allāh's favors on him, he will dominate the people, and through Allāh's pleas he will master His devotees. Or he is one who obeys those who listen to the truth while having no intelligence in his bosom. At the first appearance of doubt, he will entertain misgivings in his heart.

"So, neither this nor that is good enough. Either man is eager for pleasures, easily led away by passions, or he covets and hoards wealth. Neither of them has any regard for religion in any matter.
The nearest similitude to these (categories of men) is loose cattle. This is the way knowledge dies as those who bear it die.

"O Lord! Yes! The earth is never without those who maintain Allāh’s plea either openly and reputedly or, being afraid, discreetly so that Allāh’s pleas and proofs will not be rebutted. How many are they and where are they? By Allāh, they are few in number, but they are great in esteem before Allāh. Through them, Allāh guards His pleas and proofs till they are entrusted to others like themselves who sow the seeds thereof in the hearts of those who are like them (receptive to them).

"Knowledge has led them to a real understanding, so they have associated themselves with the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easygoing regard as hard. They endear what the ignorant take as strange. They live in this world with their bodies here but with their spirits resting in the high above. They are the vicegerents of Allāh on His earth and the advocates of His creed. O, how I yearn to see them!

"Go away, O Kumayl, if you please!"

148. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Man is hidden under his tongue. You cannot know his worth and value (unless he speaks)."

149. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Whoever does not know his own worth is ruined."

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1The meaning is that a man’s worth can be known by his speech because the speech of every person is indicative of his mind and mannerism. By virtue of it, his feelings and temperament can be very easily assessed. Therefore, so long as he is silent, his weaknesses, as well as attainments, are concealed, but when he speaks, his real self manifests itself.

Man is hidden under his tongue... unless he speaks.
On Preaching

150. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said the following to a man who had requested him to preach: “Do not be like one who hopes for a blissful next life without action and delays repentance by prolonging his desires, who utters words like ascetics in this world but whose actions are like those who are eager for it. If he is granted something of it, he does not feel satisfied. If he is denied, he is not content. He is not grateful for what he gets and covets an increase in whatever remains with him. He curbs others (from wrongdoing) but not his own self. He commands others for what he himself does not do. He loves the virtuous but does not behave like them. He hates the vicious but he himself is one of them. He dislikes death because of the excess of his sins but adheres to that because of which he is afraid of death.

“If he falls ill, he feels ashamed; If he is healthy, he feels secure and

قال الرضي: و لو لم يكن في هذا الكتاب إلا هذا الكلام لكفّي به موعظة ناجعة و حكمة
بالغة و بصيرة لبصره و عبرة لناظر مفكر.
indulges in amusements. When he recovers from illness, he feels vain about himself. When he is afflicted, he loses hope. If distress befalls him, he prays like a bewildered man. When he finds ease of life, he falls into deceit and turns his face away. His heart overpowers him by means of imaginary things while he cannot control his heart by his conviction. For others, he is afraid of minor sins, but for himself, he expects more rewards than his performance. If he becomes wealthy, he becomes self-conscious and falls into vice. If he is impoverished, he despairs and becomes weak. He is brief when he is doing a good thing but goes too far when he is begging. When passion overtakes him, he is quick in committing sin but delays repentance. If hardship befalls him, he goes beyond the canons of the (Islamic) community. He describes instructive events but does not take instruction himself. He preaches at length but does not accept any preaching for himself. He is tall on speech but short on action. He aspires for things that will perish and ignores things that will last for good. He regards profit as loss and loss as profit. He fears death but does nothing while expecting it.

“He regards the sins of others as big but considers the same things for himself as small. If he does something in obedience to Allāh, he considers it much, but if others do the same, he considers it small. He, therefore, rebukes others but flatters himself. Entertainment in the company of the wealthy is dearer to him than remembrance (of Allāh) in the company of the poor. He passes verdicts against others for his own interests and does not do so against himself for others’ interests. He guides others but misguides himself. He is obeyed by others but he himself disobeys (Allāh). He seeks the fulfillment of obligations (to himself) but does not fulfill his own obligations (towards others). He fears people (and actions) for others besides his Lord (Allāh) and does not fear his Lord as he deals with the public.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says that if this book had contained nothing save this short statement, it will have sufficed as a successful piece of preaching, a specimen of high philosophy, an objective of wisdom for the onlooker and a source of instruction for the meditative onlooker.
151. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Every human being has to meet the end, sweet or sour.”

152. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Whatever approaches departs, and if anything departs, it is as though it never existed.”

153. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “The one who endures does not miss success although it may take a long time.”

154. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Whoever agrees with the action of some people is as though he participates with them in it. And anyone who joins others in a wrongdoing commits two sins: one for committing the wrongdoing and the other for accepting it.”
155. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ said: “Adhere to your covenants, entrusting their fulfillment to steadfast persons.”

156. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ said: “On you lies (the obligation of) obedience to the person about whom you cannot plead the excuse of ignorance.”

157. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ said: “Your minds are opened when you see. You are guided when you receive guidance, and you are made to hear when you do hear.”

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1Just as Allah sent prophets as a token of His justice and mercy to guide and direct us towards a perfect life and even a better hereafter, likewise, He has laid down the system of the Imamate to protect the creed from alteration, so that every Imam may save the Divine teachings from the onslaught of personal desires and give directions about the correct principles of Islam. And just as it is obligatory to know the pioneer of the faith (i.e. the Prophet ﷺ), it is necessary to know its protector. Whoever remains ignorant of him cannot be excused. This is so because the issue of Imamate is supported by so many proofs and testimonies that no intelligent person can find any way to deny it. Thus, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, “Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his times dies the death of jāhilīyya (the pre-Islamic period of ignorance and oppression).” One’s lifespan is limited, but the punishment for oppression is perpetual Hell. Its most fearful aspect is that life there will last forever, without an end, and there will be no death for one to be spared its punishment. This is why, if an oppressor kills someone, with such killing, the oppression terminates, and there is no further scope for any further oppression on the same person.
158. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “Remonstrate with your brother by being kind to him, and respond to his evil by being generous to him.”

159. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “If one places himself where he may be charged, let him not blame those who may think ill of him.”

160. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “One who possesses (riches) prefers himself over others.”

161. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “One who follows only his view perishes, and one who consults with others shares their wisdom.”

162. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “One who hides his secret holds his own option.”

163. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “Poverty is the greatest death.”

164. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “If one is fair to another person who is not fair to him, it is as though he worships him.”

165. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib 啶 said: “No creature should be obeyed if such obedience means disobeying the Creator.”
166. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “No blame should be placed on one in delaying taking what belongs to him; blame should be on the one who takes what does not belong to him.”

167. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Conceit stops one from pursuing perfection.”

168. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The undertaking is near, but the company is not.”

169. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The morning surely shines for those who have vision.”

170. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Abandoning a sin is easier than seeking help (thereafter).”

171. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “How often one meal blocks many!”

172. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “People are enemies of what they do not know.”

173. One who welcomes various views gets to know where error lies.”
174. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “One who sharpens his weapon seeking revenge against those who incur the Wrath of Allāh will be strong enough to kill those who are strong in committing falsehood.”

175. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “If you fear doing something, then do it, because your fear (itself) is greater than actually doing it!”

176. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “The mechanism whereby one earns mastership is forbearance.”

177. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “Reprimand the evil doer by rewarding the doer of righteousness.”

178. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “Remove evil from the chest of others by eradicating it from your own.

179. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “Fanatically insisting on disagreeing poisons one’s opinion.”

180. Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “Greed is perpetual bondage.”
181. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The fruit of carelessness is regret, whereas the fruit of resolve is safety.”

182. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Preferring silence over articulating wisdom produces nothing good; similarly is to speak out of ignorance.”

183. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “No two cases vary from each other except that one of them is falsehood.”

184. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Never have I ever doubted the truth whenever I witnessed it.”

185. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Never have I told a lie, nor was I ever called a liar. Never did I ever stray, nor could anyone use me to cause others to stray.”

186. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The oppressor who starts oppressing will tomorrow bite his hand (in regret).”

187. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Departure (from this world) is nigh.”
188. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One who openly opposes what is right perishes.”

189. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One who is not saved by patience will be finished by impatience.

190. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “How strange! Should caliphate (government authority) be obtained through friends and relatives?!”

Al-Sharīf ar-Radi says that it is narrated that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ composed two verses of poetry in this same meaning the rough translation of which is as follows:

If you through shūra took charge of them,
How so since those whose advice is sought were absent?!
And if you through kinsfolk argued with the opponent,
Others are more worthy of and nearer
To the Prophet than you.

191. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One in this life is a target of death; he is looted by calamities. With every sip there is hardship, with every morsel there is pain. Whenever a servant of Allāh
receives a blessing, he bids another farewell. Whenever he welcomes a new day, he bids another farewell for its sake. This is so because we assist the fates: Every breath we draw is a target of death; so, how can we hope to last since this night and this day never raise anything in honor except that they are more swift in destroying what they build and disperse what they gather?”

192. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “O son of Adam! Anything you earn beyond your need is stored for others.”

193. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Hearts have desires, coming or going; so, approach your hearts according to their desires and approaches, for if you force the heart, you will blind it.”

194. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “What shall I satisfy my anger when I am outraged? Is it when I am unable to seek revenge, so it will be said to me: ‘Why did you not have patience?’ Or should I do it when I am able, so it will be said to me: ‘Why did you not forgive?’”

195. Passing by a pile of garbage, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “This is what you, people, were too miser to give to others.”

In another narrative, he is reported as having said, “This is what you used to compete with each other for!”

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196. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: "None of your wealth is wasted so long as it provides you with admonishment."

197. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: "These hearts wear out just as bodies do; so, seek for them beautiful pieces of wisdom."

198. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib heard the Khārijites say, "There is no government except Allāh's." He, therefore, said: "A true statement intended to reap falsehood."

199. Describing mobs, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: "They are the ones who overwhelm when they gather and are known when they disperse."

It is said that he rather said, "They are the ones who do harm when they gather and do good when they disperse." The Imām was asked, "We understand their mischief when they gather, but what benefit is there if they disperse?" The Imām said, "Each one of them returns to his profession, so people benefit from them, such as the builder returns to build, the weaver returns to his craft, the baker returns to his bakery, and so on."
200. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following when a criminal was brought to him escorted by mobs: “There is no welcome for you here, O faces that are not seen except when something bad is committed!”

201. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “With every human being, there are two guardian angels. When (the angel of) death approaches, they make room for him; fate is a secure protection.”

202. Talhah and az-Zubair said to the Imām ﷺ: “We shall swear the oath of allegiance to you if we become your partners in this matter (caliphate).” Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “No, you both are partners when strength and aid is sought, and you both are aides against inability and exertion.”

203. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “O people! “Fear Allāh Who hears you when you speak, Who knows what you hide in your chests, and be more swift than death which catches up with you when you flee, which takes you away when you stay, and which remembers you when you forget about it.”

204. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Do not be discouraged by
ingrates from doing good deeds, for you may be thanked by those
who do not benefit from your good deed and who still are grateful to
you for it. You may obtain gratitude from a grateful person much
more than what someone who hides it has wasted... and Allāh loves
the doers of goodness.”

205 Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Every container becomes
straitened by what is put in it except the container of knowledge: It
expands.”

206. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The first compensation for a
clement person for his clemency is that people are his supporters
against the ignorant ones.”

207. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “If you are not clement, then put
on the garb of clemency, for many are those who imitate others and
who become almost like them.”

208. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “One who holds himself to
account succeeds while one who overlooks it loses. One who is
cautious earns security. One who receives admonishment expands
his vision. One who expands his vision gains understanding, and one
who gains understanding earns knowledge.”
209. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The life of this world shall be kind to us after being cruel to us just as a she-camel that rejects those who milk it but turns with affection to its newborn.”

Having said so, the Imām ﷺ recited the following verse: “And We wished to be gracious to those who were being oppressed in the land to make them the leaders and to make them the heirs” (Qur’ān, 28:5).

210. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Fear Allāh like one who is willing to risk everything [just to please Allāh], who urges himself to walk towards Allāh, who starts in awe, who looks into the outcomes of matters, into the penalty of anything forbidden, one who is apprehensive of the final end.”

211. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Generosity is the guard of honors. Clemency is ship’s restrainer. Forgiveness is the zakāt of victory. Solace is your compensation for one who betrayed you. Consultation is the same as guidance. One who sticks only to his own view takes a risk. Patience struggles against calamities. Impatience aids against time’s fluctuations. The best of wealth is to abandon high hopes. How many the minds that are subdued by aggressive desires are! A sign of success is to remember experience. Affection is a useful kinship. And do not place your trust in someone who has no patience.”

212. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One’s self-conceit is one of the
envies of his own mind.”

213. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “Overlook imperfections and pains, and you will always be pleased.”

214. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “One whose stem is lean, his leaves will be thick.” (That is, one who is kind to others will grow up like a healthy stem with twigs.)


216. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “One who wins becomes greater.”

217. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “In the alterations of conditions lies the knowledge of the gems of men.”

218. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “Envying a friend is a sign of fault in one’s friendship.”

219. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “Most places where minds are conquered fall under the glitter of high hopes.”

220. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib  said: “Overlook imperfections and pains, and you will always be pleased.”
220. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “It is not fair to put an end to trust by entertaining doubt.”

221. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “How miserable the ration of a servant of Allāh to the Hereafter is if he oppresses Allāh’s servants!”

222. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The very best of a generous man’s acts of generosity is that he is mindless of what he knows (of people’s faults).”

223. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If one who is attired with the outfit of modesty, people never see his shortcoming.”

224. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Through abundance of silence does one earn respect. Through fairness does one win admirers. Through acts of favors does one’s value become greater. Through humility does one’s blessing become complete. Through bearing hardships, loftiness is earned. Through fair dealing, an opponent is subdued. And through clemency with regard to a shallow-minded person does one earn supporters.”

225. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “How strange it is that the envious ones overlook the soundness of their own bodies!”
226. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “A covetous person is tied with the ropes of humiliation.”

227. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked about īmān. He said: “Īmān is knowledge with the heart, an admission with the tongue, and an action according to the [Islamic] injunctions.”

228. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If one becomes sad about this world, he becomes angry with what Allāh decrees. One who complains about a calamity that befell him complains against his Lord. And one who goes to a wealthy man and humbles himself to him on account of his wealth wipes out two-thirds of his creed. If one recites the Qur’ān, and when he dies he goes to hell, he is one of those who used to mock the Signs of Allāh. If one keeps talking about his love for this world, his heart will be burnt by it in three instances: worry which he never overcomes, miserliness which never abandons him, and hope which he never realizes.”

229. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Satisfaction suffices for wealth and good manners for a bliss.” He ﷺ was asked about the meaning of this verse: “... We shall let him lead a good life.” He ﷺ said, “It (good life) is contentment.”
230. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Be partners of one to whom sustenance goes, for this is the best means for acquiring wealth and the most worthy of earning a good fortune.”

“وَقَالَ (عَلِيهِ الَّسَلامُ): فِي قولِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْإِحْسَانِ وَالْإِضْرَابِ﴾: العدُّ

الإنصافِ، والإحسانُ التفضّلُ.

231. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following in explanation of the verse saying, “Allāh enjoins you to abide by justice and kindness”: “By justice, equity is meant, while kindness is doing others favors.”

“وَقَالَ (عَلِيهِ الَّسَلامُ): مِنْ يُغَطِّي بَالْيَدِ الْقَصِيرَةِ يُغَطِّي بَالْيَدِ الطوِيلةٍ.

قال الرضي: وَعِنْتَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ مَا يَنفِقُهُ الْمُرْءُ مِن مَا هُوَ فِي سُبْلِ الخَيْرِ وَالْبُرِّ وَإِنْ كَانَ يُسِيرًا، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَجْعَلُ الْجُزَاءَ عَلَيْهِ عَزْوَى كَثِيرًا، وَ"الْبِدَانَ" هَاهَا عَبْرَةَ عَن

النُّمَتِينَ، فَرِقْ (عَلِيهِ الَّسَلامُ) بَيْنَ نَعْمَةِ الْعُدِّ وَنَعْمَةِ الْرِّبِّ تَعَالَى، ذَكَرَهَا بِالْقَصِيرَةِ وَ

الطوِيلةٍ، فَجَعَلَ تَقْصِيرًا وَهَذِهِ طوِيلةٍ، لَنَحَلِ اللَّهُ أَبْدَا تَضْعِفَ عَلَى نَعْمَهَا المَخْلُوقَ

أَضِعَافًا كَثِيرَةً، إِذْ كَانَ نَعْمَ اللَّهُ أُصُولَ النَّعْمَ كُلَّهَا، فَكَلِّ نَعْمَةٍ إِلَيْهَا تَرْجَعُ وَمِنْهَا تَنْزَعُ.

232. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If one gives with the short hand, he will be given with the long one.”

Al-Radi has said, “The meaning of this statement is: If one spends out of his wealth in the way of goodness and kindness, though it may be little, Allāh Almighty will make its reward great. The short hand here is a reference to that of the servant of Allāh, whereas the long one is a connotation of that of the Lord, the most Exalted One, Who is never weakened by giving and Who rewards with a lot for what is little.”

“وَقَالَ (عَلِيهِ الَّسَلامُ): لَابَنِي الحَسَنِ (عَلِيهِ الَّسَلامُ): لَا تَذَّعَّوْنَ إِلَى مُبَارَزَةٍ؛ وَإِنْ

ذُعِيَ إِلَيْهِ فَاجْعَبْ: فَإِنَّ الدَّاعِي إِلَيْهِ يَبْعَضُ وَالْبَاغُ مَصْرُوعُ.

233. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Do not invite anyone to a duel, but if you are challenged to duel, respond, because one who calls to a duel is an oppressor, and the oppressor is always defeated.”
234. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The best of women’s attributes are the men’s worst: self-conceit, cowardice and miserliness. So if a woman is self-conceited, she will not let one approach her (in bed). If she is miser, she safeguards her wealth and that of her husband. And if she is a coward, she is scared of anything that appears before her.”

235. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked, “Describe to us the wise person.” He ﷺ said: “He is the one who puts everything in its right place.” He ﷺ was then asked to describe the ignorant person, so he said, “I have just done so!” Al-Radi has said, “He means to say that the ignorant person is the one who does not put things in their right places. He simply is the antithesis of the wise person.”
236. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "By Allāh! Your world is cheaper in my eyes than the intestines of a pig in the hands of a leper."

237. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Some people worship Allāh out of their desire (for what He has). Such is the worship of traders. Some people worship Allāh out of fear of Him; such is the worship of slaves. And some people worship Allāh in order to thank Him; such is the worship of the free."
238. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "One who procrastinates loses track of what is right. One who obeys a tale-teller loses friends."

239. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "A brick taken by force in order to build a house is a pawn for its destruction."

Ar-Radi says, "This statement is also narrated from the Prophet ﷺ. It is not strange that both statements are similar since their source is the same fountainhead, and they aim at obliterating one’s sins."

240. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "The oppressed one’s Day (of Judgment) is to the oppressor much harder than the day of the oppressor against the oppressed."

241. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Fear Allāh to some degree (even) though it may be little, and set a curtain between you and Allāh (even) though it may be thin."

242. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: "Surely in every blessing there is a right of Allāh. If one carries out that right, Allāh increases the blessing, and if one falls short of doing so, he risks losing the blessing."
243. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: "Beware of blessings fleeing away from you, for not everything that flees returns."

244. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: "Generosity is more prompting to goodness than regard for kinship."

245. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: "The best deed is that which you have to force yourself to do."

246. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: "I came to know Allāh, the
Glorified One, through breaking determinations, a change of intentions and the loss of courage.”

247. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ـ_salātuʾl-ahār ـ said: “Allāh has laid down īmān (conviction) for purification from polytheism; salāt (prayer) for purification from vanity; zakāt as a means of livelihood; siyam (fasting) as a trial of the people; ḥajj for the honor of Islam; persuasion for doing good deeds (al-amr bil-maʾrūf) for the goodness of the common people; dissuasion from evil (an-nahi ‘anil-munkar) for controlling the mischievous; regard for kinship for increase of number (of family members); retribution for stopping bloodshed, the award of penalties for the realization of importance of the prohibitions; the abstinence from drinking wine for the protection of one’s wits; the avoidance of theft for inculcating chastity; the abstinence from adultery for safeguarding lineage; the abstinence from sodomy for increasing the progeny; tendering testimony for furnishing proof against contentions; abstinence from telling lies for increasing the esteem of the truth; the maintenance of peace (salam) for protection from danger; Imāmate (Divine

1The breaking of determination and the loss of courage can be argued to prove the existence of Allāh in this way that, for example, a man determines to do a thing but before the determination is transformed into action, it changes and some other idea takes its place. This alteration of ideas and determinations and the emergence of change therein is a proof that there is some higher controlling power over us which has the capability to bring them from nonexistence into existence and again from existence into non-existence, and this is beyond human power. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge a super authority which affects change and alteration in determination.

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Leadership) for the orderliness of the community and obedience (to Imāms) as a mark of respect for Imāmate."

Before describing some of the aims and objectives of the Sharī'a commands, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib uala begins with the aims and objectives of conviction (īmān) because īmān serves as the basis for religious commands. Without it, no need is felt for any religious code or jurisprudence. Īmān is acknowledging the existence of the Creator and the admission of His Oneness. When this īmān takes root in a man’s heart, such man does not agree to bow before any being, nor is he over-awed, affected or impressed by any other power or authority. Rather, getting mentally freed of all ties, he regards himself as a devotee of Allāh. The result of this adherence to this unity, tawhīd, is that he is saved from the pollution of polytheism.

Prayer (salāt) is the most important of all forms of worship. It consists of standing, sitting, bending and prostrating, and these postures are a successful way of destroying the feeling of vanity and pride, erasing self-conceit and egotism and creating humility and submissiveness. This is so because the actions and movements of a vain person produce pride and haughtiness, while humble actions engender in the mind the qualities of submissiveness and humbleness. With the exercise of these actions, a man, by and by, acquires a humble temperament. This is how the Arabs, who were so vain that if their whip fell off during riding, they would not bend down to pick it up, or if the strap of the shoe gave way, they thought it would be insulting to bend down to mend it..., began to rub their faces on the dust during prostrations in their prayers and place their foreheads facing others’ feet (of those who pray in front of them in the rows) during congregational prayers. This way, they acquired the true spirit of Islam after abandoning the pre-Islamic vanity and arrogance.

Zakāt: When a person who is financially able pays annually out of his money or property a fixed share for those who are either destitute or do not have means of livelihood for a year, does so in order to fulfill one of Islam’s obligatory commands. The purpose behind it is that no individual in the community should remain poor, and they
should all remain safe from the evils that result from want and poverty. Besides, another objective is served: Wealth should keep rotating from one individual to another; it must not be centered in the possession of just few individuals.

*Siyām* (fasting) is a form of worship in which there is not an iota of show, of pretension, and no motive is active in it except that of a pure intention and a sincere desire to perform another obligation. As a result, even in seclusion, when hunger perturbs a man or thirst makes him uneasy, he does not extend his hand for eating, nor does he long for water. The lack of neither food nor water makes him lose his self-control. The purity of one’s conscience prevents his self-will from deflecting. This is the greatest advantage of fasting: It practically engenders the purity of self-will.

The purpose of *hajj* is that Muslims from all corners of the globe should assemble at one place so that this world assembly may prove to be an occasion for the manifestation of Islam’s greatness, the renewal of the passion for worship and the creation of global bonds of mutual brotherhood.

The purpose of *jihād* is to fight with all possible might and means those forces that oppose Islam, so that Islam may achieve stability and progress. Although there are dangers for life in this course, and difficulties crop up at every step, the tidings for eternal ease and everlasting life produce the courage to bear all these hardships.

The persuasion for doing what is good and the dissuasion from committing evil are affective ways of showing others the correct path and preventing them from committing wrongdoing. If a community’s members do not perform these duties, nothing can save it from ruin, and it falls to an extreme depth morally and socially. That is why Islam has laid a great emphasis on it, regarding it as an unpardonable sin.

Doing good for kinship means that a man should do favors to his relatives. He at least should not stop mutual accosting and speaking with them so that attitudes may become clean and family ties may develop. Dispersed individuals may render strength to one another.
Seeking restitution is a right given to the survivors of a killed person. They can demand a life for a life so that, for fear of punishment, none will dare kill anyone. At the same time, the survivor’s passion for revenge should not result in the killing of more than one single person. No doubt, forgiveness or pardon does carry weight in its own place, but where it means trampling of an individual’s right or endangering world peace, it cannot be regarded as favorable. Rather, on such occasions, restitution, or the payment of the blood money (diyya), becomes the sole way of stopping bloodshed and safeguarding human lives. Thus, Allāh says:

\[
\text{وَلَكُمُ فِي الْقِسَاصِ حُيَّةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتْفَكُّونَ}
\]

And for you, there is (security of) restitution (qisās), O men of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil).
(Qur’ān, 2:179)

The purpose behind the awarding of penalties is to make the offender appreciate the seriousness of violating the prohibitions of Allāh so that he may keep his distance from prohibitions for fear of being punished.

Wine causes diffusion of thinking, dispersion of senses and weakness of comprehension. As a result, a man commits such actions which will not be expected of him when he is sober. When intoxicated, one’s senses become weak. Besides, it ruins health and renders the body liable to catch infectious diseases, while sleeplessness, nervous weakness and rheumatism are its main side effects. This is why the Shari‘a has prohibited intoxicants, including beer.

Theft, that is, taking what someone else owns, is an evil which is produced by the sway of greed and evil motivations. Since bringing down evil passions from the status of excess to the bounds of moderation means chastity, the abstinence from theft is produced by curbing greed and evil passions.
Adultery and sodomy have been prohibited so that one’s lineage may be regulated and the human race may continue and prosper. The children born out of adultery are not regarded as legitimate. Consequently, they are not entitled to inheritance, while there is no question about children born too legally married couples. Besides, as a consequence of evil practices such as adultery, venereal diseases can cause the ruination of life in addition to discontinuing reproduction.

The law of testimony is needed because if one party denies the right of that of another, the latter may establish it through testimony and thereby secure it.

Abstention from lies and falsehood has been enjoined so that the standing and importance of its antithesis, namely the truth, may become prominent. In observing the advantages of being truthful, the moral weakness of falsehood can be avoided.

“Salām” means peace and love for peace. It is obvious that a peaceful attitude is a successful way of protecting one from dangers and of preventing war and fighting. Generally, commentators have taken the word “salam” to mean “mutual greetings and well-wishing”, but both context and fact that it has been mentioned in a series of obligations do not support this interpretation. Salām is a means of securing safety from dangers. It is regarded as a path for peace and for loving peace. When two Muslims meet each other, they greet each other with the greeting of salām, of peace. It means that they announce the mutual wishes of peace and well-being. Afterwards, each feels safe with the other.

Imāmate (imāma): This word has appeared in the same context in authentic editions of Nahjul-Balāgha as well as in its commentaries such as that of Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 19, p. 90; Ibn Maytham, Vol. 5, pp. 367378; Minhāj al-Barā’ah, Vol. 21, p. 318, and other sources besides Nahjul-Balāgha, such as Nihāyat al-‘Arab by an-Nuwayri ash-Shāfi’i, Vol. 8, p. 183 and Bihar al-Anwār by al-Majlisi, Vol. 6, p. 111.
In fact, this word, *imāma*, has been distorted to “amāna” (trust) or “amānāt” (trusts) in some copies such as those printed in Egypt. It is very surprising to note that the word has appeared as *amāna* in the text of Nahjul-Balāgha printed with a commentary by Ibn Abul-Hadīd in Egypt in the first edition, Vol. 4, p. 350 as well as in the second edition edited by Muhammed Abul-Fadhl Ibrāhīm, Vol. 19, p. 86, while he himself (Ibn Abul-Hadīd) based his commentary on its correct reading, namely *imāma*, as did other commentators.

However, in explanation of this sentence, “Imāmate for the orderliness of the community,” as the theological scholars say: Whoever has known dark experiences and examined political principles necessarily knows that whenever men have among them a chief and a guide whom they obey, one who restrains the oppressor from his oppression and the unjust man from his injustice, avenging the oppressed..., leads them to rational principles and religious
duties. He restrains them from the corruption which causes the destruction of order in their worldly affairs and from evils that result in wretchedness in the Hereafter, so that every individual might fear that punishment. As a result of all of this, these community members will draw closer to soundness and depart from corruption.

The institution of Imāmate is intended to cater to the unification of the nation and to protect the commandments of Islam from alteration and distortion. In the absence of a head for the nation, a protector for the religion, the order of the nation cannot be maintained, nor can the commandments of Islam remain safe from tampering. This objective can be achieved only when obedience to him is obligatory. This is so because if he is not obeyed and followed by obligation, he will neither be able to maintain justice and equity, nor will he secure the rights of the oppressed from the oppressors, nor will he be able to issue and enforce the laws of the Shari’ā. The outcome of these inabilities is that the extinction of evil and mischief from the land cannot be expected.

248. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ used to say: If you want an oppressor to take an oath, ask him to swear like this: that he is out of reach of Allāh’s might and power. If he swears falsely this way, he will be swiftly punished, whereas if he swears by Allāh Who is such that there is no god but He, he will not be quickly punished since he is acknowledging the Unity of Allāh, the Sublime.”

1It is narrated that someone levied some charges against Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq ﷺ before the ‘Abbāside caliph Abdullah ibn Muhammed al-Mansūr. Al-Mansūr sent for the Imām ﷺ and told him that so-and-so had told him such-and-such about him. The Imām said it was all wrong and there was not an iota of truth in it. He desired the man to be sent for and questioned before him. Consequently, he was sent for and questioned. The man said that whatever he had said was true and correct. The Imām said to him, “If you are speaking the truth, then you swear as I ask you to swear.” The Imām ﷺ made him swear by saying, “I am out of reach of Allāh’s
249. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: "O son of Adam! Be your own representative in the matter of your property, and do about whatever you want to be done after your death, since after you, it will be out of your control."

might and power, and I rely on my own might and power." Soon after swearing like this, the man was hit with paralysis, and he became motionless. The Imam, returned with full honor and prestige, as we read in the following references: *Al-Kāfī* of al-Kulaynī, Vol. 6, pp. 445 - 446; *Bihār al-Anwār* of al-Majlisi, Vol. 47, pp. 164 - 165, 172 - 175, 203 - 204; *Al-Fusūl al-Muḥimmah* of Ibn as-Sabbagh al-mālikī, pp. 225 - 226; *As-Sahwāʾiq al-Muḥriqāt* of Ibn Hajar ash-Shāfīʿi al-ʿAsqalānī, p. 120 and *Jāmīʿ Karamat al-Awliyāʾ* of an-Nabhani ash-Shāfīʿi, Vol. 2, p. 4. This incident took place during the reign of Hārūn ar-Rashīd (149 - 193 A.H./766 - 809 A.D.), grandson of Abū Jaʿfar al-Mansūr al-Dawaniqī, when the well-known enemy of Ahl al-Bayt of the Holy Prophet, namely Abdullah ibn Musʿab, grandson of Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, slandered Yahya ibn AbdAllāh ibn al-Hassan ibn Imām al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abū Tālib before Hārūn ar-Rashīd by saying that he was plotting a rebellion against him (against Hārūn). Then Yahya made Abdullah swear before Hārūn in the same manner as the Imam had demanded. When Abdullah ibn Musʿab swore as he was required, the symptom of leprosy soon appeared in him in the presence of Hārūn ar-Rashīd. He died three days later. Every part of his flesh cracked open and all the hair of his body fell out. After this documented incident, Hārūn used to say, "How soon Allāh took revenge on Abdullah for Yahya!" For more information about this incident and similar ones, refer to these references: *Maqatil at-Tālibiyīn* of Abul-Faraj al-Isfahānī, pp. 472 - 478; *Muṣūl al-Dhahab* of al-Maṣʿūdī, Vol. 3, pp. 340 - 342; *Tārīkh Baghdad* of al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, Vol. 14, pp. 110 - 112; *Sharḥ Nahjul-Balāgha* of Ibn Abul-Hadīd al-Muʿtazīlī, Vol. 19, pp. 91 - 94; *Tārīkh* of Ibn Kathīr, Vol. 10, pp. 167 - 168 and *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ* of al-Sayyūṭī, p. 287.

1The meaning is that if a person desires that after his death a portion of his property should be spent on charity, he should not wait till the time of his death but should spend it whenever he desires during his lifetime. It is possible that after his death, his successors may not act on his will, or he may not get an opportunity to leave a will.
250. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Anger is a sort of madness: Its victim repents afterwards. If he does not repent, his madness is confirmed.”


252. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If you are impoverished, trade with Allāh through charity.”

253. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following to Kumayl ibn Ziyād an-Nakha’ī: “O Kumayl! Direct your people to go out in the day to achieve noble traits and to go out in the night to meet the needs of those who might be sleeping. I swear by the One Whose hearing extends to all voices, if someone pleases another’s heart, Allāh will create a special thing out of this pleasing so that whenever any hardship befalls him, it will come running like flowing water and drive away the hardship as wild camels are driven away.”

1 Envy produces such a poisonous matter in the body which destroys its natural heat. As a result, the body weakens and the spirit withers. This is why an envious person never prospers and melts away in the heat of envy.
254. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Faithfulness with faithless people is faithlessness with Allāh, while faithlessness with faithless people is faithfulness with Allāh.”

255. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Many men are gradually brought to punishment due to good treatment (of those who do not deserve it). Many men remain in deceit because their evil deeds are covered. Many men are in illusion because of people speak well to them, while there is no greater ordeal by Allāh, the Glorified One, than giving all of these men a respite (which they may not deserve).”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “This saying has appeared earlier as well, but here it contains a beautiful and useful addition.”

256. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “O son of Adam! Do not inflict the worry of the Day that has not yet come but has already approached, because if that Day is in your life, Allāh will also bestow its livelihood.”

257. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “There are two kinds of workers in the world: One is a person who labors in this world for this world; his labor for this world keeps him unmindful of the next. He is afraid of destitution for those whom he will leave behind but feels safe about it. So, he spends his life seeking the good of others. The other
is one who labors in this world for what is to come hereafter, securing his share of this world without an effort. Thus, he gets the benefits of both, becoming the owner of both homes. This way, he is prestigious before Allāh. If he asks Allāh anything, He does not deny him.”

258. It is related that during the days of (caliph) 'Omar ibn al-Khattāb, the question of the excess of ornaments of the Ka’ba was mentioned to him and some people suggested the following: “If you raise by it an army of Muslims, you will earn great rewards; after all, what would the Ka’ba do with ornaments?” 'Omar considered doing so but asked Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  what he thought. The Imām said the following:

“When the Qur’ān was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, there were four kinds of property. One is the property of a Muslim which he distributed among the successors according to fixed shares. Second is the tax (fay’ ﬁء) which he distributed to those for whom it was meant. Third, the one-fifth (khums ﺦﻤﺲ) for which Allāh had fixed ways to distribute. Fourth is charity (sadaqat) the disposal of which is also fixed by Allāh. The ornaments of the Ka’ba did exist in those days, but Allāh left them as they were. He did not leave them by omission, nor were they unknown to Him. Therefore, you should keep them where Allāh and His Prophet placed them.”

'Omar ibn al-Khattāb at that moment said, “If you had not been here, we would have been humiliated.” He left the ornaments as they were.
Among the first three caliphs, 'Omar ibn al-Khattāb often used to call on Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib to help him solve many intricate problems, so as to benefit from his vast knowledge. But Abū Bakr, due to the short period of his caliphate, as well as 'Othmān, due to the special circumstances of the latter’s caliphate and entourage, seldom used to call on Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib and benefit from his advice. 'Omar used to praise Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib very much for his vast knowledge, saying, “The most knowledgeable person among us in jurisprudence and judgment is Ali,” as we read in these classic references: al-Bukhāri, Sahih, Vol. 6, p. 23; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, Vol. 5, p. 113; al-Hākim, Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 305; Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqāt, Vol. 2, part 2, p. 102; Ibn Abd al-Barr, Al-Istī‘āb, Vol. 3, p. 1102 and others.

Certainly, there is no need for a testimony from 'Omar or from others in this regard. 'Omar himself and a group of the companions admit that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to often say, “Ali is the most knowledgeable in jurisprudence and judgment among my umma (Muslim nation),” according to Akhbār al-Qudāt of al-Wakī’, Vol. 1, p. 78; Masābīh as-Sunnah of al-Baghawi, Vol. 2, p. 203; Al-Istī‘āb of Ibn Abd al-Barr, Vol. 1, pp. 16 - 17; Vol. 3, p. 1102; Ar-Riyād an-Nadirah of al-Muhibb al-Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 108 and Al-Sunan of Ibn Mājah, Vol. 1, p. 55. In this regard, imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrates from Abū Hazm that a certain man approached Mu‘āwiya and put to him some theological questions. Mu‘āwiya said, “Refer these questions to Ali who possesses better knowledge.” The man said, “But I prefer to have your own reply rather than that of Ali.” Mu‘āwiya silenced him and said, “This is the worst thing that I have ever heard from you! You have expressed hatred towards the person whom the Messenger of Allāh used to coach and tutor as a mother bird feeds a nestling by putting grain after grain into the mouth of the nestling with its beak and to whom the Messenger of Allāh said:’You hold the same status in relation to me as Hārūn (Aaron) held in relation to Mūsā (Moses) except that there shall, in all certainty, be no prophet after me’, and to whom 'Omar used to turn for the solution of unsolved problems,” as we read in: Fayd al-


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1His full name is محمد عبد الروؤف بن تاج العارفين بن علي بن زين العابدين الحدادي القاهرةي Muhammad ibn Abd al-Ra’ūf ibn Tāj al-‘Arīfīn ibn Ali ibn Zain al-‘Abidīn al-Haddādī al-Munawī. He was a senior scholar, a man of knowledge in both religion and arts. He dedicated his life to research and authorship. He used to eat very little and sleep very little, too, so he fell sick and his limbs weakened. His son, Tāj ad-Dīn Muḥammad, used to write what his father dictated to him. He wrote as many as eighty works. He was born in Cairo, Egypt, in 952 A.H./1545 A.D. where he lived and died in 1031 A.H./1622 A.D.
Above all, this admission is the acknowledgment by the Holy Prophet of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  as narrated by 'Omar ibn al-Khattāb himself, Abū Sa`īd al-Khudri and Mu`ath ibn Jabal. These dignitaries report saying that the Holy Prophet said: “O Ali! I have exceeded you in Prophethood, for there will be no prophet after me, and you exceed others in seven noble qualities. You are: i) the first [among all contemporary males] to believe in Allāh, ii) the best to fulfill your promise to Allāh, iii) the best to adhere to the commandments of Allāh, iv) the most equitable distributor among people, v) the best dispenser of justice (or the most clement) to the (Muslim) subjects, vi) the one who has the best insight into controversial issues (or the most learned in judgment), and vii) the most conspicuous in virtue and honor before Allāh,” according to Hilyat al-Awliyā’, Vol. 1, pp. 65, 66; Ar-Riyād an-Nadirah of al-Muhībb al-Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 198; Al-Manāqib, al-Khawārizmi, p. 61; Kanz al-‘Ummāl, Vol. 12, p. 214 and Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 13, p. 230.

It is also narrated by Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib, Abū Ayyūb al-Ansāri, Ma`qil ibn Yasar and Buraydah ibn Husayb that the Messenger of Allāh  said to Fātima , “Are you not satisfied that surely I have married you to the one who is the foremost of my umma in believing in Islam, the most knowledgeable among them and the superior to them all in clemency?” This is recorded in these sources: Al-Musnad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 5, p. 26; Al-Musannaf, as-Sam‘āni, Vol. 5, p. 490; Al-Istī‘āb, Vol. 3, p. 1099; Usd al-Ghābah, Vol. 5, p. 520; Kanz al-‘Ummāl, Vol. 12, p. 205; Vol. 15, p. 99; Majma‘ az-Zawā‘id, Vol. 9, pp. 101, 114 and As-Sīrah al-Halabiyya, Vol. 1, p. 285.

Once we read the following saying by the Holy Prophet , we will no longer be surprised when taking note, based on the above acknowledgments, of the vast knowledge of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib, his efficiency in the field of jurisprudence and judgment: “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; whoever wants to acquire (my) knowledge must come through the gate,” as recorded


259. When the news of the attack of Mu`āwiyah’s men on al-Anbār reached Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ, he himself came out walking till he reached an-Nukhaylah where people overtook him and said: “O Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib! We are [mighty] enough for [defeating] them.” He said: You cannot be enough for me against yourselves; so, how can you be enough for me against others? Before me, the people used to complain of the oppression of their rulers, but now I have to complain of the wrongful actions of my own people, as though I am led by them and they are the leaders, or that I am the subject and they are the rulers.”

The narrator says: “When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ uttered this during his speech, which we have included in the collection of sermons (No. 27 above), two men from among his companions advanced towards him and one of them said: “I I have power only
over myself and my brother (Qur‘ān, 5:25). So, order us with your command, O ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib, and we will carry it out.” Thereupon, ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib སྐད་ said: “How can you two accomplish what I aim at?”

260. It is said that al-Ḥārīth ibn Hawt al-Laithi came to ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib སྐད་ and said: “Do you believe that I can ever imagine that the people of Jamal were wrong?” ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib སྐད་ said: “O al-Ḥārīth! You have seen below yourself, not above it; you have been confused. Certainly, you have known right, so that you can recognize the righteous. And you have not known wrong, so that you can recognize the people who are wrong!” Then al-Ḥārīth said: “In that case, I shall withdraw along with Saʿd ibn Mālik and Abdullah ibn ‘Omar, although he had sworn allegiance, he refused to help ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib in his battles putting forth this excuse: “I have sought seclusion in order to devote myself to worship and I do not want to involve

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1Saʿd ibn Mālik (i.e. Saʿd ibn Abū Waqqās, father of ’Omar ibn Saʿd who killed ʿImām al-Hussain) and Abdullah ibn ’Omar were among those who were keeping themselves away from ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib’s help and support. As for Saʿd ibn Abū Waqqās, after the killing of ʿOthmān he retired to some wilderness and passed his life there; he did not agree to swear the oath of allegiance to ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib (as caliph). But after the martyrdom of ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib, he used to express his repentance, saying, “I held an opinion but it was a wrong one,” according to al-Hākim’s Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p. 116. When Muʿāwiyyah blamed him for not supporting him in his fight against ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib, Saʿd said, “I only repent for not having fought against the rebellious group (i.e. Muʿāwiyyah and his folks),” according to these references: Ahkām al-Qur‘ān of al-Jassās al-Hanafi, Vol. 2, pp. 224 – 25 and Al-Furuʿ of Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali, Vol. 3, p. 542. As for Abdullah ibn ’Omar, although he had sworn allegiance, he refused to help ʿImām Ali ibn ʿAbū Ṭālib in his battles putting forth this excuse: “I have sought seclusion in order to devote myself to worship and I do not want to involve
Ibn `Omar,` whereupon Imām Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “Verily, Sa`d and `Omar have neither sided with right nor forsaken wrong.”

261. Imām Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “One who holds authority is like one who rides a lion; he is envied for his status but he well knows it.”

262. Imām Ali ibn Abī Tālib ﷺ said: “Do good deeds to the bereaved ones so that good is done to your bereaved ones, too.”


1The notion here is that if a person holds a high position in, say, a royal court, people look at his rank, status, honor and prestige with envy. But he always fears lest the royal pleasure should turn against him and he falls in the pit of disgrace, dishonor, death and destruction. He is like the rider on a lion with whom people are awed, but he himself faces the danger lest the lion should devour him or throw him in some fatal pit.
263. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “When the utterance of the wise is to the point, it serves as a cure, but if it is wrong, it acts like an illness.¹

264. Someone asked Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ to define conviction for him. The Imām said, “Come to me tomorrow so that I may enlighten you in the presence of all people; thus, if you forget what I say, others might retain it. This is so because an utterance is like a fluttering prey which may be grappled by someone but missed by others.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “We have already stated in the earlier chapter how Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ replied to this man, namely his saying (No. 31): ‘Faith stands on four pillars, etc.’”

265. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Love your friend up to a limit, for it is possible that he may turn into your enemy some day. And hate your enemy up to a limit, for it is possible he may turn into your friend some day.”

¹The learned and the reformers are responsible for improvement as well as deterioration because the common people are under their influence; they regard their words and actions as being correct and sound. They rely on them and act on their statements. Thus, if their teaching caters for improvement, then thousands of individuals will acquire improvement and betterment by it. But if there is evil in it, thousands of individuals will get involved in misgiving and straying. That is why it is said: “When a scholar gets into evil, the whole world gets into evil.”
266. It is related that two persons were brought to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥasan`i once. They had stolen a public property. One of them was a slave purchased with public money, whereas the other had been purchased by someone from among the people. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥasan`i said, “As for the one who has stolen the public funds, there is no punishment for him, for it means one who is the property of Allāh has taken another property of Allāh. As for the other, he should be punished.” Consequently, the thief’s hand was cut off.

267. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥasan`i said: “If my steps acquire firmness out of these slippery places, I will alter several things.”¹

¹It cannot be denied that after the demise of the Prophet of Islam Ṭḥān, changes came into existence in the Islamic faith. Some people who acted on their own inclinations altered the commands of the Shari`a although none has the right to make alteration to it. This will be ignoring the clear commands of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah and enforcing, in their place, commands produced by one’s own inclination or way of thinking. Thus, the Qur’ān contains this clear method of divorce: الطلاقُ مرتَشان “(Revokable) divorce (i.e. divorce in which resumption of conjugal relations is permissible without a marriage to another man) may be done with two pronouncements” (Qur’ān, 2:229). But due to certain supposed advantages, caliph ‘Omar ordered three pronouncements to be required on a single occasion. Similarly, he introduced the system of ‘awl in inheritance and introduced four tākbīrs in the funeral prayers. In the same way, caliph ‘Othmān added an adhān to the Friday prayer service, ordering the offering of full prayers in place of qāsr (shortened) ones, allowing the sermon to precede the ‘Id prayer service. In fact, hundreds of commands of this type were altered or fabricated. As a result, even correct commands were somehow mixed with wrong ones, causing a loss of authenticity. For such changes to the creed, see the following references: Al-Ghadīr, Al-Amānī [changes introduced by Abū Bakr], Vol. 7, pp. 74 - 236; [changes introduced by ‘Omar], Vol. 6, pp. 83-325; [changes introduced by ‘Othmān], Vol. 8, pp. 98-387; An-Nass wal-Ijtihād, Sharafud-Dīn [changes introduced by Abū Bakr], pp. 76 - 154; [changes introduced by ‘Omar], pp. 155-276 and [changes introduced by ‘Othmān], pp. 284 - 89. See also Muqaddimat Mir`ātul-`Uqūl by Murtada al-Askari, Vol. 1 & 2.
Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ, who was the greatest scholar of the Shari`a, used to protest against these orders and expressed his views about the changes made by some companions, sahāba. In this regard, the Mu’tazilite scholar Ibn Abul-Hadīd writes the following: “There is no possibility for us to deny that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib had views on the commands of the Shari`a and opinions at odds with those of the companions,” as we read on p. 161, Vol. 19 of his encyclopedia titled Sharḥ Nahjul-Balāgha.

When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ took charge of the formal caliphate, rebellions soon cropped up on all sides as a result of which he could not get rid of innovations introduced into the faith; those troubles chased him up to the last moment of his holy life. Consequently, the altered commands could not be fully corrected or eradicated. Many wrong or doubtful commands gained currency in areas far removed from the center. Nevertheless, a group of people associated with Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ used to inquire about the commands of the Shari`a from him directly, and they recorded his answers to their queries. As a result, the correct commands did not totally disappear, the wrong ones did not become unanimously accepted, thanks to Allāh Who protects His creed.

268. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “You have to know with full conviction that Allāh has not fixed for any person more livelihood than what has been ordained in the Book of Destiny, even though his means (of seeking it) may be great, his craving for it intense and his efforts for it acute. Nor does the weakness of a person or the paucity of his means stand in the way between him and what is ordained in the Book of Destiny for him. Whoever realizes it and acts on earns the best of comfort and benefit, while whoever disregards it and doubts it exceeds all men in disadvantages. Very often, a person who
is granted favors is slowly driven (towards punishment) through these same favors. Quite often, an afflicted person receives goodness out of his affliction (such as a blessing disguised as a calamity). Therefore, O listener, increase your gratefulness, lessen your haste and stay within the bounds of your livelihood.”

269. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Do not turn your knowledge into ignorance or your conviction into doubt. When you gain knowledge act (on it), and when you acquire conviction, proceed (on its basis).”

270. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Greed (or foolishness) takes a person to the watering place but brings him back thirsty. It undertakes responsibility but does not fulfill it. Often, the drinker gets choked before he quenches his thirst. The greater the worth of a thing yearned for is, the greater is the grief for its loss. Desires blind the eyes of understanding. The destined share will reach whoever does not approach it.”

Knowledge and conviction demand that they should be acted on, applied, implemented, turned into action... If they are not acted on, they cannot be called knowledge and conviction. Consequently, if a man says that he knows the dangers that exist on a particular path but he adopts that very path for his journey, instead of the path that is danger-free, then who can say that this man had full certainty about the dangers of that path? This is so because the consequence of such certainty should have prevented him from going along that path. Similarly, the person who has a firm belief (i.e. īmān, conviction) in the resurrection and revival of life, or in chastisement and reward, cannot be overpowered by those things of this world that make a man neglectful to the extent that he disregards the next life. He should not fall short of doing good deeds for fear of chastisement and evil consequences.
271. Imâm Ali ibn Abû Tâlib ﷺ said: “O Allâh! I seek Your protection from this: that I may appear to be good in the eyes of people while my inward self may be sinful before You, and that I may guard myself (from sinning) only for show before people although You are aware of everything about me. Thus, I appear before the people in good shape although my evil acts are placed before You. This means achieving nearness to Your creatures but remoteness from Your pleasure.”

272. Imâm Ali ibn Abû Tâlib ﷺ said: “I swear by the One Who let us pass the dark night after which there was a bright day that such and such¹ did not happen.”

273. Imâm Ali ibn Abû Tâlib ﷺ said: “A small act of goodness which is continued regularly is more beneficial than a grand one carried out with grudge.

274. Imâm Ali ibn Abû Tâlib ﷺ said: “When optional deeds (of worship) stand in the way of obligatory ones, abandon them.”

275. Imâm Ali ibn Abû Tâlib ﷺ said: “Whoever keeps the distance of the journey (to the afterlife) in view remains prepared.”

¹Sayyid ar-Radi has not written what it was that did not happen, leaving us only with the first part of the sentence!
276. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān  said: “Perception by the eyes is not real observation because the eyes sometimes deceive people; but wisdom does not deceive whomsoever it counsels.”

277. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān  said: “Between you and preaching there is a curtain of deception.”

278. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān  said: “The ignorant ones from among you get too much while the learned are just put off.”

279. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān  said: “Knowledge dispels the excuse of those who produce excuses.” Compare this statement with the wise axiom that says, “Those who excuse themselves accuse themselves.”

280. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān  said: “Anyone whom death overtakes early seeks time (respite), while the death of anyone who is deferred puts forth excuses for the postpone-ment (of doing good deeds).”

281. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān  said: “For every thing to which people say ‘how good it is!’ there is an evil hidden in this world.”
282. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib was asked about destiny. He said the following: “It is a dark path; do not tread on it. It is a deep ocean; do not dive into it. And it is the secret of Allāh; do not trouble yourselves about (knowing) it (because you never will).”

283. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “When Allāh intends to humiliate a person, He denies him knowledge.”

284. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “In the past, I had a brother-in-faith, and he was prestigious in my view because the world was humble in his eyes, the needs of the stomach did not have a sway over him. He did not long for what he did not get. If he got a thing, he would not ask for more. He remained most of the time silent. When he spoke, he silenced the other speakers. He quenched the thirst of inquirers. He was weak and feeble, but at the time of fighting, he was like the lion of the forest or the serpent of the

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1The man to whom Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib refers here as his “brother” and whose qualities he has stated has been taken by some commentators to be Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, by some as ‘Othmān ibn Maz‘ūn al-Jamhi, and by some as al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi. But it is not unlikely that no particular individual is referred to here at all because it is customary with Arabs to speak of a “brother” or a “comrade” although they have no particular individual in mind.
valley: He will not put forth an argument unless it was decisive.

He would not abuse anyone in an excusable matter unless he had heard the excuse. He would not speak of any trouble except after its disappearance. He spoke of what he would do, and he would not say what he would not. Even if he could be exceeded in speech, he could not be excelled in silence. He was more eager for keeping quiet than speaking, and if two things confronted him, he would see which one was more akin to the longing of the heart, and he would oppose it.

“These qualities are incumbent on you. So, you should acquire them and compete with each other in upholding them. Even if you cannot acquire them, you should know that acquiring a part is better than giving up the whole.”

285. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Even if Allāh had not warned of a chastisement on those who are disobedient to Him, it would be obligatory by way of gratitude for His favors that He should not be disobeyed.”

286. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following to express his condolences to al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays about (the death of) his son: “O Ash‘ath! If you grieve over your son, certainly it is the consequence of the blood relationship; but if you endure, Allāh will then provide recompense for every affliction. O Ash‘ath! If you endure even then, matters will move on as ordained by Allāh. But in that case, you will deserve to be rewarded, whereas if you lose patience, matters will again move as ordained by Allāh. But in this case, you will be bearing the burden (of your sins). O Ash‘ath! Your son made you happy while, at the same time, he was a trial and a hardship. (When
he died,) he caused you to grieve while, at the same time, he has proved to be a source of reward and mercy for you.”

287. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following at the grave of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ at the time of his burial: “Certainly endurance is good except in your regard, O Messenger of Allāh! Fretting is bad except over you. And the affliction about you is great while every other affliction before or after it is petty.”

288. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Do not associate with a fool because he will beautify his actions for you and wish that you, too, would be like him.”

289. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked once about the distance between the East and the West. He replied as follows: “A day’s trip for the sun.”

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1A fool considers his ways of action to be the most appropriate, and he wants his friend also to adopt the same ways, so that he should become as he himself is. This does not mean that he desires that his friend should become as foolish as he is. He cannot be thinking like this because he does not consider himself to be a fool. If he, in fact, considers himself to be foolish, then he will not have been as such! Rather, he considers his ways of action as being correct and desires his friend to be equally “wise”. That is why he presents his view before him in an embellished way, desiring him to act on it. It is possible that his friend may be influenced by his advice, so he treads the same path. Therefore, it is better to keep away from him.
290. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān said: “Your friends are three and your enemies are (also) three: Your friends are: your friend, your friend’s friend and your enemy’s enemy. And your enemies are: your enemy, your friend’s enemy and your enemy’s friend.”

291. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān saw a man busy scheming against his enemy with what was harmful to his own self as well, so he said to him, “You are like one who pierces a spear through himself in order to kill the person iding behind him!”

292. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥassān said: “How many the admonishments are, yet how few those who take lessons from them!”

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1If the vicissitudes and changes of this world are observed, the circumstances and conditions of the people attended to, and their histories noted, then from every corner edifying stories can be heard. Such stories are fully capable of arousing the mind out of its forgetful slumber or providing instruction and imparting teaching and clear-mindedness. Thus, the creation and dissolution of everything in this world, the blossoming of flowers and their withering, the thriving of vegetation and its withering away and the subjugation of every atom to change provide such instructive lessons that they are enough to curb any hope of attaining eternity in this deceitful life as long as the eyes and ears are not closed to these instructive events.

A Persian couplet says:

*The world is full of stories of folk gone by,*
*But unless one lends an ear to it, feeble is its cry.*
293. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Whoever goes too far contending, as well as that who falls short therein, becomes oppressed, and it is difficult for a contender to fear Allāh.”

294. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “I am not worried about a fault after which I get time to offer prayers in two units (rekʿāt) and beg safety from the wrath of Allāh.”

295. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked once: “How will Allāh conduct the accounting of all persons despite their large number?” He replied: “Just as He provides them livelihood despite their large number.” Then it was said to Him: “How will He conduct their accounting without their seeing Him?” He replied: “Just as He provides them with livelihood although they do not see Him.”

296. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said (perhaps in a letter answering someone): “Your messenger interprets your intelligence, while your letter is more eloquent in expressing your true self.”

297. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The person who is afflicted with hardship is not in a greater need for praying than the one who has been spared affliction but is not immune to it.”
298. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib said: “People are the progeny of the world, and none can be blamed for loving his mother.”


301. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Suffices the fixed life term to remain ever watchful.”

302. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “A man can sleep over the death of his child but cannot sleep over the loss of his property.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “This statement means that a man remains patient about the death of his children but does not do so at the loss of his property.”

303. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Mutual affection between parents creates a sound relationship between sons. A relationship is more in need of affection than affection is for a relationship.”

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1The idea here is that lightning may flash a hundred thousand times, tempests may rise, earth may quake and mountains may collide with each other. But as long as the fixed period of life has yet to run its course, no occurrence can cause any harm, nor the typhoon of death may put the flame of life out. There is a fixed hour for death, and nothing can cut it short before that time. Thus, death itself is the watchman and guardian of life. A poet has said, “What is known as death is (actually) the watchman over life.”
304. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺭﺍ said: “Be afraid of the thoughts of believers because Allāh, the most Exalted One, has placed the truth on their tongues.”

305. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺭﺍ said: “The belief of a person cannot be regarded as true unless his trust in what is with Allāh is greater than his trust in what he himself has.”

306. When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺭﺍ came to Basra, he sent Anas ibn Mālik to Talhah and az-Zubayr to remind them of what he (Anas) himself had heard the Messenger of Allāh 妫 saying concerning them both, but he avoided doing so. When he came back to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺭﺍ, he said that he had forgotten that matter. Thereupon, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺭﺍ said: “If you are speaking a lie, Allāh will afflict you with white spots (leucoderma) which even a turban may not cover.” And so it was.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “White spot means leucoderma. After sometime this disease did take place to Anas’s face, so much so that he was never seen with his face uncovered.”

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1 The occasion and circumstances surrounding this statement, as related by Sayyid ar-Radi, were as follows: During the Battle of the Camel, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺭﺍ sent Anas ibn Mālik to Talhah and az-Zubayr so that he should remind them of the Prophet’s statement to the following effect: “You both will fight Ali and will commit excess in his regard.” Anas ibn
307. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ said: “Sometimes the hearts advance [towards their Creator] and sometimes they retreat. When they advance, get them to perform the optional [acts of worship] (as

Mālik went back stating that he had forgotten to mention it. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ then uttered these words about him. However, it is said that Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ made this statement when he wanted Anas to confirm the Prophet’s saying: “Whoever accepts me as his master, Ali is his master. O Allāh! Love whoever loves Ali and hate whoever hates Ali.” Consequently, numerous persons have testified to this hadīth, but Anas kept quiet [and did not narrate it]... Then, Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ said to him, “You, too, were present at Ghadīr Khumm. What is keeping you silent on this occasion?” Anas said, “I have grown old and my memory does not serve me well.” Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ made this statement then, as we read in these references: Ansāb al-Ashrāf of al-Balādhirī where the biography of Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ is discussed on pp. 156 - 57; Al-A‘lāq an-Nafsah of Ibn Rustah, p. 221; Latā‘if al-Ma‘ārif of ath-Tha‘alibi, pp. 105 - 106; Muhadarāt al-Udabā’ of ar-Rāhīb, Vol. 3, p. 293; Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 4, p. 74; Arjah al-Matālib of Shaikh Ḥbaydūlāh al-Hanafī, pp. 578 – 80. In this regard, Ibn Qutaybah (Abdullāh ibn Muslim ad-Dainūrī [231 – 276 A.D./828 – 889 A.D.]) writes the following: “People have related that Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ asked Anas ibn Mālik about the Prophet’s saying: ‘O Allāh! Love whoever loves Ali and hate whoever hates Ali,’ and he replied, ‘If you are a liar, may Allāh afflict you with white spots which even a turban may not cover,’” as recorded on p. 580 of Al-Ma‘ārif. Ibn Abul-Hadīd has also supported this view. Denying his knowledge of the incident mentioned by Sayyid ar-Radi, he writes the following: “The incident mentioned by Sayyid ar-Radi that Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ sent Anas ibn Mālik to Talhah and az-Zubayr is an unrecorded event. If Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ had sent him particularly to remind them of the Prophet’s saying concerning them, then he could hardly have come back and said that he had forgotten it because when he left Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib ﷺ and went to those two individuals, he should have admitted and remembered the saying; therefore, how could he, on his return after an hour or a day, plead that he had forgotten it and deny it? This is something which cannot happen,” as stated on pp. 217 – 18, Vol. 19 of Sharh Nahjul-Balāgha.
well). But when they retreat, keep them confined to only what is obligatory.

308. Imām Ali ibn Abū Talib ﷺ said: “The Qur’ān contains news about the past, predictions about the future and commandments for the present.”

309. Imām Ali ibn Abū Talib ﷺ said: “Throw a stone in return from where one comes to you because evil can be met only with evil.”

310. Imām Ali ibn Abū Talib ﷺ said to his secretary `Ubaydullāh ibn Abū Rafi’: “Put a cotton flake in the ink pot, keep the nib of your pen long, leave some space between the lines and close up the letters because this is good for the beauty of the writing.”

311. Imām Ali ibn Abū Talib ﷺ said: “I am the ya’sūb (chief, head, leader, etc.) of the believers, while wealth is the leader of the wicked.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “It means that the believers follow me while the wicked follow the path that take them to wealth and riches just as the bees follow their ya’sūb, leader.”

We have already explained the meaning of the word “ya’sūb” in the footnote of saying No. 262 above and pointed out that this title was given to Imām Ali ibn Abū Talib ﷺ by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself. We quoted some of his different statements on this subject. Here we quote one
312. Some Jews said to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ: “You did not even bury your Prophet when you picked up differences about him (about successorship to him).” It is then that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ replied thus: “We did not differ about him; we differed after him (i.e. about his succession). You had not dried up your feet yet, having come out of the river, when you began asking your Prophet (Moses ﷺ): ‘Make for us a god as they have gods of their own.’ Said he, ‘Verily you are people behaving ignorantly’ (Qurʾān, 7: 138).”\(^{1}\)

\(^{1}\)The purpose behind this criticism by the Jews was to show that the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammed ﷺ was a controversial matter. But Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ clarified the fact that the exact focus of controversy was not about Prophethood but about his succession and vicegerency. Then, commenting on the status of the Jews, he pointed out that those who were today criticizing the differences among Muslims after the Prophet were of the same kind as those who had begun to waver about belief in the Unity of Allāh even during the lifetime of Moses ﷺ. Thus, on becoming free of the slavery of the Egyptians, they reached the other side of the river and saw the figure of a calf in a temple in the Sinai desert. It was then that they asked Moses ﷺ to make a similar figure for them to
313. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib was asked: “With what did you overpower your adversaries?” He answered: “Whenever I confronted one of them, he helped me against himself.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib is pointing out his striking of awe in the hearts.”

314. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said to his son Muhammed ibn al-Hanafiyya: “O my son! I fear lest destitution overtakes you. So, you should seek Allāh’s protection from it because destitution is [an indication of] a deficiency in religious beliefs, perplexity of the mind, and it is conducive to hatred of obstinate people.”

worship, whereupon Moses rebuked them for being still as stubborn as they were in Egypt. This meant that people who were so immersed in their desire for idol-worship that even after being initiated into the belief in the Unity of Allāh, they still became restless on seeing an idol and made the request for a similar idol to be made for them. Such people had no right to criticize any differences among the Muslims.

The man who is over-awed by his adversary is sure to be defeated because in facing a foe, physical prowess is not enough but steadfastness of heart and strength of courage are also necessary. When the adversary loses courage and feels sure that he will be defeated, he will certainly then be defeated. This is what happened to the adversary of Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib; he was so affected by his acknowledged reputation that he was sure of his own death, in consequence of which his spiritual power and self-confidence were shattered and eventually this mental state dragged him to his own death.
315. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib replied to a man who had asked him a difficult question with the following: “Ask me for understanding but do not ask for confusion, because the ignorant person who tries to learn is like the learned man, but the learned man who tries to create confusion is like the ignorant.”

316. Abdullah ibn Abbās once advised Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib against his views, so the Imam said: “You have only to advise me, but then I have to see (what to do), and if I act against your advice, you have to follow me.”

317. When Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib returned to Kūfa from Siffin, he passed by the residences of the Shibamites (who belonged to the tribe of Shibam) and heard their women mourning those killed in Siffin. At that time, a Shibamite, namely Harb ibn Shurahbil ash-Shibami, who was one of the nobles of those people, went to meet with him. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said to him, “Do your women have control over you as regarding the weeping that I hear? Do you not desist them from such crying?” Harb began to walk with him while Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib was on horseback, so Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said to him: “Get back because the walking of a man like you with one like me is mischief for the ruler and a

1Abdullāh ibn Abbās had advised Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib to issue a letter of appointment to Talhah and az-Zubayr as governors of Kūfa and to retain Muʿāwiyyah as governor of Syria till such time as his status became stabilized and the government gained strength. In reply, Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said that he could not expose his own religion to danger for the sake of the worldly benefit of others, adding that “Instead of insisting on your own point of view, you should listen to me and obey me.”
disgrace for the believer.”

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ overpower passed by the Khārijites’ dead bodies during the battle of Nahrawān and said: “Woe to you! You have been harmed by the one who deceived you.” He was asked: “O Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ overpower! Who deceived them?” He replied: “Satan, the deceiver, and the inner self [nafs] that leads one to evil, deceived them through passions. It made it easy for them to get into sins, promised them victory and eventually hurled them into the Fire.”

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ overpower said: “Beware of disobeying Allāh in solitude because the Witness (of that situation) is also the Judge.”

When the news of the killing of Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr reached Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ overpower, he said: “Our grief over him is as great as their (the enemy’s) joy except they have lost an enemy, whereas we have lost a friend.”

In the year 38 A.H./658 A.D., Muʿāwiya sent ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs to Egypt with a large force. ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs called on Muʿāwiya ibn Hudayj to help him. They brought together ʿOthmān’s supporters and waged a war against Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr (son of caliph Abū Bakr), capturing him. Muʿāwiya ibn Hudayj beheaded him. Stuffing his body in the belly of a dead ass, he burnt his corpse... Muḥammad was at that time twenty-eight years old. It is reported that when the news of this tragedy reached his mother, she fell onto a great rage and indignation. His paternal sister, Mother of the Faithful ʿĀ’isha, took a vow that, as long as she lived, she would
never eat roasted meat. Since then, she used to curse Mu`awiya ibn Abū Sufyān, `Amr ibn al-`Ās and Mu`awiya ibn Hudayj after every prayer she performed...

When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib heard the news of Muhammed’s martyrdom, he became immensely sad. He wrote in a very somber language to Ibn Abbās, who was then in Basra, about the tragic death of Muhammed ibn Abū Bakr.

Hearing the news of Muhammed’s martyrdom, Ibn Abbās came from Basra to Kūfā to offer his condolences to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib.


We have written before above a brief biography of Muhammed ibn Abū Bakr.

321. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The age up to which Allāh accepts any excuse for a human being is sixty years.”
322. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One whose sin overpowers him never wins, and whoever secures victory by evil means is (in fact) vanquished.”

323. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Allah, the Glorified One, has embedded the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich. Consequently, whenever a destitute person remains hungry, it is because some rich person has denied (him his share). Allah, the Sublime, will question them [the rich] about it.”

324. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Not to be in need of putting forth an excuse is better than putting forth a true excuse.”

325. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The least obligation of Allah on you is that you should not make use of His favors for committing sins.”

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1 The meaning here is that obligations should be carried out so that there is no occasion for putting forth excuses. After all, in making excuses, there is a hint for shortcomings and perhaps a sense of humiliation.

2 There are a few grades of denial of favors and of ingratitude. The first is that a person may not be able to appreciate (the real significance of) a favor. For example, the vision of the eyes, the speech of the tongue, the hearing of the ears and the movements of the limbs. These are all favors bestowed by Allah, but many people do not realize them to be favors and do not entertain feelings of gratitude, taking them for granted. The second grade is that a person may see a favor and appreciate it but may not feel grateful for it. The third grade is that a person may oppose the One Who bestows the favors, going against His will. The fourth grade is that instead of using the favors granted by Him, a person may use them in committing sins offensive to Allah. This is the highest grade of denial of favors, i.e. of ingratitude.
326. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “When the disabled fall short of performing acts of obedience to Allāh, the Glorified One, it is a good opportunity given by Allāh for the intelligent people to perform such acts.”

327. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “A sovereign is the watchman of Allāh on earth.”

328. Describing a believer, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “A believer has a cheerful face, a sorrowful heart, a very broad chest (very generous), and a very humble heart. He hates high status and dislikes fame. His grief is long, his courage is far-reaching, his silence is much and, his time is occupied. He is grateful, enduring, buried in his thoughts, sparing in his friendship (with others), of a bright demeanor and of a soft temperament. He is stronger than stone but more humble than a servant.

329. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “If a man happens to see the end of (his) life and destiny, he will begin hating desires and their deception.”

330. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “There are two shares in the property of every person: heirs and accidents!”
331. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The person who is approached with a request is free till he makes a promise.”

332. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Whoever prays but does not exert effort is like one who shoots without using a bow-string.”

333. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Knowledge is of two kinds: that which is recorded down (transcribed, printed, published, etc.) and that which is just heard. The one that is heard does not offer any benefit unless it is recorded.”

334. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Correctness of decisions goes together with power. One emerges with the other’s emergence and disappears when the other disappears.”

335. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The beauty of destitution is

1When anyone’s star is auspicious and his luck is good, he steps automatically towards the goal in view, and his mind confronts no perplexity in determining the correct way of approach. But the person whose luck is about to ebb stumbles even in the light; his mental faculties become paralyzed. Consequently, when the downfall of the Barmakids began, ten persons from among them assembled for consultation about a matter but were not able to make a decision even after a long discussion. Seeing this, Yahya [the Barmaki] said, “By Allāh! It is a forerunner of our decline and a sign of our downfall that even ten of us have not been able to settle a matter, although when we were in ascendancy, just one of us could easily solve ten problems.”
chastity; the beauty of riches is gratitude.”

336. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The day of justice will be more severe on the oppressor than the day of oppression on the oppressed.”

337. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The biggest wealth is that one should not have an eye on what others possess.”

338. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Utterances are preserved and actions are tested. Every soul, for what it earned, is pawned (Qur’ān, 74: 38). People are to be made deficient (as regarding their bodies) and meddled with (as regarding their minds) except those whom Allāh protects. The one who inquires from among them aims at confusing others, whereas the one who answers creates hardships. It is possible that the man who has the best views among them will be deviated from the soundness of his thinking by pleasure or displeasure, and it is possible that a single glance may affect even the man with the best wisdom from among them or a single expression may transform him.”

339. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “O folks! “Fear Allāh, for there is many a man who aspires for what he does not get, many a builder of a house who does not live to occupy it, and many a gatherer of
that which he shall just leave behind. Possibly he may have gathered it wrongfully or by denying one’s right. He acquired it unlawfully and had to bear the weight of sins on its account. Consequently, he returned (from this world) with that weight and came before Allāh with sorrow and grief. \textit{He lost this world and (also) the thereafter; that is a loss (which is) manifest (Qur’ān, 22: 11).}

340. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Lack of access to sins is also a kind of chastity.”

341. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The dignity of your countenance is solid, but begging dissolves it; therefore, look carefully before whom you dissolve it.”

342. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “To praise more than what is due is sycophancy; to do it less is either because of inability to speak or due to envy.”

343. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said, “Peace with one who keeps away even from minor sins and, hence, his burden is considered light.”

\footnote{The result of lack of restraint and care with regard to small sins is that a man becomes rather careless in the matter of sins and, by and by, this habit produces boldness to commit larger sins. Then he begins to commit them without hesitation. Therefore, one should regard small sins as a harbinger of bigger ones and should avoid them so that the stage for committing big sins will not materialize.}
344. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥāfiz said: “One who sees his own shortcomings abstains from looking into other’s shortcomings. Whoever feels happy with the livelihood with which Allāh provides him does not grieve over what he misses. Whoever draws out the sword of rebellion gets killed by it. Whoever strives without means perishes. Whoever delves into the depths gets drowned. Whoever visits places of ill-repute receives blame.

“Whoever speaks more commits more errors. Whoever commits more errors becomes shameless. Whoever is shameless will have less fear of Allāh. Anyone who decreases his fear of Allāh causes his heart to die. One whose heart dies enters the Fire. Whoever observes the shortcomings of others and disapproves of them, then he accepts them for himself, is definitely a fool. Contentment is a capital that does not dwindle. Whoever remembers death much is satisfied with small favors in this world. Whoever knows that his speech is also part of his action speaks less except where he has some purpose.”

345. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥāfiz said: “The oppressor among the people has three signs: He oppresses his superior by disobeying him, and his junior by imposing his authority on him, thus topping other oppressors.”

346. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib Ḥāfiz said: “At the extremity of hardship
comes relief, and at the tightening of the series of tribulation comes ease.”

347. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم said the following to one of his companions: “Do not devote too much of your effort to your wife and children because if your wife and children are lovers of Allāh, then He will not leave His lovers without caring for them. And if they are enemies of Allāh, then why should you worry and keep yourself busy about the enemies of Allāh?”

348. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib صلی الله علیه وآله وسلم said: “The greatest defect is when you are concerned about the defect (in others) which is already present in yourself.”

1What a worse defect can there be that a man criticizing those defects in others which exist in him? The requirement of justice is that before casting one’s eye on others’ defects, one should look at his own defects and realize that a defect is a defect whether it is in others or in himself. A Persian couplet says: “Looking at others’ defects is neither appropriate nor is it manliness. Better look at your own self since you are full of defects.”
349. Someone congratulated another person in the presence of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib on the birth of a son saying: “Congratulations for getting a rider of horses!” Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Do not say so, but say: You have an occasion to be grateful to Allah, the Giver, and be blessed with what you have been given. May he attain full life, and may you be blessed with his devotion.”

350. One of the officers of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib built a stately house about which Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “These are silver coins showing their faces. Certainly, this house speaks of your riches.”

351. It was said to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib, peace with him: “If a man is left in his house and the gate is closed, from where shall his livelihood reach him?” He replied: “From whatever way his death reaches him.”

The meaning is that a man should be content in the matters of livelihood because whatever is destined for him will in any case reach him wherever he may be.

A Persian couplet says: “Like death, livelihood will reach a man even if his gate is closed, but greed keeps people (unnecessarily) anxious.”

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1If Allāh considers it appropriate to keep a man living while he is confined to a closed house, then He is certainly powerful enough to provide the means of life for him. Just as a closed door cannot prevent death, in the same way, it cannot prevent the entry of livelihood because the Might of Allāh, the Almighty, is equally capable of either.
352. Offering condolences to people for the loss of a dear one, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٌاٌٍٍ said: “This thing (death) has not started with you nor does it end with you. This fellow of yours was used to journeying; therefore, it is better to think of him as still journeying. Either he will rejoin you or you will rejoin him.”

353. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٌاٌٍٍ said: “O people! Let Allāh see you fearing Him at the time of happiness just as you fear Him at the time of distress. Certainly, whoever is given ease (of life) and does not consider it as a means of slow approach to tribulation (wrongly) considers himself as being safe against what is to be feared, while whoever is afflicted with straitened circumstances but does not perceive them to be a trial loses a coveted reward.”

354. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٌاٌٍٍ said: “O prisoners of desires! Cut them (your desires) short because whoever leans on the world gets nothing out of it except the pain of hardships. O people! Take on yourselves to train your own souls. Turn away from the dictates of your natural inclinations.”

355. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٌاٌٍٍ said: “Do not regard an expression uttered by any person as being evil if you can find it capable of
bearing something good.”

356. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If you have some need which Allāh, the Glorified One, can fulfill for you, begin by seeking Allāh’s blessing on His Messenger, may Allāh bless him and his descendants, then ask your need, because Allāh is too generous to accept one (seeking His blessing on His Messenger) of the two requests made to Him while denying the other.”

357. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Whoever is jealous of his esteem should abstain from quarreling.”

358. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “It is foolishness to make haste before the proper time, or to delay after a proper opportunity. In either case, there is folly.”

359. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Do not ask about things which may not happen because you have enough to worry about with what already happens.”

360. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The intellect is a clear mirror, and the taking of lessons (from things around you) provides warning and counsel. It is enough for improving yourself that you should avoid what you consider to be bad in others.”
361. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Knowledge is associated with action. Therefore, whoever knows should act [on it] because knowledge calls for action. If there is a response, well and good; otherwise, it (knowledge) departs from him.”

362. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “O people! The wealth of this world is broken into kinds that may bring an epidemic; therefore, keep off this grazing land. Leaving it is a greater favor than peacefully staying in it. Its part which suffices for subsistence is more blissful than its riches. Destitution has been ordained for those who are rich here, while comfort has been designated for those who keep a distance from it. If a person is attracted by its dazzle, it blinds both his eyes. And if a person acquires eagerness towards it, it fills his heart with grief which keeps alternating in the dark part of his heart, some grief worrying him and another giving him pain. This goes on till suffocating death overtakes him. He is flung in the open while both shrines of his heart are severed. It is easy for Allāh to cause him to die and for his comrades to place him in the grave.

“The believer sees the world with eyes that derive instruction and takes from it food enough for his barest needs. He hears in it with ears of hatred and enmity [towards this world]. If it is said (about someone) that he has become rich, it is also said that he has turned destitute. And if pleasure is felt on one’s own living, grief is felt over his death. This is the status, although the day has not yet approached when they will be disheartened.”
363. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ عليه السلام said: “Allāh, the Glorified One, has laid down rewards for obeying Him and punishment for committing sins against Him in order to save men from His chastisement and to drive them towards His Paradise.”

364. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ عليه السلام said: “Time will come when nothing will remain of the Qur’ān except its writing and nothing of Islam except its name. The mosques in such days will be busy with regard to construction but desolate with regard to guidance. Those staying in them and those visiting them will be the worst of all people on earth. From them, mischief will spring up and in their direction all wrong will turn. If anyone isolates himself from it (mischief), they will fling him back into it. And if anyone steps back from it, they will push him towards it. Says Allāh, the Glorified One, (in one qudsi hadith): I swear by Myself that I shall send on them an evil wherein the one who endures will be bewildered, and He will do so. We seek Allāh’s pardon against stumbling through neglect.”

365. It is related that seldom did Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ١ عليه السلام ascend the pulpit without uttering the following statement before starting his sermon: “O people! Fear Allāh, for man has not been created for naught so that he may waste himself, nor has he been left without anyone caring for him so that he may commit foolish acts. This world, which appears to him to be beautiful, cannot be the
replacement for the next which appears in his eyes to be bad, nor is the vain person, who is successful in this world, is sure that he will prosper in the next even to a small extent.”

366. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “There is no distinction higher than Islam, no honor more honorable than fear of Allāh, no asylum is better than self-restraint, no intercessor more effective than repentance, no treasure more precious than contentment, and no wealth is a bigger remover of destitution than satisfaction with mere subsistence. Whoever confines himself to what is just enough for maintenance achieves comfort and prepares his abode in ease. Desire is the key of grief and the conveyance of distress. Greed, vanity and jealousy are incentives to falling into sins and mischief-making, the collecting of all bad habits.”

367. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ once said the following to Jābir ibn Abdullāh al-Ansārī: “O Jābir! The mainstay of religion and the world are four persons: The scholar who acts on his knowledge, the ignorant person who does not feel ashamed of learning, the generous person who is not niggardly in his favors, and the destitute who does not sell his next life for his worldly benefits. Consequently, when the scholar wastes his knowledge, the ignorant feels too ashamed to learn, and when the generous is niggardly with his favors, the destitute sells his next life for the worldly benefits.
“O Jābir! If favors of Allāh on a person increase, people’s needs toward him also increase. Therefore, whoever fulfills for Allāh all that is obligatory on him in this regard will preserve them (Allāh’s favors) in continuance and perpetuity, while whoever does not fulfill those obligations will expose them to decay and diminution.”

368. Both Ibn Jarīr at-Tabari Ibn al-Athīr, the first on p. 1086, Vol. 2 of his Tārīkh book and the other on p. 478, Vol. 4 of his Tārīkh, relate from ’Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Abū Layla, the faqīḥ (jurist), who was one of those who had risen in support of (Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Muhammed) Ibn al-Ash’ath against al-Hajjāj (ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi), that he (Ibn Abū Layla) was exhorting people to carry out jihād by recalling the following: “On the occasion of the encounter with the people of Syria, I heard Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ, may Allāh exalt his rank among the righteous and may He reward him with the reward of martyrs and men of truth, saying: ‘O believers, whoever observes excesses being committed and people being called towards evil and disapproves it with his heart is safe and free of responsibility for it, and whoever disapproves of it with his tongue will be rewarded and he is in a higher status than the former. But whoever disapproves it with his sword in order that the word of Allāh may remain superior and the word of the oppressors may remain inferior, catches hold of the path of guidance and stands on the right way, while his heart is lit with conviction.””
369. Another saying in the same strain runs as follows: “So... among them (the Muslim community) there is one who disapproves evil with his hand, tongue and heart. This man has perfectly attained the virtuous habits. And among them there is one who disapproves evil with his tongue and heart but not with his hand. This man has attained only two virtuous habits but lacks one. And among them there is the third who disapproves evil with his heart but not with his tongue and hand. This is the one who lacks the two better qualities out of the three and holds only one. Then, among them there is also one who does not disprove evil with his tongue, heart or hand. He is just a dead man among the living.

“All virtuous acts, including waging a war in the way of Allāh, as compared to the persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil, are just like spitting in the deep ocean [i.e. of no consequence]. The acts of persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil do not bring death nearer, nor do they lessen a lifespan. And better than all this is to utter a just expression before a tyrannical ruler.”

370. The following is related from Abū Juhayfah who said, “I heard Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ saying: ‘The first fighting with which you will be overpowered is fighting with the hands. Thereafter, you will fight with your tongues then with your hearts. Consequently, whoever does not recognize virtue with his heart or does not disprove evil will be turned’ upside down. Thus, his upside will be turned downwards and his low side will be turned upwards.”

371. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Certainly, right is weighty and wholesome while wrong is light and contagious.”
372. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ialis said: “Do not feel safe from the punishment of Allāh even about the best man in the whole community because Allāh, the Sublime, says: But none feels secure from the plan of Allāh save the people (who are the) losers (Qur’ān, 7: 99). Again, do not lose hope even for the worst man of the community because Allāh, the Sublime One, says: Verily, none despair from Allāh’s mercy save the disbelieving people (Qur’ān, 12: 87).”

373. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ialis said: “Miserliness contains all other evil vices and is the rein with which one can be led to every type of evil.”

374. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ialis said: “O son of Adam! Livelihood is of two kinds: The livelihood which you seek and the livelihood which seeks you; if you do not reach it, it will reach you.

“Therefore, do not turn your one day’s worry into a year’s worry. Whatever you get every day should be enough for you for the day. If you have a whole year of your life, even then Allāh, the Sublime, will give you every next day what He has destined as your share. If you do
not have a year in your life-span, then why should you worry for what is not for you? No seeker will reach your livelihood before you, nor will anyone overpower you in the matter of livelihood. Likewise, whatever has been destined as your share will not be delayed from you.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “This statement has already appeared elsewhere in this Chapter except that here it is clearer and more detailed. This is why we have repeated it according to the principle laid down in the beginning of the book.”

375. Imám Ali ibn Abú Tálib  said: “Many a man faces a day after which he finds no day, and many a man is in an enviable status in the earlier part of the night but is mourned by wailing women in its later part.”

376. Imám Ali ibn Abú Tálib  said: “Words are under your control so long as you have not yet uttered them. But when you have spoken them, you are under their control. Therefore, guard your tongue as you guard your gold and silver, for often one expression snatches away a blessing and invites a penalty.”

377. Imám Ali ibn Abú Tálib  said: “Do not say what you do not know; rather, do not say all that you know because Allāh has laid down some obligations for all your limbs by means of which He will put forth arguments against you on the Day of Judgment.”
378. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Fear lest Allāh should see you committing sins that offend Him or misses you when it is time to obey Him and, as a result, you will become a loser. Therefore, when you are strong, be strong in obeying Allāh, and when you are weak, be too weak to commit sins against Allāh.”

379. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Leaning towards this world despite what you see of it is a folly. Lagging behind in doing good deeds, when you are convinced of good reward for them, is an obvious loss, while trusting in everyone before testing him is a weakness.”

380. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “It is (the proof of the) humbleness of the world before Allāh that He is disobeyed only herein and His favors cannot be achieved except by renouncing it.”

381. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One who searches for something will obtain it, or at least some of it.”

382. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Goodness is not good if it is followed by the Fire. Hardship is no hardship at all if followed by Paradise. Every blessing other than Paradise is minor; every calamity other than the Fire is comfort.”
383. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Beware that destitution is a calamity, but worse than destitution is the sickness of the body, while worse than bodily sickness is the disease of the heart. Beware that plenty of wealth is a blessing, but better than plenty of wealth is the health of the body, while still better than the health of the body is the piety of the heart.”

384. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Anyone whose action keeps him behind, his lineage cannot push him forward.” In another version, it is expressed thus: “Whoever misses his own personal attainments cannot gain any benefit from his forefathers’ attainments.”

385. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The believer’s time has three periods: The period when he is in communion with Allah, the period when he manages for his livelihood, and the period when he is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant. It does not behoove a wise person to be away (from his house) save for three matters, namely: learning, going to do something for the next life, or enjoying what is not prohibited.”

386. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Abstain from the world so Allah may show you its real evils, and do not be neglectful because (in any case) you will never be neglected.”
387. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Speak so that you may be known, since man is hidden under his tongue.”

388. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Take of the favors of the world whatever comes to you; keep away from whatever is kept away from you. If you cannot do so, be moderate in your pursuits.”

389. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Many an expression is more effective than an onslaught.”

390. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Every small thing with which one is contented suffices.”

391. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Let it be death, but not humiliation. Let it be little, but not through others. Whoever does not get while sitting will not get by standing either. The world has two days: One is for you, and the other is against you. When the day is for you, do not feel proud, but when it is against you, endure.”

392. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “The best fragrance is musk; its weight is light while its smell is sweet.”

393. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib said: “Put off boasting, give up self-
conceit and remember your grave.”

394. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The child has an obligation on the father, while the father, too, has an obligation on the child. The obligation of the father on the child is that the latter should obey the former in every matter save in committing sins against Allāh, the Glorified One, while the obligation of the child on the father is that the latter should give the first a beautiful name, provide him with good upbringing and teach him the Qur’ān.”

395. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Evil effect of sight is true, charm is true, sorcery is true, and fa’l (auguring good) is true, while tayrah (auguring evil)1 is not true, and spreading of a disease from one to the other may not be true. Scent gives pleasure, honey gives pleasure, riding gives pleasure and looking at greenery gives pleasure.”

Auguring well is not objectionable. For example, after the migration of the Prophet (from Mecca to Medīna), Quraysh announced that whoever apprehended the Prophet would be given one hundred camels as a reward. Thereupon, Buraydah ibn al-Husayb al-Salami set off in his search with seventy of his men. When they met at a halting place, the Prophet ﷺ asked him who he was. He said he was Buraydah ibn al-Husayb al-Salami. Buraydah later recollected saying, “The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not auguring evil. Instead, he used to augur well.” On hearing this, the Prophet remarked: “Barada amruna wa saluha” (our affair has

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1 “Fa’l” means something from which one augurs well while “tayrah” means something from which one augurs evil. From the point of view of religious laws, auguring evil from anything has no basis and it is just the product of whims.
been cooled and is sound). Then he asked him what tribe he came from. When he replied that he was from Aslain, the Prophet remarked: "Salimna!" (We are safe). Then he asked from which scion he was. When Buraydah replied that he was from Banū Sahm, the Prophet remarked: "Kharaja sahmuka" (your arrow has missed its aim). Buraydah was very impressed by this pleasing conversation and inquired from the Prophet who he was. The Prophet replied, "Muhammed ibn Abdullāh". Hearing this, he spontaneously exclaimed, "I do stand witness that you are the Messenger of Allāh!" Forsaking the prize announced by the Quraysh, he instead acquired the wealth of belief in Islam," as we read in: Al-Istā’āb, Vol. 1, pp. 185 – 86 and Usd al-Ghābah, Vol. 1, pp. 175 - 76.

396. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “Nearness with people in their manners brings about safety from their evil.”

397. Someone uttered an expression which was above his status. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “You have started flying soon after growing feathers and commenced grumbling before attaining youth.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “Here, shākir [in the original Arabic text] means the first feathers that grow on a bird before it is strong enough to fly. And saqb means the young camel that does not grumble unless it becomes mature.”

399. On being asked about the meaning of the expression: *La hawla wala quwwata illa Billāh* (there is neither strength nor power except through Allāh), Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib said: “We are not masters of anything along with Allāh, and we are not masters of anything save what He makes us masters of. So, when He makes us masters of anything of which He is a superior Lord over us, He also assigns some duties to us. And when He takes it away, He takes away those duties as well.”

400. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib heard ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir (may Allāh have mercy on him) conversing with al-Mughīrah ibn Shu‘bah. He said to him, “Leave him alone, O ‘Ammār, for he has entered religion only to the extent of his deriving from it a worldly advantage, and he has willfully involved himself in misgivings in order to adopt them as cover for his shortcomings.”

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1What Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib meant is that man does not enjoy mastery over anything. Rather, such mastery is assigned/granted by Allāh. So long as this mastery lasts, the obligations of the Shari’ā also continue, whereas when the mastery is taken away, the obligations, too, are lifted, since in such a case, the laying of obligations will mean placing the responsibility beyond one’s capacity which cannot be permitted by any wise or prudent person, let alone by Allāh. This is why Allāh has placed the responsibility of performing various acts after having conferred the necessary energy in the limbs. It follows that this responsibility will remain only so long as the energy subsists. On the disappearance of energy, the responsibility for action will also disappear. For example, the obligation to pay *zakāt* applies only when there is wealth, but when Allāh takes away that wealth, He removes the liability to pay *zakāt* because in such a case, the laying of obligation is against prudence.
401. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  săd  said: “It is good for the rich to show humility before the poor through seeking the rewards of Allāh. Yet better than that is the pride of the poor towards the rich while relying on Allāh.”

402. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  săd  said: “Allāh does not grant wisdom to a person except that some day He will save him from ruin with its help.”

403. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  săd  said: “Whoever clashes with the truth will be knocked down by it.”


405. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  săd  said: “Fear of Allāh is the main trait of the moral character.”

406. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  săd  said: “Do not steer the sharpness of your tongue against the One Who gave you the power to speak nor the eloquence of your speech against the One Who set you on the right path.”
407. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “It is enough for your own self-discipline that you abstain from what you dislike in others.”

408. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “One should endure like free people; otherwise, one should keep quiet like the ignorant.”

409. In an incident, it is related that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said to al-Ash’ath ibn Qays, by way of offering his condolences on the death of his son, “You should either endure like great people, or else you should forget like animals.”

410. Describing life in this world, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “It deceives, it harms and it passes away. Allāh, the Sublime, neither approved it as a reward for His lovers nor as a punishment for His enemies. In fact, the people of this world are like those riders who, as soon as they descend, the driver calls out to them and they march off.”
عمل فيه بخصية الله فشقيت بما جمعته له وليس أحد هذين أهله ان تؤثروه على نفسه وَلاَ أن تتحمل له على ظهرك فارج لمن مصى رحمة الله وَلَمَّا بقي رزق الله.
411. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said to his son Imām al-Hassan ﷺ: “O my son! Do not leave anything of this world behind you because you will be leaving it for either of two kinds of persons: a person who uses it in obeying Allāh, in this case he will acquire virtue through what was evil for you, or a person who uses it in disobeying Allāh and, in this case, he will be reaping evil with what you gathered for him; so, you will be assisting him in his sinfulness.
Neither of these two deserves to be preferred by you over your own self.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “This saying is also related in another version thus: ‘Whatever of this world is now with you was with others before you, and it will pass on to some others after you. Thus, you are gathering things for either of two sorts of men: a man who uses whatever you gathered in obeying Allāh and thus acquires virtues with what is evil for you, or a man who uses it in disobeying Allāh, so you will be getting evil for what he gathers. Neither of these two is such that you should prefer him over your own self, for you may burden yourself for his own sake. Therefore, hope for the mercy of Allāh: Divine livelihood is for whoever survives one who passes away.’”

412. Someone said “Astaghfirullāh!” (I seek Allāh’s forgiveness) in the presence of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “May your mother lose you! Do you know what istighfār is? Istighfār is meant for people of a high status. It is a word that stands on six pillars: The first is to repent over what was done in the past; the second is to make a firm determination never to revert to it again; the third is to carry out all the obligations of people so that you may meet Allāh quite clean, with nothing to account for; the fourth is to fulfill every obligation which you ignored (in the past) so that you may now affect justice with it; the fifth is to aim at the flesh grown as a result of your unlawful earning, so that you may melt it down by grief (of repentance) till the skin touches the bone and new flesh grows between them; and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you (previously) made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. It is only on such an occasion that you may say: Astaghfirullāh!”
413. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  عليه السلام said: “Clemency is (like winning) a whole tribe (supporting you).”

414. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  عليه السلام said: “How wretched the son of Adam is! His death is hidden, his ailments are concealed, his actions are preserved, the bite of a mosquito pains him, choking causes his death and sweat gives him a bad smell.”

415. It is related that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  عليه السلام was sitting with his companions when a beautiful woman passed by and they began to look at her. It was then that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  عليه السلام said: “The eyes of these men are covetous, and such glances are the cause of their becoming covetous. Whenever anyone of you sees a woman who attracts him, he should meet his wife [for cohabitation] because she is a woman just like his wife.”

One a Khārijite said: “May Allāh kill this heretic! How logical he is!” People then leaped towards him to kill him, but Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  عليه السلام said: “Wait a little bit. There should either be abuse [for an abuse] or else pardoning the offender.”

416. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  عليه السلام said: “Suffices you for wisdom to be
able to distinguish the ways of misguidance from those of guidance.”

417. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Do good deeds, do not regard any part of it as small because its small is big and its little is much. None of you should say that another person is more deserving than he is in doing good deeds; otherwise, by Allāh, it will really be so. There are people of good and evil. When you leave either of the two, others will perform it.”

418. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Whoever mends his inward self, Allāh mends his outward self for him. Whoever performs acts for the sake of his religion, Allāh accomplishes his acts of this world for him. Anyone whose dealings between himself and Allāh are good, Allāh renders the dealings between him and other people good, too.”

419. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Forbearance is a covering curtain, and wisdom is a sharp sword. Therefore, conceal the weaknesses in your conduct with forbearance and kill your desires with wisdom.”

420. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “There are some servants of Allāh whom Allāh particularly chooses for His favors so that they may be of benefit to other people. Therefore, He keeps such favors
in their hands so long as they give them out to others. But when they deny them to others, He takes away the favors from them and gives them to others.”

421. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “It does not behoove a man to have trust in two things: health and riches, because there is many a man whom you see healthy but he soon falls, and many a man whom you see rich but soon turns destitute.”

422. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Whoever complains to a believer about a need, it is as though he has complained about it to Allāh. But whoever complains about it to an unbeliever, it is as though he complained about Allāh.”

423. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said on the occasion of an ‘Īd: “It is an ‘Īd for anyone whose fast is accepted by Allāh and for whose prayers He is grateful, and (in fact) every day wherein no sin against Allāh is committed is an ‘Īd.”

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1If vision and conscience are alive, even the remembrance of a sin destroys one’s peace of mind because tranquility and happiness are achieved only when the spirit is free from the burden of sin and one’s robe is not polluted with disobedience. And this real happiness is not bound by time. Whenever one desires, he can avoid sin and enjoy this happiness. Such happiness will be the real happiness, and the harbinger of an ‘Īd. A Persian poet says: “Every night is the Grand Night provided you appreciate its value.”
424. ٤٢٤ - وَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَامُ) : إِنَّ أَعْظَمَ الْحَسَّآتِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَسَّةُ رَجُلٍ كَسَبَّ مَالًا فِي غَيْرِ طَاوِعَةِ اللَّهِ فَوَرَثَهُ رَجُلٌ فَاتَقَفَ فِي طَاوِعَةِ اللَّهِ سَبِحَانَهُ، فَدَخَلَ بِهِ الجَنَّةَ، وَدَخَلَ الْأُولُ بِهِ الثَّارِ.

Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “On the Day of Judgment, the greatest regret will be felt by the man who earned wealth through sinful ways, although it is inherited by a person who spends it in obeying Allāh, the Glorified One, and he will be awarded with Paradise on that account while the first one will be dragged into the Fire on its account.”
425. Īmām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālīb ﷺ said: “The worst in bargaining and the most unsuccessful in striving is a man who exerts himself in seeking riches although fate does not help him in his aims and, consequently, he leaves this world in a sorrowful state while in the Hereafter, too, he will face its ill consequences.”

426. Īmām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālīb ﷺ said: “Livelihood is of two kinds: the seeker and the sought. Therefore, whoever hankers after this world, death traces him till it turns him out of it. But whoever hankers after the Hereafter, worldly ease itself seeks him till he receives his livelihood from it.”

427. Īmām ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālīb ﷺ said: “The friends of Allāh are those who look at the inward side of the world, while the other people look at its outward side. They occupy themselves with its most remote benefits while other people occupy themselves with the immediate benefits. They kill those things which they feared will have killed

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1Despite efforts throughout life, a man does not always achieve all the successes of life. If on some occasions he succeeds, as a result of effort and of seeking, on many others he has to face defeat and give up his objectives, admitting defeat before fate. A little thinking can lead to the conclusion that when things of this world cannot be achieved despite one’s effort and pursuit, how can the success of the next world be achieved without striving and pursuing? A Persian couplet says: “You hankered after the world but did not attain the objective. O Allāh! What will be the result when the good of the next world has not even been sought?”
them, and they abandon here in this world what they think will abandon them. They take the amassing of wealth by others as a small matter and regard it as a loss. They are enemies of those things which others love while they love things which others hate. Through them, the Qur’ān has been learned, and they have been given knowledge through the Qur’ān. With them, the Qur’ān is staying while they stand by the Qur’ān. They do not see any objective of hope above what they hope and no objective of fear above what they fear.”

428. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ﹝عـ﹞ said: “Remember that pleasures pass away while consequences linger.”

قال الرضي: و من الناس من يروي هذا للرسول (صلى الله عليه وآله) و مما يقول أنه من كلام أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام) ما حكاه تغلب عن ابن الأعرابي قال المأمون: لو لا أن علیا (عليه السلام) قال اخبر تقله لتقلت اقله تخبر.

429. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ﹝عـ﹞ said: “Try (a man) and you will hate him!”

Sayyid ar-Radi says: “Some people say that this saying was articulated by the Prophet ﺍ﹝صـ﹞, but what confirms that it is the saying of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ﹝عـ﹞ is the statement related by Tha’lab from Ibn al-’Arabi, that is, that (caliph) al-Ma’mūn said, ‘f Ali had not said ukhbur thiqlihi (try a man and you will hate him), I would have said: aqlihi takhbur (hate a man in order to try him).”

430. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﺍ﹝عـ﹞ said: “It is not that Allāh, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, keeps the gate of gratitude open for a person and closes the gate of plenty on him, or opens the gate of
prayer to a person and closes the gate of acceptance on him, or opens the gate of repentance on a person and closes the gate of forgiveness on him... (He is above doing any of these things).”

431. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The most appropriate person for an honorable status is whoever descends from the people of honor.”

432. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  was asked: “Which of the two is better: justice or generosity?” Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  replied: “Justice puts things in their places, while generosity takes them out of their directions. Justice is the general caretaker, while generosity is a particular benefit. Consequently, justice is superior and more distinguished of the two.”

433. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “People are enemies of what they do not know.”

434. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib  said: “The whole of asceticism is confined between two expressions of the Qur’an: Allāh, the Glorified One, says: ... lest you should distress yourselves because of what you miss and be over-joyous for what He has granted you (Qur’ān, 57: 23). Whoever does not grieve over what he misses and does not revel over what comes to him acquires asceticism from both its ends.”
435. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ℓ said: “What a breaker sleep is for the resolutions of the day!”

436. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ℓ said: “Governing power is the proving ground of men.”

437. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ℓ said: “No town has a greater obligation on you than another. The best town for you is that which bears you.”

438. When the news of the death of Mālik al-Ashtar (may Allāh have mercy on him), reached Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ℓ, he said: “Mālik, what a man Mālik was! By Allāh! If he had been a mountain, he would have been a great one. If he had been a stone, he would have been quite solid. No horseman could have reached it and no bird could have flown over it.” Sayyid ar-Radi says that the Imām is comparing Mālik to a lonely mountain (rising in height above the others in its range ℓ).

439. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ℓ said: “A little that lasts is better than much that brings about grief.”

440. Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ℓ said: “If a man possesses a revealing quality, wait and see his other qualities!”

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1The good or bad quality that is found in a man springs from his natural
441. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib asked Ghalib ibn Sa`sa`ah, father of al-Farazdaq (the famous Arab poet who was born before Islam in around 641 A.D. and died in around 110 A.H./728 A.D.), during a conversation between them: “What about the large number of your camels?!” The man replied: “They have been swept away by (the performing of) obligations, O Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib!” Whereupon Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “That is the most praiseworthy way of (losing) them.”

442. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Whoever trades without knowing the rules of religious law will be involved in usury.”

443. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Whoever regards small distresses as big, Allah involves him in real big ones.”

444. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Whoever maintains his own respect in view, his desires appear light to him.”

445. Imam Ali ibn Abü Tālib said: “Whenever a man tells a joke, he separates himself a bit from his wits.”

temperament. If the temperament produces one quality, his other qualities will also be akin to this one because the dictates of temperament will be equally effective in either. Thus, if a man pays zakāt and khums, it means that his temperament is not miserly. Therefore, it is expected that he will not be niggardly in spending in other items of charity as well. Similarly, if a man speaks a lie, it can be expected that he will indulge in backbiting, too, because these two habits are similar to each other.
446. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Your turning away from the one who inclines towards you is a loss of your share of advantage, while your inclining towards one who turns away from you is self-humiliation.”

447. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Riches and destitution will follow presentation before Allāh.”

448. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Az-Zubayr remained a man from our house till his wretched son, Abdullāh, came forth.”

Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwām (1 - 73 A.H./662 - 692 A.D.), whose mother was Asmā’, sister of `Ā’isha (daughter of caliph Abū Bakr), had grown in his dislike of Banū Hāshim especially towards Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib to such an extent that he was able to change the opinion of his father, az-Zubayr, against Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib although the Imām was the son of his father’s aunt. That is why Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Az-Zubayr had always been from us, we Ahl al-Bayt (our household), till his ill-owned son, Abdullāh, grew up,” as we read in these references: Al-Istī‘āb, Vol. 3, p. 906; Usd al-Ghābah, Vol. 3, pp. 162 - 63; Ibn 'Asākir, Vol. 7, p. 363; Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 2, p. 167; Vol. 4, p. 79, Vol. 20, p. 104 and others.

Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr was one of the instigators of the Battle of Jamal. His aunt, 'Ā’isha, wife of the Prophet of Islam, his father, az-Zubayr, and the son of his mother’s uncle, Talhah, all fought against Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib.
Thus, Ibn Abul-Hadid writes the following: “It was Abdullāh who urged az-Zubayr to fight (in the Battle of Jamal), making the march to Basra seem to ‘Ā’ishā as an attractive idea,” as we read on p. 79, Vol. 4 of Sharh Nahjul-Balāgha.

‘Ā’ishā loved her nephew Abdullāh very much. To her, he was like the only child of a mother, and none in those days was more beloved to her than he was,” as we are told by Abul-Faraj al-Isbahāni (or Isfāhāni) who states so on p. 142, Vol. 9 of his famous work Al-Aghānī. This is also recorded on p. 120, Vol. 20 of Sharh Nahjul-Balāgha by the Mu’tazilite writer Ibn Abul-Hadid as well as by Ibn Kathīr who states it on p. 336, Vol. 8 of his Tārīkh book.

Hishām ibn ‘Urwah relates the following: “I have not heard her (‘Ā’ishā) praying for anyone as much as she used to pray for him (Abdullāh). She gave ten thousand dirhams (as a gift) to the one who informed her of Abdullāh’s safety from getting killed (by Mālik al-Ashtar in the fight of the Battle of Jamal), and prostrated to Allah in thanks-giving for his safety,” according to Ibn ‘Asākir who says so on pp. 400, 4002, Vol. 7 of his Tārīkh book. The same is recorded on p. 1117, Vol. 20 of the Sharh book of Ibn Abul-Hadid.

This was the reason for Abdullāh’s authority over her and his complete command over her affairs. He was the one who directed and guided her as he wished...

However, Abdullāh’s hatred towards Banū Hāshim had reached such a degree that, according to the narrations of a group of historians, “During his (Abdullāh’s) caliphate (in Mecca), he did not send blessings to the Holy Prophet in his Friday prayer sermon (khutba) for forty Fridays. He used to say: ‘Nothing prevents me from mentioning the Prophet’s name except that there are certain men (i.e. Banū Hāshim) who become proud (when his name is mentioned).’” In another rendering, the text reads as follows: “Nothing prevents... except that the Prophet has a bad household who will shake their heads on the mention of his name,” according to Maqatil at-Tālibiyyin, p. 474; Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol. 3, p. 79; Tārīkh, al-Ya’qūbi, Vol. 2, p. 261; Al-Iqd al-Farīd, Vol. 4, p. 413 and Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 4, p. 62, Vol. 19, pp. 91 - 92, Vol. 20, pp. 127 - 29.
Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr said to Abdullāh ibn Abbās once: "I have been concealing my hatred towards you, the people of this house (i.e. the Household of the Prophet [ص]) for the last forty years...," as recorded by al-Masʿūdi on p. 80, Vol. 3 of Murūj al-Dhahab and by Ibn Abul-Hadīd in his Sharh, Vol. 4, p. 62, Vol. 20, p. 148.

He also used to hate Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib [ال] in particular, defame his honor, abuse and curse him, as we are told by the famous historian, al-Yaʿqūbi, who indicates so on pp. 261 – 62, Vol. 2 of his Tārīkh, as well as by al-Masʿūdi, p. 80, Vol. 3 of Murūj al-Dhahab in addition to Ibn Abul-Hadīd who records this fact on these pages of Vol. 4 of his Sharh book: pp. 61, 62-63, 79.

He gathered Muḥammed ibn al-Hanafiyya (son of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib [ال]) and Abdullāh ibn Abbās with seventeen men from Banū Hāshim, including al-Hassan ibn al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abū Tālib [al-Hassan II] and jailed them in the shiʿb (valley) of `Arim. He intended to burn them alive, so he placed plenty of wood at the entrance of the shiʿb. Meanwhile, al-Mukhtār ath-Thaqafi dispatched four thousand soldiers to Mecca. On their arrival, they attacked Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr when the latter expected them the least and thus rescued those Banū Hāshim dignitaries. 'Urwh ibn az-Zubayr made an excuse for the action of his brother, Abdullāh, saying that it was the result of Banū Hāshim’s refusal to swear the oath of allegiance to him (to Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr). This was similar to what 'Omar ibn al-Khattāb had done to the Banū Hāshim when they gathered at Fātima’s house to declare their refusal to swear the oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr when he was made caliph with help of 'Omar himself. So, 'Omar brought firewood and intended to burn the house on them. These gruesome details and many, many more can be reviewed in many history books such as these: Maqātil at-Tālibiyyīn of Abul-Faraj al-Isfahānī¹, p. 474, al-Masʿudi, Vol. 3, pp. 76-77, al-Yaʿqūbi, Vol. 2, p. 261, Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 19, p. 91, Vol. 20, pp. 123

¹The edition of Maqātil at-Tālibiyyīn which the Editor of this book has in his personal library is published by Dār al-Zahrā’a of al-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq; no date of publication is indicated. It lists many descendants of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib [ال] who were ruthlessly killed by various governments since the inception of Islam and till the author’s time.
In this regard, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahāni writes the following: “Abdullaḥ ibn az-Zubayr always instigated others against Banū Hāshim and persuaded them (to adopt his viewpoint) by every worst method. He spoke against Banū Hāshim from the pulpit, instigating people against them. Once, Ibn Abbās, or someone else from (Banū Hāshim) raised an objection to him. But afterwards, he changed his way and imprisoned Ibn al-Hanafiyya at the Shi‘b al-‘Arim. Then he gathered Ibn al-Hanafiyya along with other members of Banū Hāshim who were present (in Mecca) in a prison and collected firewood to set fire to it. This was so because of the news that had reached him that Abū Abdullah al-Jadali and other followers of Ibn al-Hanafiyya had arrived (in Mecca) to support Ibn al-Hanafiyya in fighting Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr. Therefore, he hastened to do away with the prisoners. But when this news reached Abū Abdullah al-Jadali, the latter went out as the fire was already ignited on them, put the fire out and rescued them,” as we read on p. 15 of Al-Aghāni.

So, all these prove what Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said about him.

وَلَا يَذْقُ حَيَةً، وَلَا يَذْقُ حَيَةَ. ۴٤٤—۴٤٥۴—۴٥ وَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): مَا لَأَبِنَ أَدْمَ وَالْفَخْرِ! أَوْلِهٌ نُطْفَةٌ، وَآخَرُهُ حَيَاةٌ، وَلَا يُدَقُّ حَيَةً،

449. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “What has a man to do with vanity? His origin is semen, his end is a carcass, while he cannot feed himself, nor can he ward off death?”

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1If one ponders over his original condition, the eventual disintegration and decay of his body, he will be compelled to admit his lowliness and humble status instead of being proud and vain. He will see that there was a time when he did not exist, then Allāh originated his existence with a humble drop of semen which took the shape of a piece of flesh in the mother’s womb and continued feeding and growing on thick blood. On completion of the body, he set foot on earth. He was then so helpless and incapable that he had neither control over his hunger and thirst nor on his sickness and health, nor could he do himself any benefit or harm. He had no
450. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib was asked who the greatest poet was. He said: "Any group of them that did not proceed on the same lines in such a way that we can know the height of their glory, but if it has to be done, then it is ‘al-Malik ad-Dillīl’ the king of the blind.’

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “Amīr al-Mu’mīnīn here is referring to Imrī’ul-Qays, the poet.”

authority over life and death, not knowing when the energy of limbs might be exhausted. He felt his senses might stop functioning, his eyesight might be taken away and his hearing ability might be snatched away. He could not tell when death might separate his soul from the body and leave the latter to be cut into pieces by vultures and kites or by worms to feed on it in his grave. An Arabic couplet says: “How does one whose origin is semen and whose end is a carcass dare to be vain?’

1 This means that a comparison can be made among the poets when their imagination runs in the same direction. But when one’s expression differs from that of another, and when one’s style varies from that of another, it is difficult to decide who is defeated and who wins. Consequently, from various considerations, one is preferred over another, and someone is considered greater for one consideration, while the other wins due to the other consideration, as the famous saying goes: “The greatest poet of Arabia is Imrī’ul-Qays ibn Hajar ibn al-Hārith ibn ‘Amr al-Kindi (c. 501 – 540 A.D.), the king who lost his kingdom, when he rides, al-A’shā (namely Maymūn ibn Qays ibn Jandal ibn Sharaheel who belonged to the tribe of Bakr ibn Wā’il; his date of birth is unknown and he died in 7 A.H./628 A.D.) when he is eager for something, and an-Nabighah [the genius] (al-Dhubyani, namely Ziyād ibn Mu`āwiyah ibn Dabab ibn Jābir; his date of birth is unknown and he died in 605 A.D.) when he is terrified.” Nevertheless, despite this categorization, Imrī’ul-Qays is held in high esteem among the poets of the first era because of the beauty of his imagery, the excellence of his description, inimitable similes and rare metaphors, although many of his couplets are below moral and ethical standards and speak of obscene or promiscuous subject-matters. But in spite of this obscenity and promiscuity, the greatness of his art cannot be denied. An artist looks at a poetic production from the point of view of art, ignoring the other elements which do not affect art.

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451. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Is there no free man who can leave this chewed morsel (of the world) to those who like it? Certainly, the only price for your souls is Paradise. Therefore, do not sell your soul except for Paradise.”

452. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Two greedy persons never get satisfied: a seeker of knowledge and a seeker of this world.”

453. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Belief means that you should prefer truth (even) when it harms you rather than falsehood (even) when it benefits you, that your words should not be more than your action and that you should “Fear Allāh when speaking about others.”

454. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Destiny holds sway over (our) predetermination till effort itself brings about ruin. Sayyid ar-Radi says, “Something of this meaning has already appeared earlier though in words different from these.”

455. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Forbearance and endurance are twin products of high courage.”

456. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Backbiting is the tool of the
helpless.”

457. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Many a man gets into mischief because of being spoken well of.”

458. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Life in this world has been created for other than its own self, and it has not been created for itself.”

459. Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Banū Umayyah (the Umayyads) have a fixed period (mirwad) wherein they are having their way. But when differences rise among them, even if the hyena attacks them, it will overpower them.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “Here, mirward is derived from irwad which means: to allow time, to wait for, to give a respite. It is an extremely eloquent and wonderful expression. It is as though Imam Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ has likened the period of Banū Umayyah to a limited area meant for the training of horses for racing, a place where they are running towards the limit, so that when they reach its extremity, their organization is destroyed. ¹

¹This is a prediction about the decline and fall of the Umayyads that proved true, word for word. This ruling dynasty was founded by Muʿāwiyyah ibn Abū Sufyān and it was terminated by the death of Marwān ibn Muhammed al-Himār (“the donkey”) in 132 A.H. (749 A.D.) after a period of ninety years, eleven months and thirteen days. The Umayyad period was second to none in tyranny, oppression, cruelty and despotism. The despotic rulers of this period perpetrated such tyranny that it put blots
460. Eulogizing the Ansār, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “By Allāh, they nurtured Islam with their generous hands and eloquent tongues as a year-old calf is nurtured.”

461. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The eye is the strap of the rear.”

on Islam, blackened the pages of history, injured the spirit of humanity and damaged the image of the creed and its followers. They allowed every kind of ruin and destruction only to retain power. They led armies into Mecca, set fire to the Ka`ba, made Medīna the victim of their brute passions and created streams of Muslim blood. At last, this bloodshed and ruthlessness resulted in rebellions and conspiracies from all sides against the Umayyads. The latter’s own internal strife and agitation as well as infighting paved the way for their ruin. Although political unrest had set-in among them earlier, during the days of al-Walīd ibn Yazīd, open disturbances began to take place one after the other. On the other hand, Banū al-Abbās (the Abbāsid or Abbāsides) also started preparations [to take power from the Umayyads]. During the reign of Marwān al-Himār, they started a movement under the name of "Al-Khilāfah al-Ilāhiyya" (the Divine caliphate). For successful piloting of this movement, they appointed a military leader, namely Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī who, in addition to his knowledge of political events and occurrences, was also an expert in the art of warfare. Making Khurāsān (in today’s Iran) his base, he spread a whole net against the Umayyads and succeeded in bringing the Abbāsids to power. In the beginning, this man was quite unknown. It is for this reason, and for his humble status, that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ likened him and his associates to the hyena as this simile is used for modest and humble people.
Sayyid ar-Radi says, “This is a wonderful metaphor. It is as though Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib likens the rear part of the body to a bag and the eye to a strap. When the strap is let loose, the bag cannot retain anything. According to the well-known and reputed view, this is a saying of the Prophet, but some people have stated that it belongs to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib. Al-Mubarrad has mentioned it in his book Al-Muqtadab in a chapter titled “Words of single letters”. We, too, have discussed this metaphor in our book titled Majazāt al-Āthār an-Nabawiyah.

462. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said in one of his speeches: “A ruler came to power over them. He remained uncommitted and made them uncommitted till the entire religion put its bosom on the ground.”

463. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “A severe period will come to people wherein the rich will seize their possessions with their teeth (by way of miserliness) although they have not been commanded to do so. Allāh, the Glorified One, says: Do not forget generosity among yourselves (Qur‘ān, 2: 237). During this time, the wicked will rise while the virtuous will remain low. Purchases will be made from the helpless, although the Prophet has prohibited purchasing from the helpless.”

1Generally, purchases are made from helpless people in such a way that taking advantage of their need and necessity, things are purchased from them at unfairly cheap prices and are sold to them at high prices. No religion allows taking advantage of such helplessness and extreme need, nor is it ethically permissible to profiteer by taking advantage of others’ helplessness.
464. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Two types of persons will fall into ruin on my account: One who loves me and exaggerates, and the other who lays on me false and baseless blames.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “This is on the lines of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ own saying which runs thus: ‘Two categories of persons will be ruined on my account: One who loves me with exaggeration, and one who hates [me] and is a bearer of malice’. The Holy Prophet ﷺ used often to urge and order the umma to love Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ, forbidding them from bearing any hatred towards him. Moreover, the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to regard love for Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ as the sign of faith (īmān) and hating him as the sign of hypocrisy (nīfāq) (as we have already mentioned in a footnote above).

We would like to quote one of the traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with regard to this subject. It has been narrated through fourteen companions that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever loves Ali, he surely loves me, and whoever loves me, he surely loves Allāh, and whoever is loved by Allāh, He will permit him to enter Paradise. Whoever hates Ali, he surely hates me, and whoever hates me, he surely hates Allāh, and whomsoever Allāh hates, He will surely let him enter the Fire. And whoever harms Ali, he surely harms me, and whoever harms me, he surely harms Allāh: Surely, those who harm [the Cause of] Allāh and His Messenger, Allāh has cursed them in the present life and in the one to come and has prepared for them a humiliating chastisement (Qur’ān, 33: 57), as we read in these references: Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, pp. 127 - 128, 130; Hilyat al-Awliyā’, Vol. 1, pp. 66 - 67; Al-Istī‘āb, Vol. 3, p. 1101; Usd al-Ghāba, Vol. 4, p. 383; Al-Isābah, Vol. 3, pp. 496 -497, Majma’ az-Zawah’id, Vol. 9, pp. 108 - 109, 129, 131, 132, 133; Kanz al-‘Ummāl, Vol. 12, pp. 202, 218 - 19, Vol. 15, pp. 95 - 96, Vol. 17, p. 70; al-Muhīb al-Tabari, Ar-Riyād an-Nadira, Vol. 2, pp. 166, 167, 209, 214 and Ibn al-Maghāzili, Al-Manāqib, pp. 103, 196, 382.
At the same time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to caution the umma against exaggerating with regard to love for Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ that exceeds the bounds of Islam. One who does so is called ghāli (extremist or excessive). In other words, such a person is anyone who believes that the Holy Prophet ﷺ or Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ or any Shi‘ite Imām is a god, or attributes to them the special attributes of Allāh, or believes that the twelve Imāms ﷺ are prophets, or makes any claim which they (the Holy Prophet and the Imāms) did not make about themselves.

On the contrary, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had also forbidden any offense or denigration concerning them (the Imāms). He used to blame those who make false and baseless accusations against them as well as those who hated and harbored malice against them.

It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ sometimes used to refrain from mentioning some of the excellent qualities of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ as Jābir ibn Abdullāh al-Ansārī narrates: “When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ approached the Holy Prophet with the news of the conquest over Khaybar by himself (by Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib [ع]), the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him: ‘O Ali! Had it not been for some groups of my umma who may say about you what the Christians say about ‘Īsa son of Maryam (Jesus son of Mary), I would have said (something) about you so that you would not pass before any Muslim but that he would seize the dust from the tracks of your feet to seek a blessing from it. But it suffices to say that you hold the same status in relation to me as Hārūn (Aaron) held in relation to Mūsa (Moses) except that there shall, in all certainty, be no prophet after me,’” according to Majma‘ az-Zawā‘id, Vol. 9, p. 131; Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 5, p. 4, Vol. 9, p. 168, Vol. 18, p 282; Manāqib Ali ibn Abū Tālib, Ibn al-Maghāzili, pp. 237 – 239; Manāqib Ali ibn Abū Tālib, al-Khawārizmi, pp. 75 - 76, 96, 220; Kifayat at-Tālib fi Manāqib Ali ibn Abū Tālib, al-Ganjī, pp. 264 -265; Arjah al-Matālib, pp. 448, 454 and Yanābī` al-Mawadda of al-Zamakhshari, pp. 63 - 64, 130 - 131.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ had also informed the Muslim umma that there would appear two types of deviated groups among the Muslims who would exceed the bounds of Islamic principles with regard to
understanding Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ as he himself has related: “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ called on me and said: ‘O Ali! There is a resemblance between you and ‘Īsa son of Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) whom the Jews hated so much that they laid a false accusation against his mother, and whom the Christians loved so much that they assigned to him the status (of being a god) which is not his’”.

Then, Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ went on to say: “Beware! Two types of persons will fall into ruin on my account: One who loves (me) and praises me for what is not in me, and one who hates me and whose detesting me will lead him to any false and baseless accusation on me. Beware! I am not a prophet, and nothing has been revealed to me. But I act according to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Prophet as much as I can,” as we read in these references: Al-Musnad, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. 1, p. 160; Al-Mustadrak, al-Hākim, Vol. 3, p. 123; Mishkāt al-Masāḥīh, Vol. 3, pp. 245 – 246; Majma’ az-Zawā’id, Vol. 9, p. 133; Kanz al-‘Ummāl, Vol. 12, p. 219, Vol. 15, p. 110; Tārīkh, Ibn Kathīr, Vol. 7, p. 356.

The above quoted statements of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ have also been reported from the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he said the following to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ: “O Ali! Two types of people will fall into ruin on your account: One who loves you exceedingly, and liar is the one who attributes false things to you,” according to Al-Istīʿāb, Vol. 3, p. 1101.

Also, he said to him, “Two categories will be ruined on your account: One who loves you with exaggeration, and one who hates you and bears malice [against you],” as we read in Ibn Abul-Hadīd, Vol. 5, p. 6.

The famous scholar of tradition, `Amir ibn Sherāhil ash-Sha`bi (19 – 103 A.H./640 – 721 A.D.), has confirmed this saying that these two categories of people have already appeared, and that both became disbelievers. They were annihilated, according to Al-Istīʿāb, Vol. 3, p. 1130 and Al-ʿIqd al-Farīḍ, Vol. 4, p. 312.
465. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ was asked about the Unity of Allāh (Tawhid) and His justice (Adl). He replied: “Unity means that you do not subject Him to the limitations of your imagination, while justice means that you do not lay any blame on Him: *His words, and He is the all-Hearing, the all-Knowing* (Qur’ān, 6: 115).”

466. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “There is no good in silence about matters involving wisdom just as there is no good in speaking with ignorance.”

467. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said the following in his prayer for rain: “O Lord! Send us rain by submissive clouds, not by unruly

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1 The belief in the Unity of Allāh is not complete unless it is supported by belief in Allāh being free of all imperfections, that is, one should regard Him as being above the limitations of body, shape, place or time and should not subject Him to his own imagination and whims. This is so because the being who is contained by imagination and whims cannot be Allāh. Contrariwise, a creation of the human mind can. The field of mental activity remains confined to things which are seen and observed. Consequently, the greater one tries to appreciate Him through illustrations concocted by his mind or through his imaginative efforts, the more remote he will get from reality. In this regard, Imām Muhammed al-Bāqir ﷺ says, “Whenever you contain Him in your imagination, He will not be Allāh but a creation like your own self and is revertible to you.” Justice means that whatever the form of injustice and inequity may be, it should be dissociated from Allāh, and He should not be given such attributes which are evil, useless and which the mind can in no way agree to attribute to Him. In this regard, Allāh says, “And perfect is the word of your Lord in truth and justice: There is none who can change your Lord’s words.”
Sayyid ar-Radi says, “This is an expression of wonderful eloquence, because Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ has likened the cloud, which is accompanied by thunder, lightning, wind and flashes with unruly camels that throw away their saddles and throw down their riders, likening the clouds that are free of these terrible things to the submissive camels that are easy to milk and obedient to ride.”

468. It was said to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ once: “We wish you had dyed your gray hair, O Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ!” He said: “Dye is a way of adornment, whereas we are in a state of grief.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says in his comment that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ is referring here to his grief at the demise of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

469. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “The fighter in the way of Allāh who is martyred will not get a greater reward than whoever remains chaste despite limited means. It is possible that a chaste person may even become one of the angels.”

470. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “Contentment is a wealth that is not exhausted.”
471. When Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib put Ziyād ibn Abīh in place of Abdullāh ibn al-Abbās over Fars (part of Persia, today’s Iran) and its revenues, he had a long conversation with him in which he prohibited him from conducting an early collection of the revenue. Therein he said: “Act on justice and stay away from violence and injustice: Violence will lead them to forsake their abodes, while injustice will prompt them to take up arms.”

472. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The worst sin is that which the one who commits it takes it lightly.”

473. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “Allāh has not made it obligatory on the ignorant to learn till He has made it obligatory on the learned to teach.”

474. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “The worst comrade is he for whom formality has to be observed.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “This is so because formality is inseparable from hardship, and it is an evil that is caused by a comrade for whom formality is observed. Consequently, he is the worst of all comrades.”

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1A friendship based on love and sincerity frees one from ceremonial formalities, but the friendship for which formalism is necessary is unstable. Such a friend is not a true friend. True friendship requires that a friend should not be a cause of trouble for his friend. If he is a cause of trouble, he will prove tedious and harmful. This harmfulness is a sign of his being the worst of all friends.
475. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib said: “If a believer enrages (ihtashama) his brother, it means that he will leave him.”

Sayyid ar-Radi says, “It is said that hashamahu or ahshamahu means: ‘He enraged him’. According to another view, it means ‘He humiliated him’, while ihtashamahu means ‘He sought these for him’, and that is most likely to cause him to separate.”
475. Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ said: “If a believer enrages (ihtashama) his brother, it means that he will leave him.”

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SELECTED SHORT AXIOMS OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL

Your brother is the one who solaces you during the time of hardship.

Be good to the abuser and you gain the upper hand over him.

Minds are mostly subdued by the glitter of ambitions.

Discipline your children, you will thus benefit them.

One’s good conduct is better than his gold.

Through kindness are the free enslaved.

Quickly do goodness so you may gain happiness.

A lifetime’s bliss is in good deeds.
One’s affliction stems from his tongue.

Wealth is blessed when zakat is paid.

Augur well, you will gain goodness.

When hands crowd at food, they bless it.

One’s humbleness honors him.

Rely on Allāh, and He will suffice you.

Creed cracks when scholars die.

Justice firms governance.

Safety’s outfit never wears out.

The rewards of the hereafter are better than this world’s felicity.

Speech’s goodness lies in its brevity.

Keep the poor company and you will be appreciated more.

One who keeps good folks company wins goodness.
The companion of evil ones is a devil.

Good manners are (as good as) a gain.

One’s career is his treasure.

One’s clemency is his helper.

Men’s embellishments are good manners.

The best companion is the one who assists you in doing what is good.

The best women are those who are affectionate and who give birth.

One’s close friend indicates the extent of his reasoning.

Lowly men’s authority is (good) men’s lesion.

Continue to suppress your anger and your outcomes will be praiseworthy.

Heart’s medicine is accepting (every Divine) decree.

One humiliates himself with greed, gains dignity with contentment.
One’s articulate speech is his capital.

Remembering death cleanses the heart.

Living in prosperity is living in security.

One’s bosom companion indicates one’s rationality.

Look after your father, your son will look after you.

Anticipation may lead to deprivation.

Inner goodness is better than outer goodness.

Visiting the weak manifests humbleness.

Visit one according to the extent of his regards for you.

Folk’s masters are the faqihs.

Bad manners form loneliness from which there is no escape.

One’s conduct indicates his innermost.

Happy is one who derives admonishment from others.
The condition for gaining (people's) companionship is to abandon affectation.

Recitation of the Qur'an heals one's body.

The most evil of all people is the one who is avoided, on account of his evil, by all people.

One's goodness lies in safeguarding his tongue.

If you maintain ties with your kinsfolk, the number of your supporters will increase.

Piety reforms creed, its damage stems from greed.

The heart's enlightenment results from consuming what is lawful.

A strait heart is harder than a strait hand.

Tongue's strokes are harsher than lances' stabs.

Pursuit of manners is better than persuit of gold.

Congratulations to whoever is blessed with good health.

One who plays less lives more.
Kings’ oppression is easier to do than spoiling subjects.

Thirsting for money is tougher than thirsting for water.

An oppressed man’s injustice shall never be lost.

Oppression’s outcome is calamitous.

A rational foe is better than an ignorant friend.

High aspiration is a sign of deep conviction.

A slave of his (illicit) desire is more servile than a bondman.

One who leads you to abuse betrays you.

One who pleases you with falsehood cheats you.

A true believer’s gain is finding wisdom.

A man’s pride in distinction is better than that in origin.

One who is safe from his own evil wins.

A thing’s branch tells of its root.
One’s worth lies in what he does the best.

Saying what is right is an indication of one’s creed.

Satiation grows a harsh heart.

A fool’s heart hides behind his tongue.

Clemency is the perfection of knowledge.

Generosity’s perfection adds an apology.

Agreeing too often is hypocrisy, disputing too much is disunity.

The power of knowledge never disappears.

Leniency of speech is tied to hearts.

An envious person never finds rest.

A rational man’s tongue is behind his heart.

One who seeks what does not concern him misses what does concern him.
Sweet speech wins many friends.

One who knows his worth never perishes.

One whose stem is lean has many branches.

The fire of separation is harsher than the fire of Hell.

A believer’s noor (celestial light) stems from standing for the night prayers.

One’s hypocrisy humiliates him.

A happy person’s concern is his Hereafter, that of a wretch is his (temporal) world.

One’s perdition lies in conceit.

Far away is a piece of advice that comes from a foe.

The burden of a benefactor’s charity weighs heavier than its reward.

A fool’s authority swiftly vanishes.

Woe unto one whose manners are bad!
There is no honor greater than Islam.

There is no ailment more wearisome than little rationality.

There is no sickness more wearisome than little reasoning.

No right results from abandoning consultation.

One wins mastership over his people by being benevolent to them.

The day of justice is harder on the unjust one than the day when he oppressed.

This much concludes our selection of the statements of Imām Ali ibn Abū Ṭālib ﷺ. We praise Allāh, the Glorified One, Who enabled us to gather the scattered utterances from various areas and bring them together from different places, text materials that have been far from our reach. We have no ability save through Allāh. In Him do we trust, and He is Sufficient for us. He is the best Supporter.

May Allāh bless our master Muhammed ﷺ, the last of the prophets and the one who guided us towards the best path, and bless his virtuous descendants and companions who are the stars of conviction.
SHRINE OF IMĀM ALI

Bysm Allah al-rahman al-rahim

(Such noor [celestial] light is lit) in houses which Allah has permitted to be raised to honor to celebrate His Name therein: He is glorified in them in the mornings and in the evenings (again and again) by men whom neither sale nor merchandise can divert from remembering Allah, nor from regular prayers, nor from the (payment of) zakat. They fear (only) the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new) (Qurʾān, 24:36-37).

It is not polite to speak about the shrine of Imām Ali without saying a word about this great man although both Preface and Introduction have already told the reader something about him, a drop of an ocean, for detailing the life and wisdom of Ali requires volumes and volumes, and indeed many such volumes have been published and will continue to be published Insha-Allāh till life on this planet comes to an end. One of these voluminous anthologies is titled الصحیح من سیرة الامام على which falls in 19 Volumes. It is written by Ayatollah Sayyid Ja` far Murtada al-`Amili and published in Qum, Iran, in 1430 A.H./2009 A.D. by Daftar Tablighat Islami which is administered by the theological seminary there, and it carries ISBN 978-600-90724-5-3. The text below has been submitted by the Ataba Alawiyya in al-Najaf al-Ashraf and is edited by the Translator who utilized two main references: One of them is a directory in full color published by the intellectual and
cultural affairs section of the said Ataba in 1130 A.H./2011 A.D. This colorful directory is printed by the Rafidain House for Printing, Publication and Distribution, an Iraqi-owned firm based in Beirut, Lebanon. It bears no ISBN. Another source is also published by the same Ataba and is written by Dr. Salah Mahdi al-Fartousi, an Iraqi writer who was born in 1946 in al-Najaf al-Ashraf, and who has written scores of researches and books, including: مختصر العين للزبيدي، العائلة لابن السيد البطليوسي و المهذب: مرقد و ضريح أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام, and its second edition was published by the same Ataba and printed by Dbouk International, also of Beirut, Lebanon, in 1431 A.H./2010 A.D. It has no ISBN. Al-Fartousi has been kind to provide the Translator of these three Volumes with a number of fabulous photos of the shrine of Imām Ali ﺪ، so it is incumbent on the Translator to express his deep gratitude. Of course, many other references are consulted for the text below.

The Prophet of Islam ﷺ made numerous statements about Ali ﺪ, including the following:

الحق مع علي اينما مال
The truth is with Ali wherever he inclines.

فبّبك لشبها عن عيسى ابن مريم
Addressing the Imām ﺪ, the Prophet ﷺ once said, “There is a similarity in you (O Ali) with Jesus son of Mary.

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ جَعَلَ قَبِيرَكَ وَقَبِيرَ ولدك بقاعا من بقاع الجنة وعمرة من عرصاتها.
Allāh has made your gravesite (O Ali) and those of your offspring areas of Paradise and a neighborhood of its neighborhoods.

As for the Imām ﺪ in his own words, read what he has said:

وَ اللَّهُ لَوْ أَغْفُلَ الْقَالِمِ السَّبْعَةَ بِمَا تَحْتَ أَفْلَكُهَا عَلَى أنَّ أَغْصُيَ اللَّهُ في نَمَذَةٍ أَسْلِبُهَا

1Some readers may wonder about Paradise and whether it has “neighborhoods” and the like. A deep study of Paradise will reveal that it is divided into levels, areas and even cities; it is a world by itself that is much, much larger and greater than our planet by many, many times.

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By Allah! Had I been given the seven provinces in addition to their protectorates, provided I disobey Allah by depriving an ant of a grain of barley, I will never do it.

إن إمرتكم لا هون من هذه النعل إلا أن احق حقا وأبطل باطلًا.

Addressing people who wanted to swear the oath of allegiance to him, he said, “Authority over you is less in my eyes than this sandal unless I establish what is right and nullify what is wrong.”

أنا أكره أن أتميز عليكم.
I hate to be distinct from you.

البيت مبطنتا و حولي يطون غرته و اكيدا حرى أ اقنع من نفسى بأني يقالي: "هذا أمير المؤمنين" و لا أشارنهم في مكاره الذهر أو أكرون أسوأ لهم في جشوعة العيش؟
Should I sleep with a full belly while around me are empty stomachs and anxious ones? Should I be satisfied when people say, “This is the Commander of the Faithful” without sharing them time’s hardships or be a role model for them in living a harsh life?

و أيمن الله، لاتصقين المنظوم من ظالمه، و للاقودن الظالم بذراغته، حتى أورده منهل الحق و إن كان كارها.
By Allah, I shall restore right from the oppressor, leading him by the nose, even against his will, till I let him reach the source of goodness.

لا تغدوا ولاتقنوا ولايدا ولا أمرا ولاشيها فانيا ولامنعولا في صومعته ولا تحروقوا نخلا ولا تقطعوا شجرا.
Addressing his troops before dispatching them, the Imam ordered them thus, “Do not commit treachery, do not kill a newborn, or a woman, or an aging man, or one who isolates himself in his place of worship; do not burn date trees and do not cut any trees.

الغتي أثك جرذت الأرض فاخذت ما تحتت قدماك و أكلت ما تحتت يديك فارفع إلي جسادك.
Writing one of his provincial governors, Ali said, “It has come to my knowledge that you have stripped the land, taking from what is under your feet, eating of what is under your hands, so submit your report to me.”
Reprimanding one of his provincial governors, the Imām wrote, “So fear Allāh and return the money to these people, for if you do not do it, and if Allāh grants me power over you, I shall seek Allāh to excuse me in your regard, and I shall strike you with my sword which, anyone whom I strike with, sends one to the fire (of hell).”

No poor person feels hungry except on account of what a rich man enjoys.

I never saw an abundant bliss except there is beside it a lost liability.
People are (of two kinds:) either a brother of yours in faith or the like in creation.

So love for others what you love for yourself, and hate for them what you hate for it.

Forgive whoever oppresses you, give whoever deprives you, maintain your ties with whoever severs them, do not hate whoever hates you, and be good to whoever abuses you.

Surround your promise with fulfillment, safeguard your conscience by being trustworthy, and protect yourself from whatever you are given, for there is no obligation which Allāh mandates, something which people agree about collectively despite their different inclinations and various views, more than magnifying fulfillment of pledges.
A Look at the Shrine of the Commander of the Faithful,

Imām Ali ibn Abu Tālib
All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, peace and blessings with the best of His creation, the Messenger of Allāh, and with his sinless and auspicious Progeny.

**Hiding the Gravesite of the Commander of the Faithful**

Perhaps the war stances of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Tālib Ḥasan in which he humiliated the polytheist heroes and chiefs of Quraish tribe in defense of Islam, in firming its foundations, filled the hearts of the enemies of Allāh and of Islam with animosity and hatred, so they kept waiting for the opportunity to seek revenge on him, to charge him, and to harm him.

Everybody knows what Banu Umayyah (descendants of Sufyan) had done, followed by the descendants of Abul-Abbas [al-Saffāh, the blood-shedder], their hatred and animosity towards the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Tālib Ḥasan. For this reason, Ali Ḥasan stated in his last will and testament that his gravesite should be hidden. He Ḥasan knew that power after him would be the lot of Banu Umayyah; therefore, he did not feel safe about his grave been desecrated. He Ḥasan, hence, stated before his death that he should be buried secretly for fear of Banu Umayyah and their supporters, the Kharijites and the like, who might inter it due to their knowledge of its location, and that such interring would prompt the Banu Hashim, his clansmen, to fight, a situation which he Ḥasan always avoided even
during his lifetime; so, how could he accept it to be the cause of a feud after his demise?

What proves this concern is what actually was done by al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi\(^1\) when the Umayyads did, indeed, rise to power. He called for digging up as many as three thousand graves looking for the sacred corpse of the Commander of the Faithful \(\text{Al-}\text{Shafi`i}\) as history books tell us. This is why only the children of Ali \(\text{Al-}\text{Shafi`i}\) and those whom they trusted from among their close followers knew exactly where the grave was located.

**Building of the Sacred Grave Rises**

Knowledge of the location of the grave of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Tālib \(\text{Al-}\text{Shafi`i}\) was kept hidden from people during the entire Umayyad period, i.e. about 92 Hijri years, from 40 – 132 A.H. which coincided from 661 – 750 A.D., that is, about 89 Anno Domini years, since the Hijri lunar year is shorter than the solar one. Only the Imāms from among the Ahl al-Bayt \(\text{Al-}\text{Shafi`i}\) and the elites from among their sincere followers knew where the grave was. All this was done according to the will left by the Imām \(\text{Al-}\text{Shafi`i}\) shortly before his death in 40 A.H./661 A.D.

When the Umayyad state collapsed and was followed by the Abbasid state in 132 A.H./750 A.D., Imām Ja’far ibn Muhammed al-Sadiq \(\text{Al-}\text{Shafi`i}\) kept going to both Heera and Kufa cities and visiting the sacred grave before its site was made public. He was accompanied by his sincere supporters who started telling those whom they trusted from among the people about its location. Its site was thus determined to be in the Ghari land near Najaf. This public revelation

\(^1\)His *kunya* was "Abu Muhammed." Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, the Umayyad king, appointed him commander of his army, so he killed the *sahabi* Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr by crucifying him inside the Ka`ba. Then Abd al-Malik installed him as governor of Mecca, Medina, and Taif, then added to them Iraq. He remained governor for twenty years. He built the city of Wasit (located between Kufa and Bara) where he died in 95 A.H./714 A.D. He is proverbial in his passion for shedding blood, ridiculing the Sunnah, and deliberately violating the Islamic code of conduct.
was made by Imām Ja‘far ibn Muhammed al-Sadiq during the time of caliph Abu Ja‘far al-Mansur, who ruled from 136 – 158 A.H./754 – 775 A.D., during the time when he used to go often to Heera city and from there he would go to Najaf and visit the sacred grave accompanied by some of his companions.

The Abbasid Dawud ibn Ali (d. 132 A.H./750 A.D.) narrates how a wooden box covered the grave. Changes kept taking place to the grave since then as well as many renovations and construction projects the most important of which are as follows:

**FIRST:** Hārūn al-Rashīd renovated it in 170 A.H./787;
**SECOND:** Al-Dā‘i al-Saghīr did so in 279 A.H./893 A.D.
**THIRD:** The Hamdānis renovated it in 311 A.H./924 A.D.
**FOURTH:** Ibn Buwayh al-Daylami in 371 A.H./982 A.D.
**FIFTH:** The Safavids constructed the present shrine as it now stands during the years from 1040 – 1052 A.H./1631 – 1643 A.D.

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1His full name is: Imām Ja‘far al-Sādiq (the truthful one) ibn (son of) Imām Muhammed al-Bāqir ibn Imām “Zainul-‘Ābidīn” Ali ibn al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abū Tālib, peace with them all. He is the faqih of Muslims who follow the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam through the holy Ahl al-Bayt whom Allāh purified and protected from all sins as we read in verse 33 of Sūrat al-Ahzāb of the Holy Qur’ān. According to p. 472, Vol. 1 of *Usool al-Kāfī* by mentor al-Kulayni, his mother was “Umm Farwah” Asma’ daughter of Qasim ibn Muhammed ibn (first caliph) Abu Bakr who was one of the seven most prominent jurists of Medina. Imām al-Sadiq was born on Rabī’ al-Awwal 17 of the Hijri year 83, which corresponded to Thursday, April 20, according to the Julian Christian calendar, of 702 A.D. The Imām was poisoned with grapes at the hands of the then governor of Medina, and he died on Shawwāl 15, 148 A.H./December 4, 765 A.D. He needs no introduction since not only the Muslims of the world recognize his lineage, character and ocean of knowledge, but the non-Muslims, too, are quite familiar with him and with thousands of his students who spread far and wide.
The Sacred Nave:
Its general form is called "al-sahn al-shareef," the sacred nave, and the overall upper area of the shrine, including the brick wall, is 13,240 m². The sacred nave covers most of this area, and it surrounds the shrine from the northern, eastern and southern areas, and the estimated area of only the shrine is about 4,219 m².
**Outer Brick Wall**
The architectural design of the nave is most magnificent; rarely is there anyone like it. In its design, astronomic matters have taken into consideration, such as sunrise and the determining of midday time. A huge structure surrounds the resting place, dome and minarets in the shape of a square brick wall most of which is plated from inside with Kashani (or Kashi). Qur’anic verses are inscribed in very beautifully entwined letters on its frontal areas.
Nave’s Gates

1. Southern Gate: *Bab al-Qibla*
   
   This gate is so named because it is located in the direction of the *qibla*, in the center of the southern side of the nave’s brick wall, and it leads to the Rasool Street. It rises as high as 4.30 meters and has a total width of 3.48 meters. It is comprised of two huge teak wood shutters. Surrounding each shutter is a huge built façade covered by Kashi made in Kerbala decorated with various very beautiful inscriptions.
2. Western Gate: Bab al-Faraj
This gate is located in the western side of the brick wall, in the second grandiose hall to be specific, and it is the last gate to open to the nave. It was opened during the time of Sultan Abdul-Aziz in the year 1279 A.H./1863 A.D., so it was called the sultani gate, after the sultan. But it was called bab al-faraj, the gate of ease, because it ends at an area which is believed to be a spot chosen by the Mahdi Imam for to offer his prayers. Residents of Najaf city call it bab al-'imara because one who leaves it behind will be facing the Imara quarter, an old city quarter which was demolished in its entirety during the time of tyrant Saddam Hussein in the pretext of expanding the shrine. The real reason behind its demolition was the large number of mosques, schools and homes of theology professors. It is similar to the rest of the shrine’s gates: It is comprised of two huge shutters made of teak wood. It is 4.30 meters and its entire width is 3.20 meters and is surrounded by a huge façade covered with Kashi made in Kerbala decorated with various inscriptions.
3. **Northern (Tusi) Gate:**
It is located in the northern side of the upper sacred sanctum. This gate is named after mentor "Abu Ja'far" Muhammed ibn al-Hassan al-Tusi\(^1\). His resting place is located in the street which is named after him and which leads to the Wadi al-Salam Cemetery.

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\(^1\)Shaikh al-Tūsi, "Abū Jaʿfar" Muhammed ibn al-Hassan (385 - 460 A.H./995 - 1068 A.D.), is one of the greatest literary figures in Islamic history, a scholar the scope of whose knowledge encompassed Islamic history, *fiqh* and *hadīth*. 

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Eastern or Clock Gate:
This main gate is located to the east of the sacred shrine. The clock stands over it facing the large bazaar. It is regarded as the main door for entering the shrine and from there to the sanctum. From both sides, it is surrounded by pillars that protrude from the outside fence by 1.30 meter and is overhead of one who enters from within or who exits. It looks like a dent having an angle similar to that of the arched and grandiose halls which the wall surrounds. On the pillars of the gate there are writings useful for tracking aspects of the history of this Alawi monument, including the date when the old Kashi was built. It is now called the gate of Imām Ali ibn Mousa al-Rida ﷺ.
Muslim ibn Aqeel Gate
Within the brick wall’s eastern side and near the area of the Khadraa Mosque is the gate of Muslim ibn Aqeel, brother of the Commander of the Faithful. This gate, too, is made of teak wood and is comprised of two shutters four meters high and 3.30 meters wide. The façade that surrounds this gate is covered with Kashi made in Kerbala and is decorated with various inscriptions.
Nave’s Arcades
The wall that surrounds the sanctum is 5.12 meters high, maintaining the same height on all four sides. Totally surrounding the shrine from all sides is an almost square arcade the eastern and western flanks of which are slightly larger than its northern and southern ones. The walls of these arcades are covered with green marble which is similar to that which covers the floor and courtyard up to a height of 2.20 meters. The rest of parts of the walls and ceilings are glazed entirely with the most magnificent mirrors in mathematical and plant inscriptions.

1. Nave's Northern Arcade: It faces the Tusi Gate.
2. Nave's Eastern Arcade: It is the one where the main doors leading to the shrine are located: On one side, two gilt doors are located in the Golden Grandiose Hall, and on the other are the eastern golden doors that open into the sacred shrine.
4. Western Arcade: It is similar in its location to the Eastern Arcade.
Nave’s Grandiose Hall:
‘Ulema Hall: It used to be called “maqam (standing place) al-‘ulema” due to the large number of senior theology scholars who are buried there, and it overlooks the courtyard from the sanctum’s northern side, facing the grand hall of the cemetery of senior jurisprudent Sayyid Kazim Yazdi ﷺ.¹

¹His full name is: Ayatollah Mohammed Kazem (or Kazim or Kadhim) Yazdi, one of the senior leaders of the Shi’as of the world; his date of birth is unknown, but he passed away in 1919.
Gold Spout Hall:
This hall overlooks the courtyard from the southern side of the sanctum's wall, facing the large hall of the cemetery of Sayyid Muhammed Sa`eed al-Habboobi، and it is almost similar in shape and size to the scholars' hall.

Grand Hall of the Cemetery of Sayyid al-Habboobi عند بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم:
It is located to the left of one who enters through the Qibla Gate. It is a huge grandiose hall covered with domes, and its front area is beautified with decorative wood works.
Both Grandiose Halls of the Shrine's General Secretariat: They neighbor each other and are located on the right side of one who enters through the Qibla Gate. From the inside, both of these grandiose halls are joined together to form a huge room. Each of these grandiose halls has a decorated wood façade that extends to the outer dimensions of the hall.
Cemetery of Sayyid Abul-Hassan al-Isfahani

It is located directly to the left of one who enters the shrine through the Clock Gate. This grandiose hall has a decorated wood façade that extends along the outer dimensions.

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1Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abul-Hassan Isfahani (1860 – 1946) was a senior Shi`a Muslim scholar, cleric and faqih, jurist. He was born in 1277 A.H./1860 A.D. in a village on the outskirts of Isfahan, Iran. He was educated and resided in Iraq and became the sole marji` taqlid after the death of his contemporary, Mirza Hussain Naeeni. The tenure of his Marja`iyah is particularly known for its commendable administration. After his preliminary training in Isfahan, he traveled to Najaf and gradually joined the lessons of Akhund Khurasani who soon recognized the talents of his disciple. His famous dissertation in fiqh is titled “Waseelat un-Najat”, the means to salvation. Due to its comprehensive nature, it has been elucidated by many faqih, including Ruhollah Khomeini. Among his famous students were Ayatullah Seyyid Muhsin al-Hakim, Ayatullah Seyyid Meelani, Ayatullah Mirza Hashim Amuli and others. He died in Najaf on 9th Thull-Hijjah in 1365 A.H. (1946).
Both Grandiose Halls of the Sultans' Cemeteries:
They fall to the left of one who enters through the Tusi Gate. Each grandiose hall has a decorated wood façade that extends along its outer dimensions.
Grandiose Hall of the Cemetery of Sayyid Kadhim Yazdi

It is located to the left of one who enters through the Tusi Gate, and it is a huge hall covered with domes. This hall is beautified by a large façade made of decorative wood.
Omran ibn Shahin Mosque:
It is located in the northern side of the shrine's outer wall. Nowadays, the remaining portion of the arcade, which was built by Omran ibn Shahin, is called Masjid Omran (Omran Mosque) which was built in the mid-fourth Hijri century (10th Century A.D.). Its door is now located within the entrance of the Shaikh al-Tusi Gate which has been expanded, swallowing a portion of the Omran arcade in the year 1369 A.H./1950 A.D.
Al-Khadraa Mosque:
It is located in the area where the northern side meets the eastern one of the outer brick wall, and it is regarded as one of the old mosques. In the month of Rajab of 1368 A.H. (May of 1948-9 A.D.), the local government demolished a third of it in order to open the street that
surrounds the shrine to traffic. It was renovated later, and a gate for it was opened onto the street. In 1384 A.H./1964, the mosque and its attachments were all demolished and rebuilt by orders of the then supreme religious authority, the late Grand Ayatollah Abul-Qasim al-Khoei who used to deliver his lectures there. Its new construction was the first which Najaf witnessed for one of its mosques and in such a grand style; more than twenty-five thousand dinars were spent on it, a huge sum of money at the time (whereas now the same amount buys one meal for a couple at a modest restaurant!). After the departure of al-Khoei from this vanishing world, presently Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani replaces his predecessor in leading congregational prayers and delivering lectures and has been doing so for a number of years. The endowment administration closed it down in the pretext of renovating it, which it never did, until it was opened on a Monday, May 29, 2006 by orders of Sayyid al-Sistani.

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1Late Grand Ayatollah Abul-Qasim al-Khoei was one of the senior leaders of Shi'a Muslims of Iraq and abroad, one of the most learned, charismatic and wise leaders of the Islamic world. He was born on Rajab 15, 1317 A.H. (November 19, 1899) at Khoei in Iranian Azerbaijan, heartland of many great Shi'a thinkers and sufis, ascetics, and he died at 3:13 pm on Saturday, Safar 8, 1413 (August 8, 1992). He was versed in religious Persian and Arabic poetry and language as well as in Turkish.
Mosque of the Head (*masjid al-ra’s*):

It is located in the western part of the nave, and it is named so because it was built near the head of the buried Imām and Commander of the Faithful ﷺ. The date of its construction goes back to the time of the Elkhans (the Khans), a Mogul dynasty that once ruled Iraq, Iran and the Caucasus as well as parts of Asia Minor starting in the month of Thul-Hijja of 653 A.D./February 1255-6 A.D. The mosque’s area was added to the extension area as the upper arcade of the sanctum which was called “Ali ibn Abu Ṭālib Arcade” as part of a large expansion project.
Gharawi Husainiyya and School:
Within the enclosure of the northern part of the nave's brick wall, in its eastern portion to be exact, there is the Husainiyya of the sacred Alawi Ataba which used to be a school for students of sciences of theology, and it is now open to students of all sciences as well as pilgrims visiting the shrine.
Library of the Hayderi Shrine:
It is called library of the "Hayderi Rawda", and it is one of the most distinguished and advanced libraries in the city of al-Najaf al-Ashraf where thee is hardly a street without a library or bookstore. In the past, it housed many books and manuscripts most of which were handwritten by their writers. Kings, sultans and the like paid a great deal of attention to this library, gifting the precious manuscripts which they had to it, helping it gain fame and a great status. Scholars, writers and famous personalities paid it attention, too, providing it with books by purchasing entire private libraries and giving them as gifts to this grand library or marking them as a trust, a gift to the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ. Throughout history,
this library was given many names, including the Gharawi chest, the most famous and popular name, the Alawi chest, the shrine’s chest, the chest of the Commander of the Faithful มี, the Alawi shrine’s library, the Alawi library, the Hayderi library and finally the Hayderi Rawda (garden of knowledge).
Nave's Clock:
The clock of the nave is so unique, it is often compared with the famous Big Ben clock in London due to its huge size. Its top takes the shape of a dome covered with gold bricks, while inside there are three huge bells that are heard every fifteen minutes. The dome stands on gilt columns that shape something like roofed halls, eight in number, as the columns are supported on a square area representing the ceiling of the main clock chamber which houses its engine.
Gold Grandiose Hall (Courtyard or Parlor):
It is located in the sanctum’s courtyard in the eastern side. This Golden Hall faces the main entrance to the sanctum’s upper arcades and is covered with green marble. It is accessed from the northern and southern areas only. Its eastern area was closed with a wall that rises 90 cms above the parlor’s ground over which there is a beautiful fence-like wall made of shiny silver and rises 75 cms. Within the parlor, the bases of both minarets are located in addition to a door so one can go up the minarets, in addition to two doors one of which has a chamber where Sayyid Mustafa Khomeini is buried, and it is located in the northern side, whereas the other is the chamber of the caller to prayers, the muathin, which is located in the southern area. Beside the base of each minaret, there are two doors
made of pure gold and decorated with the most beautiful plant and Qur'ânic verses which demonstrate precision and originality. The northern door leads to the resting place of `allama al-Hilli and is named after him. It leads through a short passage to the Alawi sanctum’s arcade. The southern door is located at the resting place of al-Muqaddas al-Ardabili.

In the midst of the open veranda is the shrine’s large hall which is covered with pure gold, and it is a marvel in precision and craftsmanship, one of the masterpieces of Islamic architecture. It is full of embossments and inscriptions. The gold hall is decorated with a huge braid of pure gold, and its top contains large gold decorations that drape to almost the third top part of the hall. They are so grand and beautiful, they attract everyone’s attention and make everyone breathless. Both façades of the side halls have something like arched windows beautified with protruding decorations on blue enamel; two windows are in each side.
Gilt Minarets:
Both gilt minarets are located on the sides of the gold-covered halls, i.e. the main entrance to the sanctum’s arcade, within the sanctum’s
courtyard area. With the huge gilt dome, these minarets are considered to be the most beautiful and the most important architectural parts of the shrine: The minarets are among the most important architectural elements of sacred landmarks. Each minaret is 29 meters high, and it is shaped like a cylinder the diameter of which keeps decreasing as it rises high in the sky.
Gilt Dome:
The upper shrine is covered by two domes one of which is internal, arched in the shape of half an almost circular ball embroidered with mosaics and beautiful Kashi and rises 50.23 meters above the sanctum's ground, and an outer one shaped like a bulb that rises 15.18 meters from its base to the word "Allāh" above it. There is a space between both domes. The diameter of the internal one is 5.13 meters, whereas the diameter of the outer dome is 6.16 meters. This dome is regarded as one of the high and huge domes and is distinguished by a long neck that enhances its awesome shape and size; it is one of the most precise, symmetrical and beautiful domes.
Dome’s Stripe:
On the dome, there is an outer stripe of blue enamel 1.46 in height on which there are sacred verses from Surat al-Fath, Chapter of Victory (Ch. 48 of the Holy Qur’ān) inscribed in protruding gold letters.
Entrances to the Alawi sanctum Arcades:
Six entrances decorate the sanctum: The first, the main one, falls in the center of the large golden grandiose hall; there is a gold door across the resting place of `allama al-Hilli, two silver ones face each other and overlook the Shaikh al-Tusi Gate, another faces the Qibla Gate and is called “Bab al-Murjd”, two other doors also face each other at the beginning and end of the sanctum’s western arcade: The northern one, which is located at the right side of the `ulema arcade is called al-Fadil al-Sharbyani Entrance, while the southern one, which is located to the north of the Gold Spout Arcade, is called the Umm al-Baneen Entrance; both are made of teak wood.
Entrance Doors to the Holy Shrine:
One can enter the shrine from the northern arcade areas where there are two silver inlaid doors and eastern ones, the main for entering the shrine, as well as the southern ones. As for the western side, the area of the sacred head of the Imām ʿāẓam, there is an enclosure that overlooks the arcade that has no exit, and it is three meters high and 20.2 meters wide.
Sanctum's Interior:
The shrine is like a square tower the length of the side of which is 30.13 meters over an area 89,176 m² over which stands the dome which rests on four pillars. There are color mirrors and magnificent architectural designs that decorate the shrine from within with green marble, covering its internal walls.
Sanctum’s Wicket:
In the center of the shrine is the wicket that houses the remains of the Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abu Tālib ﷺ, and it is made of gold and silver and is decorated with the most beautiful Islamic inscriptions and fabulous plant paintings in pure gold. The interior of the shrine is regarded as one of the most magnificent gems of Islamic art. In addition to its material value, it also contains marvelous gold, silver and multi-colored enamel inlaying.
Grave’s Box:
Inside the shrine is the grave’s box which is called “sandooq al-khatam,” ring’s box, and it is made of Indian teak wood inlaid with ivory, shells and many other types of color woods, a marvelous monument of craftsmanship and inscription as well as of the art of writing and engraving. It was completed in the year 1202 A.H./1788 A.D. and it is rare. It was placed on the Imâm’s grave. But the damage and destruction that afflicted the shrine as a result of the army of Iraq’s former tyrant, Saddam Hussein, having been given a free hand to play havoc with the holy shrine, the troops’ damage reached even the wooden box of the grave, which is immeasurably precious, and you can still see the signs of such barbarism even now when you take a hard look at the box...
Impacts of the Ba`hist attack on the sacred Alawi Ataba (Shrine of Imām Ali ﷺ)
Expansion project for the sacred Shrine of Imām Ali ﷺ
CONCLUSION:
In the atmosphere that had been created soon after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ (members of his family) had no course except to remain secluded, aloof, isolated. This resulted in the world’s continued ignorance of their real merits, teachings and attainments. To belittle them and to keep them away from authority was considered at the time by certain people as the greatest “service” to Islam. If `Othmān’s open misdeeds had not given a chance to the Muslims to wake up and to open their eyes, there would have been no question about swearing the oath of allegiance to Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ, and temporal authority would have maintained the same course as it had so far. But all those who could be named for the purpose had no courage to come forward because of their own shortcomings as Mu‘āwiyyah was sitting in his capital away from the center. In these circumstances, there was none except Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ﷺ who could be looked at. Consequently, people’s eyes hovered around him: The same common people who, following the direction of the wind, had been swearing the oath of allegiance to others, jumped to swear the oath of allegiance to him. Nevertheless, this allegiance was not on the count that they regarded his caliphate as having come from Allāh and him as being an Imām, a Divinely appointed leader, obedience to whom is obligatory. It was rather under their own principles which were known as democratic or consultative.

However, there was one group of people who swore the oath of allegiance to him with the notion in mind that doing so was a religious obligation, regarding his caliphate as determined by Allāh. Other than that, the majority regarded him a ruler like the other caliphs. As regarding precedence, he was chronologically the fourth in a series, or at the level of the common men, he ranked after the three preceding caliphs. Since the people, the army and the civil servants had been impressed by the beliefs and actions of the previous rulers and were deeply immersed in their ways, whenever they found anything in him which was against their liking, they fretted and frowned, evaded war and were ready to rise in disobedience and rebellion. Furthermore, just as the case with those who fought in jihād on the side of the Prophet ﷺ, there were
likewise some seekers of this world and others of the Hereafter. Now, in the same way, there was no dearth of worldly men who were, in appearance, with Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ but actually had connections with Mu‘āwiyyah who had promised some of them status and extended to others temptation of wealth and prominence. To hold them as Shi‘as of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ and to blame Shi‘ism for this reason is closing the eyes to important facts because the beliefs of those people would be the same as of those who regarded Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ as being the fourth in a series. Ibn Abul-Hadīd throws light on the beliefs of these persons in clear words as follows:

“Whoever observes minutely the events during the period of caliphate of Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ will come to know that Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ had been brought to bay because those who knew his real status were very few. The swarming majority did not bear that belief about him which was obligatory. They gave precedence to the previous caliphs over him and held that the criterion of precedence was caliphate. In this matter, those coming later followed the predecessors and argued that if the predecessors did not have the knowledge that the previous caliphs had precedence over Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ, they would not have preferred them over him. Rather, these people knew and took Imām Ali ibn Abū Tālib ٓ as a citizen and a subject like any other. Most of those who fought in his company did so on the grounds of prestige or Arab partisanship, not on the grounds of religion or belief,” as we read on p. 72, Vol. 1 of Sharh Nahjul-Balāgha.

The reader may be interested in knowing that lately, the United Nations has advised the Arab countries to take Imām Ali bin Abū Tālib ٓ as an example in establishing a regime based on justice and democracy and the promotion of knowledge.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in its 2002 Arab Human Development Report, distributed around the world, listed six sayings of Imām Ali ٓ about ideal governance.
They include consultation between the ruler and the ruled, speaking out against corruption and other wrong doings, ensuring justice to all, and achieving domestic development.

The UNDP said most regional countries are still far behind other nations in democracy, wide political representation, women's participation, development and knowledge.

These sayings of Imām Ali bin Abū Tālib which the UNDP quoted in its 2002 Arab Human Development Report are:

1. "He who appoints himself an Imām (ruler) of the people must begin by teaching himself before teaching others. His teaching of others must be first by setting an example rather than with his words, for he who begins by teaching and educating himself is more worthy of respect than he who teaches and educates others."

2. "Your concern with developing the land should be greater than your concern for collecting taxes, for the latter can only be obtained by developing, whereas he who seeks revenue without development destroys the country and the people."

3. "Seek the company of the learned and the wise as you search for solutions for the problems of your country and for the righteousness of your people."

4. "No good can result from neither keeping silent about the government nor from speaking out of ignorance."

5. "The righteous are men of virtue: Their logic is straightforward; they dress themselves unostentatiously, their way is modest, their actions are many and they are not deterred by difficulties."

6. "Choose the best from among your people to administer justice to them. Choose someone who does not easily give up, who is unruffled by enmities, someone who will not persist in wrongdoings, who will not hesitate to pursue right once he knows it, someone whose heart knows no greed, one who will not be satisfied with a minimum of explanation without seeking the maximum of
understanding, one who will be the most steadfast when doubt is cast and who will be the least impatient in correcting the opponent, the most patient in pursuing the truth, the most stern in meting out judgment, someone who is unaffected by flattery and not swayed by temptation, and such men are few."

So, in the atmosphere that had been created soon after the departure of the Prophet ﷺ, Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ (members of his family) had no course except to remain secluded, resulting in the world’s continued ignorance of their real status with Allāh. The Muslim masses thus deprived themselves of becoming acquainted with these saints’ vast knowledge, teachings and attainments. To belittle them and to keep them away from authority was considered at the time as the greatest “service” to Islam. Do you now agree with this assessment? We hope you do not; otherwise, you surely have misread this book.
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'Sulaym ibn Qays, an Arab scholar, was one of the companions of Imām Ali and is well-known for his book titled *The Book of Sulaym ibn Qays*. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, this book is "the oldest surviving Shī`ite book" which is written in the first Islamic century. Sulaym is said to have been born near the place where Ḥijr was later built.
He became an ardent supporter of Imam Ali as did Abu Dharr al-Ghifri, Salmia al-Fairis and many others from among the Prophet’s most respected sahiba. He wrote down what he learned from and experienced with Ali, and his writing eventually became this same book. Sulaym collected some of the sermons which Imam Ali delivered at Kufa’s Grand Mosque. When al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi became the governor of Kufa, after the martyrdom of the Imam, Sulaym fled to Persia with his writings in 694 A.D., staying in Nobandegan. There, he found a fifteen-year-old boy, Abi bin Abu `Ayyash and became fond of him, so he started to educate him, and Abi eventually became a Shi’a. Sulaym entrusted all of his writings to Abi, after Abi had made a solemn oath not to talk of any of the writings during Sulaym’s lifetime and that after his death he would give the book only to trustworthy supporters of Imam Ali.
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