



“DISPLAYS OF Human Virtues”

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DISPLAYS OF Human Virtues



Mohammad, Ali and
Fatima, Hussein^(PBUH)



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In the Name of Allah
The Compassionate, the Merciful

BOOK: displays of human virtues
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Published in 2012

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Mohammad (PBUH) Prophet of Mercy

Introduction

All human cultural achievements and civilizations as well as all positive elements in the human social life, more than anything, are owed to the sacrifices and devotions of the noble men whose sublime thoughts have led the humanity to the establishment of real justice, righteousness, freedom, prosperity, spiritual immortality and realities beyond the tangible world. In order to replace the undesired situations of human life with new set of ideals they devoted their lives and all belongings; the noble men whose performance and way of living proved their rightfulness; those who left behind the most profound and enduring social developments and built the rightful and real cultures affecting individual and social life to an

outstanding extent.

Undoubtedly the most brilliant scenes in the human history have been created due to the valuable efforts and devotions of these gracious individuals and without their undertakings human life would have been turned into a stinking swamp full of oppression and selfishness of oppressors and selfish individuals.

One of the characters who has had a profound impact upon the human life and who produced a new definition of life is Mohammad ^(PBUH) born around 1400 years ago. Mohammad's weapon was wisdom and his power was love, therefore he could outstandingly affect all human societies to that extent that today more than one and half billion people are followers of his attitudes, manners and ideologies.

Although all chapters of life of every noble person is worth studying but sometimes the personality and traits of that person is so dignified and decent that we need to speak of all incidents happened in his life, even during childhood. It goes without saying that by going through life of every genius,

every social leader or fore-runner of every civilization we may find very interesting and astounding facts and events. Their lives from childhood until their deaths are full of secrets.

In the present book we intend to briefly talk about the characters, attitudes and lifestyle as well as sublime teachings of the Great Prophet of Islam Mohammad Ibn Abdullah ^(PBUH) and his successor Ali ^(PBUH) and in the end we will speak of the nature and reasons behind Imam Hussein's ^(PBUH) Ashura movement. It is hoped that this work will be of use for all scholars and researchers from every religion in order for them to get further familiarized with characters and traits of the said noble individuals.

Prophet of Islam

Mohammad ^(PBUH) who is known as the founder of Islam and the Prophet of all Muslims of the world was born in 570 in Mecca within the Arabian Peninsula in south west of the Asian continent. This peninsula covers an area of around 3 million square kilometers one third of which is arid lands with little or no

vegetation.

Mecca which is located near the Red Sea is considered as one of the most famous cities of the world and it is the place of one of the most important communal rituals of all Muslims that is called “Hajj”. For “Hajj”, every year around three million Muslims get together in this city.

We can read in the history books that concurrent with birth of Mohammad (PBUH) very strange incidents happened: Zoroastrian fire temple extinguished; Idols inside Kabba fell down; and some buildings within Kasra Arch (Taqe Kasra, Eyvane Madaen) destroyed. When Mohammad (PBUH) was born suddenly a light arose which filled up the sky and the earth across the east and west for kilometers. His father (Abdullah) had already died therefore his guardianship was put to his grandfather, Abdul Motalleb. When Mohammad (PBUH) was six years old his mother (Amane) died too. Beginning the eighth year of his life, Mohammad (PBUH) also lost his grandfather and his guardianship passed to his uncle (Abutalib).

Cultural and Social situation of Mecca

Mohammad^(PBUH) was born among people with no civilization and social structure. Irrational and ignorant behavior of people had given rise to massacres, time consuming wars, gambling, prostitution, debauchery and binge drinking. Among other features of the culture of these people were useless boastings, quantity centered culture, superstitions resulted from distortion of religions, ancient myths and mythological stories, each indicative of their total ignorance and cultural degradation. They considered a female child as a source of disgrace and even buried their female children alive. Such behaviors and brutal acts which are attributed to the period of ignorance was leading humanity to total annihilation. Unlike other territories Arabian Peninsula had remained immune vis-à-vis ancient conquerors and today you cannot find any monument or ancient building from Roman Empire civilization in the north or Persian Empire civilization in the south of the Arabian Peninsula because

of the primitive culture of the people living in this peninsula and the arid lands which were not attractive for any ancient empires.

Mohammad, in his early youth and teenage years

Because Abutalib (Mohammad's uncle) could not earn sufficient income Mohammad had to go to work as shepherd. After some time, Abutalib, due to harsh living conditions, proposed Mohammad to work for the trading business of a wealthy widow, Khadijah. Like Mohammad Khadijah was known for being trustworthy. Mohammad accepted the proposal and several times went on business travels in Khadijah trade caravans. It is so interesting to know that in one of the travels to Syria a Christian monk, named Bahira, saw Mohammad and taking a deep look at him said: “This young man would have a very bright future and he is the same prophet promised in the divine books. He is the messenger of the Almighty God and he would rule all over the world. I can see in Mohammad those

signs stipulated in our divine book with respect to the promised prophet.”

It is so natural every human being during his adolescence period may be subject to physical and moral deviation. But in Arabian Peninsula wherein adults were shamefully involved in debauchery and other acts of misconduct, Mohammad maintained his sound morals and manners and his integrity soon earned him the nickname “al-Amin”, the Trustworthy in Mecca. When he was 20 years old Mohammad ^(PBUH) joined the Halfol Fozul treaty which supported all oppressed people who, having taken refuge in Mecca, due to the wide spread bigotry were ill-treated and harassed by people of Mecca. Mohammad ^(PBUH) had always considered his involvement in the said treaty as an honor for himself.

He always avoid being victim to voluptuousness and mundane pleasures and his face was showing that he was a deep thinker. In order to stay away from wide spread corruption and debauchery he usually took refuge in mountains and caves. When he was alone he was deeply thinking of the two following matters:

1- The creation of earth and sky and origin of every creature or existence; then he could get knowledge from the unseen world.

2- Heavy duty and responsibility to correct the beliefs and behaviors of a people who were living in a wicked, evil, corrupt and debaucherous society; he found out although it was possible to correct the society but this would be very hard and painstaking.

Witnessing the wide spread debauchery, corruption, oppression, vanity, frivolity, superstition and idolatry he was saying to himself: “The human being is highest and the most valuable creature on earth and his creation has been taken place due to a divine purpose and he needs to move towards divine evolution through a divine route which is quite different from what now we can see.” But how we can expect a society which is marked by debauchery, adultery, mammonism and oppression to be able to move forward in the divine route?

Communication with Angels and the Divine Mission

Mohammad ^(PBUH) was not among the literate and educated intellectuals and did not pass any education courses so he was called as “Omi” which means illiterate. But within a mountain where he was perfecting his wisdom and highest human traits and characteristics at the age forty, at the will of the Almighty God an angel from light appeared before him. The Angel’s name was Gabriel and he was on a divine mission. It goes without saying that only those individuals who have been afforded perfection and to make strong their spirits can stand meeting angels of the Almighty God. Mohammad had already acquired this stage by deeply thinking of the universe and by purifying his soul against all mundane trappings therefore the Almighty God appointed him as His messenger. After Gabriel appeared before Mohammad ^(PBUH) The Angel said: “Read.” Since Mohammad was illiterate he answered: “I cannot read.” The Angel embraced Mohammad and again said to him:”Read.” Then Mohammad could

read. Gabriel repeated the embrace, asking Muhammad to repeat after him and said: “Read in the name of your Lord who created! He created man from that which clings. Recite; and thy Lord is most Bountiful, He who has taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not.” Looking at Gabriel and his divine message stipulating “Mohammad, you’re the messenger of the Almighty God and I am His Angel”, Mohammad went out the Hara cave with highest joyfulness and looked at the sky every corner of which was filled by the divine light of revelation.

Mohammad ^(PBUH) considered and sought origin of every existence in Allah, the most perfect and the flawless. When he was alone he was talking to Allah, the same Allah that appointed Moses, Christ and thousands of other prophets as His messengers in order to correct deeds of people leading them towards the divine reality, monotheism and the highest of all, Allah.

These communicating revelations between Mohammad ^(PBUH) and the Almighty God lasted for 23 years until

death of Mohammad (PBUH) when he was 63 years old. In total these divine revelations have been gathered in a divine Book called as Quran; the divine Book of guidance for leading all human beings towards real prosperity; the divine Book which is bearing words of the Almighty God revealed to Mohammad (PBUH), as His messenger, in order to relay them to the people.

Mohammad (PBUH) first invitation to Allah

Mohammad (PBUH) was assigned to a divine mission by the Almighty God in order, just like previous divine messengers, to relay the divine message to people and invite them to monotheism which is called as “Towhid”. But the difference between Mohammad (PBUH) and his predecessors was in the fact that he was appointed as the last messenger of the Almighty God on earth and no other messengers would follow him. The way for inviting people also revealed to Mohammad (PBUH): “ادع الى سبيل ربك بالحكمه و الموعظه الحسنه و جاد لهم” “Invite to the way of your

Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best.” Therefore his first words to invite people to the Almighty God included: “قولوا لا اله الا الله تفلحوا” “Say, none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, thus be successful.”

It is worth mentioning that every religion has its own principal for human salvation. For example in Zoroastrianism human salvation lies in the principle of “Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.”

In some other sects or religions “Peace” has been mentioned for salvation of human beings. It means human salvation shall pass through “Peace”. And “Peace” is realized if we understand the causes of “suffering”. And to understand causes of “suffering” we need to obtain the ability to identify origin of suffering; the ability which is called “wisdom”. And the wisdom is about knowing that all sufferings come from coherence. And coherence itself is caused by thirst and desire for the best of everything. Therefore based on all these religions and sects the human

being is always in need. He is in need of spouse and offspring, land, wealth and power none of which are ever lasting. Then he reaches this principle that coherence is necessarily followed by separation. And this separation is the same concept of suffering. Therefore in order for the human being to eliminate suffering he needs to identify its causes. And based on the said school of thought the human being shall become needless to everything in order to reach eternal peace and salvation that is the same spiritual independence.

Or for example, some religions, as it is propagated today, the major factor for salvation of the human being lies in passion, love and affection. Based on this school of thought you need to show compassion to all people whether those who are kind to you or those who ill-treat you. Then the world would be filled with kindness and all people would be saved.

All the said schools of thought can be applied provided that they will be based on monotheistic approach. Without monotheism “Towhid” compassion

may be turned into disgrace and indignity and if we show compassion to oppressors and those who practice slavery it would be turned into the philosophy of humility. Or it is possible that compassion or kindness to be turned into a blind and emotional relationship among people based on their desires, irrespective of their capacities and merits. If we all love each other and show compassion to each other irrespective of our ill-deeds and all of us can enjoy this compassion whether we are the oppressor or the oppressed, the good or the bad, the inferior or the superior then this compassion would be turned into just a beautiful lie to the benefit of ill-doers and to the loss of good-doers. On the same basis Mohammad ^(PBUH) believes that all these concepts might be abused unless they are attended to and used based on the principle of “Towhid” or monotheism that is saying “There is a single God, and that is Allah.” Therefore the first and the foremost invitation of Mohammad P.B.U.H) was to Towhid that is implying: “There is only one God that is Allah.”

Since people living in the Arabian Peninsula had been worshipping idols and got accustomed to superstitious beliefs for a so long time unexpected divine invitation could not surely tolerated by them therefore Mohammad (PBUH), knowing that ideology and good thinking is the precondition of all deep and well-rooted information, did not at first reveal his divine invitation to all, and for three years he invited in secret only a select few individuals to Islam.

Then after three years Mohammad (PBUH) received the command to invite people openly to Islam and he called his close family to be his guests in his house and invited them to Islam. Then one day morning he went up on Mount Safa, near Mecca, and called the people around him. He told them: "If I told you that an enemy, was going to fall on you this morning or this evening, would you trust me?" All together they replied: "Yes, because we have never heard you lie." Then Mohammad (PBUH) continued: "I am like a watchman who sees the enemy from distance and is rushing to warn his people. I warn you against

the bad and the evil and I invite to the good.”

Main purposes behind Mohammad (PBUH) divine invitation

Main purposes behind divine invitation extended by Mohammad (PBUH) as quoted from him included the following:

- 1- “I am messenger of the Almighty God appointed to lead you to the Almighty God and denounce idolatry”
- 2- “In my divine mission showing compassion to parents (father and mother) is of paramount significance”
- 3- “I am appointed to free human beings from wrong doings, badness and ill-deeds”
- 4- “In my religion infanticide (filicide) in fear of poverty is forbidden and considered the most obscene”
- 5- “My religion is justice-based”
- 6- “Language and words produced by the human being reflect his spirit and morale therefore they shall be used in the right path and they need to express truth even if it is to the loss of the speaker”

7- “The human being is immortal and when he dies he is just transferred to another world therefore do good deeds in order to ensure your everlasting prosperity”

Growing impact of Quranic verses and strong logics behind Mohammad (PBUH) reasoning was based upon three major significant factors including: “Worship of one God, Denunciation of Idolatry (Towhid)”; “Promotion of prime objectives in communicating message of monotheism”; “Salvation and prosperity in the eternity of human being implying that the human body will cease to exist but his spirit will remain for good (Resurrection)”.

Such viewpoints attracted people to the social dimension of the divine invitation but at the beginning there were only a handful of people who followed Muhammad (PBUH), some other people started thinking of the Muhammad (PBUH) invitation and some who were among the aristocratic class stood against him. Those who opposed Muhammad (PBUH) had devoted themselves to the mundane values and pleasures as well as their own

interests; they considered themselves as superior over other people and lower classes of the society worthless. Therefore they started standing against Muhammad ^(PBUH) who, within the then ignorance-based social system, had voiced for justice in support of the deprived and who had called for justice-based distribution of wealth among the people based on the divine revelation, torturing and harassing his companions to the death.

Even some time later based on a treaty concluded between enemies of Muhammad ^(PBUH) and Mecca-based tribes they forced Muhammad ^(PBUH) and his companions out to an arid and dry valley known as the Abu-Taleb Valley for three years banning any transaction, association and marriage with them. Describing the harsh conditions imposed upon him and his companions Muhammad ^(PBUH) was quoted as saying: “I had always stones tied to my belly to ward off the hunger pangs and sometimes we had to distribute a single date among some people.”

It is worth mentioning that under these harsh conditions no future and no end to the sufferings of Muhammad ^(PBUH) and his companions could be imagined and no glimmer of hope could be witnessed. Therefore the three years of resistance and struggle against enemies of Islam under worst and harshest living conditions and constant hunger can only be justified by their firm belief in their faith in the rightfulness of the path they had adopted. When the enemies found out that the physical and spiritual torture did not affect the iron will of Mohammad ^(PBUH) they tried to seduce him. They asked his uncle Abu Taleb to say to Mohammad ^(PBUH): “If he abandons his invitation they will give him money, high positions and gold as much as he likes.” But Mohammad ^(PBUH) replied: “If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left on condition that I abandon this course, until God has made me victorious, or I perish therein, I would not abandon it.” But still the enemies were insisting on their idolatrous acts, promiscuity and injustice.

On the other side Mohammad ^(PBUH) was always emphasizing that: “Origin of the creation of such a vast and wonderful world and the creatures might not be limited to a stone, wood or any other limited physical object. And Allah is the creator of all and invisible because Allah is not limited to mundane world and it is your heart that shall lead you to Allah.”

There is no compulsion in religion

Although Mohammad ^(PBUH) was decisive in his divine invitation but he did not force any one to accept Islam during his life and he was always insisting that because the Almighty God has emphasized: “لا اكره فى الدين”, There is no compulsion in religion” he just have been appointed by the Almighty God to invite people to Islam which ensures everlasting prosperity of people and there is no force for this purpose. In the Holy Quran the Almighty God is also saying: “انا هديناه السبيل اما شاكر ا واما كفورا “ , We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful.”

Human dignity from the Mohammad (PBUH) viewpoint

Mohammad (PBUH) believed in the human dignity saying that the Almighty God has blessed the human being with wisdom, will and authority and in short everything in the world has been created for human being and in Quran it has been revealed that: "Everything has been created for the human being and he is the representative of the Almighty God on earth." Within the same respect Mohammad (PBUH) is saying: "And this does not apply to certain group of people and all have been honored by the Almighty God and sex, race, color or wealth do not make a person superior than the other and as revealed by the Almighty God only the pious people are closer to Him.

انا خلقناكم من ذكروا نثي و جعلناكم شعوباً
و قبائل لتعارفوا ان اكرمكم عند الله اتقكم"

We created you from one man and one woman and made you branches and tribes that you may recognize one another. Undoubtedly, the most respected among you in the sight of Allah is he who is more pious."

Therefore there is no material advantage like power, wealth and position for superiority of one human being over another.

Women from Mohammad (PBUH) Point of View

Mohammad (PBUH) was always emphasizing that the male is not superior over the female. This occurs while in the then Arabian Peninsula social system women had no place in the society and every man whose new born child was a girl felt very disgraced and tried to bury her alive. Even in some sects every female was considered as ominous and devilish creature and even some Christians believed that the female would lead them to wrong doings. Based on a number of documents, companions of such sects were even doubtful that women were human beings. In order to fight such ignorance Mohammad (PBUH) tried to highlight the blessings women carry and convey the divine message in this respect.

For the same purpose Mohammad (PBUH) was revealed with a Sura in the name of Woman (Sura An-Nisa) with the purpose to emphasize the real value of women and their rights within the society.

Mohammad also himself has been quoted in this regard as saying:

*The Almighty God shows more mercy to women than men

*I like three things in your world more than everything else: Women, perfume and praying (Namaaz)

*The best men are those who are the best husbands for their wives. And I am the best for my wives

*It is good for every man to buy presents for his wife and children and it is better if he gives the presents of his daughters first

*Every woman is a flower

*When you please your daughter you make a slave free

*The paradise is under the feet of women
As the matter of fact, Islam played its role as social, political and intellectual revolution developing all social traditions and norms especially in those

areas related to women.

Islam has considered some laws on women based on their physical and social capacities and in order to respect the female dignity and rights which were totally disregarded during the period of ignorance issued some orders even with respect to the matrimonial relationship. Based on these orders within every house the woman is solely responsible to foster children and to meet sexual needs of her husband and the man is not allowed to force his wife to work in the house and preparing food and working in the house are not among her duties and responsibilities. And if a woman is supposed to work in the house it must take place based on her agreement and satisfaction. Also if a woman breasts feed her children she can ask for compensation in form of payment or etc. On the other hand the husband is responsible to meet requirements of his wife in the matter of clothing, housing and food and also he needs to respect his wife as an independent human being and if his wife enjoys an independent income he is not allowed to make use of

her income. Mohammad ^(PBUH) provided the woman with a valuable personality which is needed to be respected and enjoy all human rights, equal to those of men, given the fact she symbolizes the divine education and she is responsible to bring up the children of the human beings and by extent the whole society. Mohammad ^(PBUH) was treating his only daughter Fatimah ^(PBUH) so well and produced a valuable example for respecting the female population. Whenever Mohammad ^(PBUH) met his daughter he bent down and kissed her hands saying: “Your father is ready to die for you.” Whenever Mohammad ^(PBUH) returned from a journey firstly he rushed to see his daughter Fatimah ^(PBUH). He was always emphasizing: “Anyone who pleases Fatimah ^(PBUH) is in fact pleasing me and anyone who displeases her in fact is displeasing me.” But in our today world, under pretext of restoring women’s rights, women characteristics, human values and traits are disregarded in an extremist possible manner. Today the traits of women which include a set of talents

and capacities as well as physical and psychological requirements which differentiate women from men are denied under feministic approaches and views. And for the same purpose the relevant instrumental approach towards women which limits women's values to the material and physical ones abusing them as instruments to generate revenues, sell the products and meet men's lust for women by spreading culture of nudity and cultural promiscuity are used in the name of the so-called “women independence from men”. Within the same respect in certain societies women are forced to do very painstaking and hard jobs (men's jobs) and even they are forced to sell their bodies and do prostitution in order to produce further revenues.

Sublime teachings of Islam and Mohammad (PBUH) definitely warn women against sex abuse and nudity considering it as an insult to women dignity which would lead them to psychological abnormality and degradation and recommend them to adhere to their major role within the

family in fostering and bringing up pure generations. In this regard Mohammad (PBUH) stipulates: “women are like flowers and they have not been created to do hard and painstaking jobs”. Of course Islam has not advised women and men to seclusion and monastic life and not denied mundane pleasures. A famous quotation from Mohammad (PBUH) stipulates that: “There is no monasticism in Islam.”

Therefore Mohammad (PBUH) himself got married and encouraged the people to marry. His famous words in this respect as quoted include the following: “Marriage is my tradition. He who rejects my tradition is not of me.” He did not consider marriage (in order to meet the sexual needs) as an obstacle to promotion of spirituality and spiritual perfection of human soul. He believed that anyone who does not marry can achieve any success in ascending towards spirituality and the divine world. He was all Muslims to keep and maintain balance of all aspects of their lives. Out of his major recommendations to his companions was that “Every

Muslim shall maintain balance in all affairs of his life” denouncing ‘Ifrat (excess) or ‘Tafrīt’ (deficiency).” He considered abstinence as a tool for strengthening of the spirit in favor of good doings and against wrong doings and said as quoted: “Anyone who stays away from bad doings for forty days he will be blessed by divine wisdom and knowledge.” Islam is encouraging neatness and adornment and justice-based and balanced behavior in the right path and is persuading all human beings to adhere to their responsibilities and obligations. In this regard Quran says: “تعاونوا على البر والتقوى ولا تعاونوا على الأثم والعُدوان” Help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression.”

And if what has been said in Quran is obey and fulfilled goodness finds its place in the heart and it immunizes every one against evil and degradation. Islam is always advising human beings to the good character and attitude and Quran has praised Mohammad ^(PBUH), more than anything else, for his good character and behavior because Mohammad ^(PBUH)

was considered as the manifestation of good character and behavior. In Quran we read: “انك لعلي خلق عظيم”, And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character.” Now we refer to a number of examples on the same valuable traits of Mohammad (PBUH) as follows.

Mohammad (PBUH) and his anti-literacy campaign

One of the prime goals of Mohammad (PBUH) was to promote literacy among people. He was afraid of the wide-spread illiteracy among his people considering illiteracy as the major reason behind corruption, deviation and injustice. He was quoted as saying:

“طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم ومسلمه”, the seeking of knowledge is compulsory on every Muslim man and woman.”

He was even encouraging Muslims to acquire knowledge and science from Non-Muslim people in other countries: “اطلبوا العلم ولو بالصين”, Seek knowledge even though it is in China.” Or he was encouraging Muslim people to seek knowledge among pagans:

“خذ الحكمة ولو من المشركين؟”, Seek knowledge

even though from pagans or Non-Muslims.” In order to further encourage the literate people to further promote knowledge among the people he termed teaching as alms giving to other people : العلم صدقه ان يعلم المرء علما ثم يعلمه اخاه, the best alms giving for someone is to learn knowledge, and then to impart it to his Muslim brother.”

Knowledge was of paramount value for Mohammad (PBUH) so that he orders his companions to set free those war-captives who teach Muslims how to read and write.

Mohammad (PBUH) moral and behavior Sociability

Mohammad (PBUH) was cheerful and smiling when he was with other people and he was drawn to the more somber and thoughtful side when he was alone. He always was looking down and did not star at the eyes of other people. He was always first one to say hello to other people especially the children. He never stretched his legs while sitting among people.

He was associating with poor and needy

people and sharing his food with them and during eating never leant on the wall or anything else. He hated others standing up for him. When he arrived in a place he took the first empty seat. He did not interrupt speaking of any one while he was speaking and he did not speak too much. He was speaking fluently and calmly and he never insulted any one. Mohammad ^(PBUH) was always visiting ailing people. He was the best in cleaning his body and clothing. He washed his hair with Sedr herb and oiled it which covered his ears. He used musk and ambergris in order to make his body scented and smell good; to that extent that wherever he had passed smelt good for quite a time. He was advising people to pay for perfumes as much as possible. As a matter of fact Mohammad ^(PBUH) was spending his money for buying perfume and scent more than what he spent for his food. Tooth brushing is considered as one of the means for keeping ourselves healthy. Mohammad ^(PBUH) was giving high priority to oral hygiene and tooth brushing and accordingly his teeth

were always white and clean and he was encouraging people to do the same saying: “Make your mouth smell good by brushing your teeth.”

As much as he valued and adored a safe and sound spirit he valued a healthy and clean body and he has been quoted as saying: “Being clean and tidy is the sign of good people.”

Mohammad ^(PBUH) liked flowers very much. Imam Ali ^(PBUH) was quoted as saying: “One day Prophet Muhammad ^(PBUH), while holding roses in his hands, came to me and gave them all to me and said that they are the best flowers of the heaven.”

Muhammad ^(PBUH) has also been quoted as saying: “Whenever you receive a flower as a gift, smell and put it on your eyes.” Giving present to other people was of utmost importance for him and he was always saying that when you go on a travel on your way back you need to bring presents for your family even if the presents are just stones. He himself always accepted presents and gifts even it was just a sip of milk. Muhammad ^(PBUH) was so kind and always forgave

any ill-treatment or misbehavior towards him preferring forgiveness over revenge and he was inviting people to pardon other people's mistakes. As a matter of fact Mohammad (PBUH) was the symbol of forgiveness. The day when after years he and twelve thousands of his companions conquered Mecca and returned to this Holy city in response to the call made by one of his companions for taking revenge of people of Mecca for all their wrong doings he answered: "Today is the day of forgiveness and blessings." Mohammad (PBUH) addressed those who had exercised every kind of ill-treatment and torture against him and his companions and even killed some of his companions and now stood before him as the conquered individuals and said: "You tortured me and my companions in this city and you placed us under a harsh economic siege in Shabe Abitalib valley and you exercised your enmity to me and my companions. Now what shall I do to you?" In response people of Mecca asked for his mercy. And then Mohammad (PBUH) said: "انتم الطلقاء الي الله", You are all free, to face the Almighty

God.” And he pardoned all of them. This occurs while usually in any war the victorious side holds fire squads for the defeated one. But Mohammad ^(PBUH) as the symbol of mercy and forgiveness pardoned all his defeated and conquered enemies. He showed that power of the leadership shall remain in the service of all people of the society in favor of their evolution and the leadership shall not be victim to self-centrism and selfishness. On the great personality and character of Mohammad ^(PBUH), Leo Tolstoy the prominent Russian writer and philosopher says: “The great Islam’s Prophet is deserved to being respected and honored. His religion will pervade the world thanks to its agreement with the wisdom and intellect.”

Professor Will Durant, the American writer and historian also says: “If we evaluate this great man’s effect on people, we have to say that prophet Muhammad ^(PBUH) is one of the greatest men in the human history. He sought to raise the knowledge level and ethic of people who had become barbarized due to highly intensive warmth and drought

of desert. He attained such a success that is more than any other world reformers' success. We can hardly find a man who has fulfilled all of his religious causes. He succeeded since he believed in religion. He unified the infidel outspread tribes to organize the Ummah (a unified nation). He revealed a simple, vivid and strong creed with spiritualities based on bravery and self-esteem, more valuable than Judaism, Christianity and an old religion of Arabia. The next generation of the Ummah triumphs over enemies in 100 battles, created a great emperor during a century and in the contemporary age is a strong at dominates half of the world." force th

Treatment with children and orphans

Mohammad ^(PBUH) was very kind to children and always said: "Be kind and loving to your children and juniors." One day a group of children saw Mohammad ^(PBUH) and they gathered around him and told him: "Mohammad ^(PBUH), you did not give us our right." He answered: "what right you are speaking

of?” They responded: “You show kindness to your grand sons, Hassan and Hussein and you put them on your shoulders but have not put us on your shoulders yet.” Although Mohammad (PBUH) was Prophet of Islam and he was leading the whole Islamic community but he said to the children to climb on his shoulders one by one and he strolled them in Mecca. He had a particular attention to orphans in the society wherein orphans have always been humiliated advising people to care for orphans and accept their guardianship. In addition to the Quranic revelations in this respect Mohammad (PBUH) stipulated: “One who brings up orphans will be with me like the two fingers of a hand.”

Piety and faithfulness

Mohammad (PBUH) had got himself rid of unnecessary things of living. He was sitting on a straw mat and he had a pillow filled with palm fiber. His food mainly included barely bread and date and he never had enough food for three consecutive days. And it was quoted

by his wife that sometimes no food had been cooked in the kitchen for a whole month. He was riding his horse or any other animal used for riding without saddle and he himself was always mending his clothing and shoes and milking his goat. He believed that the world is the place for hardship and harsh efforts because he was revealed by the Almighty God that:

“لقد خلقنا الانسان فى كبد”, Certainly we have created man to be in distress.” Or in another verse it is stipulated:

“فان مع العسر يسرا”, So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief” that is saying the human being can find relief only in the next life. This has been mentioned two times in Quran which is indicative of the emphasis laid by the Almighty God that the world is the place for growth of spirit in order for it to be prepared for the next life. Mohammad ^(PBUH) always was saying to his companions that it is the hardship which would lead to growth of spirit of the human being. He also added: “الفقر فخري”, Poverty is my honor.”

He was advising his companions to help

poor and needy people. Mohammad ^(PBUH) valued unity, coexistence and kindness among people and he was encouraging the people to go and visit their relatives, neighbors as well as patients and help the poor and the needy. He even was always visiting non-Muslim ailing individuals. Quran, the Divine Book, which has been revealed to Mohammad ^(PBUH), is considered as a divine source for promotion of friendship and brotherhood among people. All sublime ethical teachings of Mohammad ^(PBUH) are based upon the same approach. Here we refer to a number of Quranic verses and recommendations with the same respect as follows:

1- Backbiting:

لَا يَغْتَاب بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا. اِيْحِبْ اٰدَکُم
ان ياکل لحم اخيه ميتا فکر همتوه “

And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?

2- Jealousy: Denouncing jealousy among people the Almighty God says that seek the divine shelter (the Almighty God) in fear of jealousy.

3- Selfishness: In the eye of Quran

selfishness is a scoundrel and vicious feature which give rise to other vices. In every part of Quran selfishness due to various motivations including power, wealth and beauty has been denounced. And Quran says that this vicious feature is always followed by enmity and hostility.

In many verses of Quran leveling false accusation, lying, gossiping and mocking people have been forbidden because they give rise to enmity among people and all those acts which promote kindness and compassion among the people (like honesty, forgiveness, clemency and mending relations between two individuals or two nations) have been termed as imperative. Even if, telling a lie which has always been denouncing in Islam would mend relationships between two people it would be permitted.

Once Mohammad (PBUH) said to his people: “Every one of you who do the following are of exalted dignity and status before the Almighty God:

a-To forgive someone who did ill-deeds against you

b-To re-establish relationship with someone who had already severed his relationship with you

c-To show leniency and forbearance to someone who did something against you because of his negligence and stupidity

4- Drinking wine (alcoholic drinks):
Mohammad ^(PBUH), inspired by the Quranic verses, considered drinking wine (alcoholic drinks) as the cause for loss of the mind and urged the people to avoid drinking (wine). He said: “The Almighty God has made locks for evil and made drinking the keys to these locks.”

Migration (Hejrat)

Mohammad ^(PBUH) was trying to develop people of Mecca inviting them to get developed from outside and inside (towards spiritual perfection) always avoiding and denouncing stillness and degradation.

When, after 13 years, the leaders of Qureysh became disappointed of preventing Mohammad ^(PBUH) revolutionary invitation they decided to murder Prophet of Islam at night. These

people were the same who had inflicted torments against Mohammad (PBUH) and his companions for 13 years. But the Almighty God made Mohammad (PBUH) aware of the intrigue of his enemies through an Angel and commanded him to leave Mecca by night. Accordingly Mohammad (PBUH) called Ali (PBUH), his loyal follower and the first one who had paid allegiance to the Prophet, and disclosed the plot to him and told him: “Are you ready to lie in my bed instead of me?.” Ali (PBUH) responded: “And then you will be safe and protected?” And Mohammad answered: “Yes I will be in divine safe hands.” Then Mohammad (PBUH) left Mecca for Yathreb, located within 400 kilometers of Mecca. The enemies rushed towards house of Mohammad (PBUH) and his bed with drawn swords in their hands, but to their surprise, they found Ali (PBUH) in his place. They asked Ali (PBUH): “Where is Mohammad (PBUH).” Ali (PBUH) responded: “Had you assigned me to watch him?”. Immediately they went after Mohammad (PBUH) but he took refuge with a cave within a mountain near Mecca.

By the will of the Almighty God, the entrance of the cave was blocked by a spider's web and some wild pigeons laid eggs in a nest at the entrance. The people who were after Mohammad ^(PBUH) traced the footprints of the Prophet of Islam to the cave and when they saw the web and the pigeons they said to themselves: “The spider and pigeons would not have made their homes there if there had been anyone in the cave. Also, if the web had been there from before, it would have been damaged if someone had entered the cave. So nobody has entered the cave even for a few years.” Therefore they left and Mohammad ^(PBUH) was saved. A few days later he left the cave for Yathrib. Because Mohammad ^(PBUH) had sent his representative to Yathrib two years ago people of this city were quite prepared to accept Islam. When he entered the city each tribe, which he passed through, desired the honor of his presence and trying to take the harness of his camel and take up his abode with them. After some time all companions of Mohammad ^(PBUH) migrated to Yathrib and name of this city was changed into

Medinat ul-Nabi (Medina) , meaning “the City of the Prophet of Islam”. The first thing Mohammad ^(PBUH) did in Medina was to build a place (mosque) for Muslims to gather and say their prayers.

Establishment of peace and reconciliation in Medina

After having settled in Medina Mohammad ^(PBUH) invited people of Medina who had been in quarrel and wrangle for so many years to make peace and he could establish friendship and kindness between all people of Medina and even he ordered all Muslims to live in peace with the Jews residing in Medina and said to his companions: “Jews are free to accept Islam or not. There is no difference between Muslims and Jews because Islam considers all human beings from any race or religion equal before the law within an Islamic state and in the light of Islam all individuals are entitled to grow, become prosperous and I, as the Prophet of Islam, am seeking prosperity and well-being of all people.”

Wars waged against Prophet of Islam

War is one of the major characteristics of every society irrespective of the culture, language, sect or religion. Even animals are equipped with their own defensive tools in order to defend themselves against their enemies. Islam believes that conflicts and disputes among human beings are inseparable from their nature and essence. The Holy Quran attributes the major reasons behind conflicts and wars among human beings to their aggressive approach, ignorance, rudeness, ungratefulness, disdainfulness and their obedience to the evil. Every reasonable human being denounces war, its violence and its destructive impact. It is in the light of peace and tranquility that human being can ascend towards the prime goal of the creation. According to Mohammad^(PBUH) religious and theological differences among human beings cannot justify wars and conflicts and companions of different religions and sects can live together in peace and respect each other's rights as he himself lived in peace with Jews and

Christians in Medina and did not force them to accept Islam. As Mohammad (PBUH) was revealed by the Almighty God in Quran: “O’ Ahlol Kitab (Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians) let us cling to the rightful word which is shared among us and which connects us to each other.”

In another verse of Quran we read:

وَبَشِّرِ عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ
أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ
Those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allah has guided, and those it is who are the men of understanding.»

Therefore if we go through whole life of Mohammad (PBUH) we can see during 10 years of his life in Medina more than 40 wars were imposed upon him and his companions in this holy city. And neither of these wars was waged by Muslims and even after he escaped from his enemies in Mecca the infidels continued harassment and torment against his innocent companions confiscating their small properties and on the other hand planned to impose economic embargo against Medina preventing

export of food to this city. One of leaders of infidels, named Abu Jahl, in a discourteous letter to Mohammad (PBUH) warned him to prepare himself for the attack by Qureysh. After Mohammad (PBUH) received the letter he was revealed by the Almighty God saying: “Those who are exposed to attack and aggression can defend themselves. And the Almighty God will assist those who have been displaced from their houses and cities for their faith in the Almighty God.”

The army of Mecca set out to Medina and waged a war better known as the “Battle of Badr” in the second year of the Hegira against the Holy Prophet of Islam outside Medina which ended with the victory of Mohammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions. However, one year after the Battle of Badr, the Meccans gathered another large army and marched towards Medina to annihilate Muslims, their religion, and their Prophet. When the Holy Prophet was informed of this, he gathered all the Muslims in the mosque and consulted with them on how the city could be defended and

whether or not it was appropriate to face the enemy outside the city. Many of his companions told him that they preferred to fight the Meccans outside the city so that no harm would come to their wives and families. Mohammad ^(PBUH) accepted this and hence a battle in which the Meccans were the assailants, broke out by the mountain of Ohod. More than 70 Muslims were killed in the battle including the paternal uncle Prophet, Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib whose dead body was dismembered by the enemy. When the Prophet saw such a condition of his uncle, he wept bitterly and felt lot of distress. But, later on when his uncle's murderer surrendered himself to him, he decided to forgive him.

There were other battles and wars which took place during Mohammad's 10-year stay in the city of Medina which were all defensive and aimed at solidifying the pillars of peace and tranquility. In all these wars, Mohammad ^(PBUH) adhered to a set of humanitarian principles and values such as protecting the rights of the innocents, women and children and

treating the prisoners with respect. As a matter of fact, those taken prisoner were encouraged to teach how to write and read to the Muslims. This way they were freed once their teaching was complete. Abu Aziz one of the prisoners of the Battle of Badr said: “Muslims took me prisoner and took me to Medina. On the way, several people were assigned to me by Mohammad (PBUH) to make sure that whenever and wherever we stopped I was given food and water. They treated me so kindly and respectfully that I became so ashamed of myself and what I had done to them before. Therefore, sometimes I would return the bread to them out of shame.”

Upon entering Medina, Mohammad (PBUH) signed a treaty of peaceful coexistence with the Jews of that city and announced that Muslims and the Jews are like one nation living together and that each could practice their religions freely. According to the treaty, Muslims and Jews would also help each other in case they were threatened by others. However and under various pretexts, the aforementioned treaty was

violated by the Jews and eventually they allied themselves with the pagan tribes of Mecca which ultimately resulted in the Battle of Ahzab. The Battle was won by the Muslims, therefore the Jews expected Mohammad ^(PBUH) to have them slaughtered for breaking the treaty of peace and collaborating with his enemies but since Mohammad ^(PBUH) was the Prophet of mercy and kindness, he forgave them.

That is why Bernard Shaw one of the greatest British writers and scholars said the following about him:

“If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam.”

“I have always held the religion of Mohammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of

Humanity.”

“I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Mohammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

Appointing his successor

After finishing the Last Pilgrimage (returning from Hajj) the Holy Prophet started for Medina. On his way, at ‘Ghadir Khumm’ the Voice from Heaven cried: “O Apostle! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people, surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people”.

Prophet Mohammad ^(PBUH) immediately ordered Bilal to recall the Muslims, who had gone ahead, who were behind and who were proceeding to their homes at

the junction, to assemble. The Prophet (PBUH) took Ali by the hand and said: “Whoever whose mawla (master) I am, Ali is his master, O Allah! Love him who loves Ali, and be the enemy of the enemy of Ali; help him who helps Ali, and forsake him who forsakes Ali.” Once again the voice from Heaven proclaimed: “This day have I perfected your religion and completed my favor on you and chosen for you Islam”. Hence, Ali (PBUH) who was the first to convert to Islam and was Mohammad’s best companion and friend for 23 years was chosen as the successor to the Holy Prophet, and all the Muslims who were present in that place made allegiance with him.

The last days of Mohammad (PBUH)

In the eleventh year of Al-Hijra and once he completed the Haj pilgrimage, the Prophet fell ill. He went to the mosque with a weak body and gathered all the Muslims and said to them: “since these are my last days, I would like to ask if there is anybody here whom I have

hurt in my life because if there is, I want to be punished for my doing right now rather than in the after-life”. Suddenly a man rose and said: “oh, Prophet! One day when you were riding a camel, you inadvertently hit me with your walking stick on my shoulder. Therefore it is my right to retaliate”.

Mohammad ^(PBUH) asked the man to come forward and retaliate and gave him a stick to do so. Those who were present in the mosque told the man: “don’t you see how feeble and weak Mohammad has become? Why don’t you show mercy to the Prophet of God?” But the man went closer to Mohammad ^(PBUH) and took his walking stick from him. Mohammad ^(PBUH) cried: “hit me” which prompted those who were at the mosque to weep. The man said: “but when you hit me, I was half-naked”. Therefore, the Prophet undressed his shoulder and repeated: “hit me”. Suddenly the man kissed the Prophet on the shoulder and said: “I never intended to retaliate. I just wanted to get a chance to kiss you on the shoulder so that I will be immune to

God's wrath on the Resurrection Day". Mohammad soon departed this life at the age of 63 in his house in the city of Medina and his pure body was buried there too".

During 23 years of his Prophethood he underwent countless hardships and sufferings but managed to change the so-called tribal and ignorant lives of the Arabs drastically. Actually, he replaced their system with a new social one. For example, he called the blind following of ancestors, "ignorance" and built a new Muslim personality which was independent from tribalism or affinity to a certain clan. He also denounced racism, nullified unjust orders, and attacked the misconducts that the ignorant Arabs used to took pride in.

Thanks to his Islamic teachings, the Holy Prophet of Islam founded his rule and social establishment on cooperation and collaboration between the state and the public. He always tried to accompany law and executive power with ethics and morality, set the conditions for ownership and tried to settle financial disputes and minimize people's social

problems. He also advised people to help the needy. That is why he made some taxes obligatory and some others optional so that wealth would be distributed more justly amongst the people of the society.

From the very beginning to the very end, nobody saw any contradictions between what he said and how he acted and even his enemies called him truthful and trustworthy.

His whole life was based on the avoidance of jealousy, greed, avarice, deception and embracing forgiveness, kindness, compassion, righteousness and living a modest, simple life. His rule was established on justice.

He himself emerged out of the poverty and made the poor respectable and cultured people. He was kind with his friends and never harbored any grudge against his enemies. In battle, he never drew his sword before his enemy did. His invitation to Islam was based on the three principles of “wisdom” (Hikmat), “good advice” and “rationality”. In propagating his religion he always

adhered to the motto of “لا اكراه في الدين” , There shall be no compulsion in [the acceptance of] the religion”, because what he cared about most was inviting people to Towhid (i.e. monotheism or the belief in the oneness of God).

He described the creator of the universe as “the one and only, who neither gives birth nor is born; the one who is alive and eternal; the one who is merciful and beneficent and is closer to us than the blood vessels in our neck, the one whose beauty is manifested everywhere. He is not in the heavens, or in the underground, or in courts of kings and he is not with the tyrants.”

He told people to hold themselves accountable for their actions and said to them: “My God tells me that our ears, eyes and hearts are responsible and they will be accountable for their actions after you die. And you will be rewarded or punished accordingly”.

One of the most salient aspects of his life was that he always avoided gold, wealth, power and all things material. In fact, nothing worldly ever caught his eye or amazed him. Actually, only the

things that brought him closer to God, made him overjoyed: “what do I have to do with this mortal world which is like a temporary shelter in a stormy day but doesn’t last long?”

The Holy Prophet of Islam told us that we are doomed to destruction and he urged us to realize this ourselves through rationalism. The Holy Quran also states that human beings have eternal spirits and talks about the afterlife which lasts forever and is permanent. Rationality, too, indicates that humans have individual spirits and that death is not the end of everything.

As a matter of fact, Islam believes that it is only the body that dies and death is an unavoidable process which separates our spirits from our bodies.

Naturally, this has been accepted by all human beings and the existing differences arise from different interpretations, for all humans are willing to live longer and try their best to stay alive. This is indicative of the fact that man seeks eternity intrinsically. But there are some who hold the idea that

life on Earth is eternal, whereas Islam tells us that just like man, this life is like a passenger who is only passing and transitioning from one point to another and, thus, is not everlasting. The Holy Quran looks at the cosmos the same way and believes that all creation is moving towards God Almighty.

In fact, the universe and this materialist world are like a huge ship sailing in the ocean of nature. This ship cannot keep sailing forever and has to drop anchor at a harbor. Similarly, our world will one day come to a halt at a place called “Dar al-Gharar” which is the Day of Resurrection and is the point where the creator and the created reach one another.

Therefore the Holy Prophet of Islam always said that “if you seek God’s kindness and the immortal happiness, you need to know that this life is short and mortal, therefore you shouldn’t pin any hope on it”. The Prophet didn’t limit his invitation and vocation to the people living in the Arab peninsula. As a matter of fact, he wanted his message to be universal. Hence, the Prophet

dispatched several representatives to rulers and kings of different parts of the world, each with a letter in which he invited them to become Muslims and submit to Allah’s faith. All these letters had the same purport, that is, the invitation to monotheism and Islamic fraternity.

Mohammad ^(PBUH) departed this life but the Holy Quran which was a collection of verses revealed to him by God Almighty was left behind to serve as a lantern of guidance for mankind. Today, all the Islamic scholars and luminaries believe that the Holy Quran which is now in the possession of Muslims is exactly the same Quran which was sent down to the Prophet.

Washington Irving (April 3, 1783 – November 28, 1859) an American author, essayist, biographer and historian of the early 19th century is quoted as saying that “all Qur’an’s verses are firm and full of content. So there is no consoling document available”.

The famous German philosopher,

writer, poet and scholar Goethe (who was voted the greatest German in 2011) had the following to say about the Holy Quran:

“As often as we approach the Quran, it always proves repulsive anew; gradually, however, it attracts, it astonishes, and, in the end forces admiration.”

Therefore, all the researchers and the men of knowledge and science refer to this heavenly book at least once in their lives for inspirations. Fortunately, the Holy Quran has been translated to all the major languages of the world and is at our disposal as a book or on the internet.



Fatimah, the Prophet's only progeny

The Holy Prophet had only one daughter, Fatimah ^(PBUH), whom he loved and revered so greatly in his life.

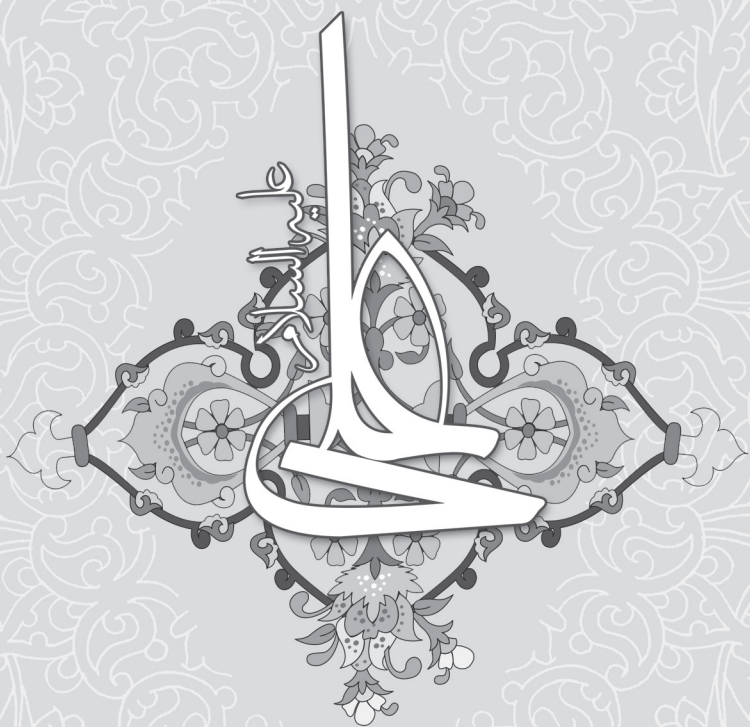
Fatimah ^(PBUH) was and is still the best and most perfect role model for other girls and women. She managed to shatter some of the harshest prejudices against the women of her time and show the world that women must have dignity.

She was a virtuous woman and the fruit and pinnacle of her father's piety. Her life was short but she always persisted on the ways of divinity and spirituality instead of materialism. She constantly tried to shield herself from carnal desires and all the objects and items connected with money and worldly possessions. Fatimah once said the following about her father:

“The worst of my people are those who are engaged in joys of this mortal world; the people whose only aim in life is to eat the best food wear the best clothes and only talk with no action.” Another characteristic of Fatimah ^(PBUH) was that she always preferred hunger to being full. She believed in living a simple and modest life but was also very hardworking and very adroit in doing various chores around the house. In other words, while Fatimah ^(PBUH) could easily live a wealthy and effortless life, she chose simplicity out of her own will. Actually, she spent all her money and possessions for the needy. Even on her wedding night and when she was approached by a poor person, she gave him her wedding gown as a gift. This shows how willing she was to make sacrifices. She was not only a devout and God-fearing lady but a usual contributor to social events and developments. That is why after her father she prevented deviations and seditions with her fiery speeches and sermons. Her husband’s name was Ali ^(PBUH) the one who had also been named the Prophet’s successor

by the Prophet himself. They had four children: two sons named Hassan and Hussein and two daughters named Zeynab and Omme Kolsum.

Fatima ^(PBUH)'s father had reared her in hardship and poverty but had given her his profound and amazing divine teachings. She was perfect in every way and was the symbol of the best daughter, best wife and best mother to her family. Fatimah ^(PBUH) died at a young age. Her departure made Ali ^(PBUH) infinitely sad and bereaved. He was so much in love with Fatimah ^(PBUH) and has such an elevated status in Islam that not only his friends and allies but also his enemies and even the non-Muslims have showered him with exaltations.



Ali (PBUH), the symbol of justice and purity

Ali (PBUH) was the cousin of Mohammad (PBUH) and was raised by him. He was a loyal pupil and was like good-natured brother to the Prophet and was the first person who believed in his Prophethood. Ali (PBUH) was always at the side of the prophet and made numerous sacrifices to spread his word and protect his life against the threats of the enemies of Islam.

He was perfect in every aspect. Even the most eloquent orators have failed to describe his greatness and adherence to the truth. Nobody has ever been able to comprehend the depth of his knowledge. It would be more than enough for man to discover only a small portion of vast knowledge. As a poet has said “Ali is everything and all the human values are found in him”.

The Christian Lebanese Author Khalil Jibran Khalil who was so enamored with the personality of Ali (PBUH), once he wrote about him: “According to my strong conviction, the son of Abu Talib

was the first Arab who chose for himself the affinity and neighborly relations with the Perfect Soul, was in love with it, and held communion with it. He was the first Arab whose lips made a resounding call of the song of the perfect soul that the people had never heard before. That was the reason why the people who were previously in stark ignorance were amazed to see the light that flowed from Imam Ali's (PBUH) eloquence.”

Shebly Shamil one of the forerunners of the school of materialism says: “Ali Ibn Abu Talib is the greatest of all greats and neither the west nor the east has ever seen anybody like him”.

Mikha'il Na'ima, a Christian author, poet and writer said about the greatness of Ali (PBUH): “the thoughts and behaviors of that great Arab have remained peerless. His way of thinking and conduct will forever be a part of human history”.

There are many scholars who have confessed to their inability to describe him. He was a person who was never intrigued by the attractions of this world and one who was never disheartened by

defeats and hardships. He was so free of all that was material that he said; “oh world! Go and deceive somebody else”. And he said elsewhere: “By God, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey God to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an Ant, I would not do it. For me, your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last?”

Nobody was closer to truth than he was and his vast knowledge was manifested in his book entitled Nahj al-Balagha.

Actually Ali (PBUH) was so knowledgeable that sometimes he even talked about some kind of hidden and arcane knowledge: “I am brimful of a hidden knowledge. If I share with you even some of the smallest secrets known to me, you will start shaking like a string in a deep well”. Or he would say to his companions: “ask me anything you like, for I know about the ways to heavens better than the ways to Earth”.

Ali (PBUH)'s piety

One can claim that the highest level of materialism can be found lurking in the government of a ruler because if the ruler seeks money and power then he can very easily take the treasury for himself or count on his palace as the safest place for promiscuity (if he embraces carnal desires). That is why the tyrants and world-seekers have no desire but to become rulers.

However, when Amir Al-Momenan (one of the titles of Ali which means “the Commander of the Faithful”) was chosen as the Caliph (Muslim ruler) and sat on the throne, the first thing he uttered was: “had there not gathered such multitude of supporters, and had they not exhausted all the arguments, and had there not been a covenant between God and the learned scholars [Imams] that [the Imams] shall not sit quietly watching the gluttony of the oppressor and the burning hunger of the oppressed poor, I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders [declined to accept the Caliphate] and

I would have continued to give the last of them the same treatment as the first one. You would then have realized that in my view [for me] worldly life is not better than the sneeze of a goat.”

Therefore the only thing that attracted Ali (PBUH) to Caliphate was the opportunity it provided to him to administer justice and right the wrongs against the oppressed. That is why even when he was the ruler of all the vast Muslim territories, he was still living a simple life and wearing worn-out clothes and eating only dry barley bread. He said: ”If I wished, I could have taken the way leading towards (worldly pleasure like) pure honey, fine wheat and silk clothes, but I cannot allow my passions and greed to lead me”.

He also said: “I swear by the God Almighty that I will restrain my desires so severely that they will be satisfied when I find a small piece of bread and salt to eat”.

He also said about the patches stitched on his dress: “Look at me, I have got so many patches on my dress that I feel ashamed to hand it over to somebody

for putting any more patches on it .Oh world! Keep away from me! You keep coming to me but I don't need you I have divorced you three times, so that you will never deceive, beguile or betray me.”

Ali ^(PBUH) has likened this world to a snake with a soft and smooth skin but with a venomous sting. He also told his companions that to him this world is “less valuable than a bone of swine in the hand of a leper” or “a worthless piece of leaf in the mouth of a grasshopper” because “this world is mortal and the people in it have no choice but to immigrate from it someday. Therefore try your best to make the most of it for the place which is eternal (i.e. the afterlife).”

Ali ^(PBUH) said about the censure of this world: “It begins with hardship and ends with decline. Judgment will be set for its legally gotten things and punishment will be sentenced for its ill-gotten things. If somebody is healthy in it, he will feel secure, and if he becomes ill, he will be sorrowful. If he becomes wealthy, he will be seditious and if he becomes poor, he will be sad. He

whoever runs for it will miss it, and he whoever disregards it will gain it. It will blind him whoever gazes at it and will teach him whoever looks at it properly.”

Ali ^(PBUH) described the Prophet as having the same attribute: “the peace of God be upon Mohammad ^(PBUH) who departed this life with an empty stomach. He was so devout and God blessed us by sending him as our leader. I swear by him that I have got so many patches on my dress that I feel ashamed to hand it over to somebody for putting any more patches on it.”

Ali's Justice

Ali ^(PBUH) is the symbol of justice. Without any doubt, once justice is mentioned by anyone his lovely name is conjured up in mind. George Jordac, a distinguished Christian scholar has written a 3-volume book entitled “Imam Ali: the Voice of Human Justice”.

Throughout his life and especially when he was the Caliph of the Muslims, Ali ^(PBUH) was always in love with justice and tried to base all his actions and thoughts on it. That is why justice was manifested

in each and every facet of his life.

Ali ^(PBUH) said: “I swear to God that if I were to spend from night to the morning upon thorns and if my hands and feet were to be chained in the day and I were to be pulled through the streets and the bazaars, I am more willing to have this happen than to present myself to God’s Court if I have committed an oppression against one of God’s creatures or if I have usurped the rights of another.”

Ali ^(PBUH) himself abided by the rules established by God and once told people: “By God, I have never asked you to do anything before I did it myself and I have never asked you to avoid anything before I avoided it myself.”

As mentioned earlier, Islam is the religion of justice and Ali ^(PBUH) is the symbol of all that is just. The following story reveals the spirit of social justice in an Islamic society:

Ali ^(PBUH), the Caliph of Muslims, was sitting at the Mosque of Kofa. A Jewish man passed by holding armor at hand. Ali ^(PBUH) recognizing the armor enquired as to where he had taken the armor from, for it had already been

stolen from the treasury? The Jewish man, trusting Islamic justice agreed to follow the Ali (PBUH) to court. The Judge of the court was the delegate of Ali (PBUH). Ali (PBUH) asked the Judge to ignore the background of both of parties and issue a just verdict. Utilizing the Islamic judicial methodology the Jewish man won the case against the Caliph of the Muslims and the man was not found guilty. Nevertheless, as soon as he left the court, his conscious smote him, and he was impressed by the Islamic justice. He then turned back to the court and confessed that he had found the armor somewhere on the way and was happy now to return it to the treasury. Upon his confession Ali (PBUH) gave him a gift and the man converted to Islam

Ali (PBUH) was always true to his word and would do and practice anything said verbally or recommended to others.

His brilliant letter to the ruler of Egypt, Maalik al-Ashtar is still considered a charter of justice and includes rights of all walks of life in the field of governance.

As it was said by George Jordac,

“although the epistle was written more than one thousand and four hundred years ago without any consultation with jurists or law universities, in some ways it is superior to the UN Charter of Human Rights”. (The text of the said epistle can be read in the appendix section of this book)

Ali ^(PBUH) was so firm and resolute in administering justice that as soon as he became the caliph he started reforming the social structures and made justice the most vital and essential component of the society.

He announced vociferously to the people who had flocked to him beseeching him to become their caliph: “I will take back from you what you might have unlawfully taken from the public treasury or what is not rightfully yours even if you have included it in your wives’ dowries”.

In all the messages and letters he wrote to his subordinates, he invited them to be pious, ethical and obey the orders and commands of God. He was so serious about such matters that he heavily reprimanded one of his appointed rulers

named Uthman Ibn Hanif because he had refused to dine with the destitute.

Ali (PBUH) is the only person in history with so many diverse and even conflicting characteristics wrapped up in one. In other words, he is the only person in history who was a hero and leader and at the same time a hardworking laborer who dug wells and aqueducts with his bare hands and in extremely hot weather and then gave the money he earned to the needy. Moreover, he was also a sage who thought wisely and acted bravely, a great politician who led the society resourcefully, a true role model of morality to his people, the best father to his children, and a loyal companion and peerless husband to his wife. That is why one needs to refer to his great book “Nahj al-Balagha” which is the most famous collection of his sermons, letters, tafsirs and narrations and has been translated to many languages.

However, a man with such a great personality was alone in his society and his justice was not tolerated. As a result, he was murdered at dawn with sword. It is said that the moment

the sword struck him on the head, Ali ^(PBUH) shouted: “by the God of Kaaba I attained salvation”. George Jordac says “Ali ^(PBUH) was murdered because of his truly exceptional justice”.

Yes! He was murdered at the age of 63 in the fortieth year of the Hegira by those who had been damaged by his justice.



The personality of Hussein Ibn Ali
(PBUH)

There have always been men to whom the luster and glitter of palaces have meant nothing; men who were not intimidated by the oppressive rulers of their time and hoisted the flag of freedom to keep the truth alive. Such men left no stone unturned in order to cut off the hands of the tyrants, topple the palaces of pharaohs and reduce the oppressors to blood and dust. Hence, they rose courageously and no matter what the cost, they didn't give up even if it meant sacrificing all they had.

Hussein Ibn Ali (PBUH) is the best of those who have risen against the tyrannical

rule of their time.

Hussein Ibn Ali (PBUH) is a very famous person in the history of humankind. He was the grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam who is known for his courage, sacrifices and fight against oppression. He created the epic of Ashura in a place called Karbala in Iraq because he and 72 of his loyal companions were brutally and unjustly martyred there. Today and after the passage of 1400 years, millions of people around the world mourn him and beat themselves on their chests and heads as a sign of their grief. Ashura might seem like an ordinary incident which happened in a specific time and place in which a very small group of people fought a large enemy that was armed to the teeth and lost their lives. But Ashura has been anything but ordinary. Actually, as time passes the more astonishing aspects of this uprising become known to us. The murderous enemies of Hussein Ibn Ali (PBUH) claimed victory but they have been known as the biggest losers in history because they have been cursed ever since and because they couldn't stop

the lofty cause of Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) for which he had started his uprising. As a matter of fact, the epic of Ashura originated from a way of thinking which, throughout history, has become a cause for mankind. Therefore it has been eternized because it went beyond a mere sectarian and ethnic conflict and turned into the symbol of man's struggles against oppression.

The goals behind Hussein Ibn Ali's uprising

The goals that Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) was trying to achieve are made clear on the Day of Ashura.

At the time of Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) some superstitions had become prevalent in the society that he intended to eliminate. All in all, the human rights and values had been neglected by the rulers of his time; the very same rights and values for which Mohammad ^(PBUH) had emerged and made countless sacrifices. Anyway, Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) was intent upon reforming the whole society.

Caliphate had become hereditary and in the hands of the aristocrats. Ethnicity

and familial ties had replaced merits and competence as determinants in distributing public wealth. Politically, the caliph didn't care about the individual or public rights of the people and was sycophancy was rife and rampant in his court.

Therefore, Hussein Ibn Ali (PBUH) rose in order to reform the society and to help Muslims regain the values and ideals for which the prophet strove so hard.

His uprising was like an armed insurgency. He was not an "outlaw". Actually, he was killed by the murderers who had received orders from the caliph to do so. An armed insurgence is started by a rogue or an outlaw. But Hussein Ibn Ali was different. He was the embodiment of kindness to others and his only goal was to save them from the ignorance and darkness which has engulfed them. That is why even in the morning of Ashura and when 30 thousands soldiers were ready to fight him, he told his companions: "we are not going to start the battle. We are only here to defend ourselves and our ideals". He then started to preach to the

enemy but suddenly the enemy hit him with a rock and broke his forehead and, hence, the battle started.

He was the noblest remaining member of the Holy Prophet of Islam but the caliphate led by a person called Yazid couldn't tolerate him and expected Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) to approve of all their corruption, lack of wisdom and oppression. But Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) didn't make allegiance with Yazid and stood by his own beliefs and ideals. On the day of Ashura one of his mottoes was “هيهات من الذله , Disgrace, how remote.”

He also shouted: “If the religion of my grandfather, Mohammad ^(PBUH) will not carry on unless I am killed, then so be it.” He uprising was aimed to be a struggle against oppression and was not afraid because he had much fewer men than his enemy did and was killed because first and foremost, he wanted to revive the great and true cause of Islam. Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) refused to fight but his enemies drew their swords on him and killed him and took his family prisoner. They didn't even observe the most basic human principles and values.

For example, they denied him and his companions water in the extremely hot weather of Iraq and, as the result, the children accompanying him were ceaselessly crying: “we are thirsty”. Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) had a 6-month-old baby who was dying because they had no water to give him. He put him in his arms and said to the enemies: “this baby is innocent. He is dying of thirst. If you think I am using him as a human shield, then take him and give him water” Suddenly and before he could complete his sentence 3-progned arrow hit his baby on the throat. Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) took some of the gushing blood from his son’s throat and threw it up in the air and said: “I can bear this tragedy because it will revive the God’s justice and religion”.

But his enemies showed him a brutality that was unprecedented and unheard of. For example, after beheading Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) and his companions, they attacked the tents of his family and set them on fire. Thomas Mamarick has said: “although our priests have been making people mourn the Jesus Christ

by reminding them of his Passion, the true passion (pun intended) is found is found amongst the companions of Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH). It is as if the Passion of the Christ is like a feather in front a huge mountain compared to what Hussein went through”.

Therefore, Hussein ibn Ali ^(PBUH) was not like a rogue outlaw who revolts and destroys everything on his path to achieve his goals. He had a lofty message which could not be tolerated by the corrupt caliph of his time therefore they killed him and his companions.

Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH)'s Irfan

Ashura has so many aspects which cannot all be delved into here. One of aspects has to do with Irfan or Islamic mysticism because Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH)'s movement is brimful of love, pure emotions Irfan. Actually, Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) and what he did on the day of Ashura is the ultimate sacrifice. To give life in the cause of Allah is the ultimate Sacrifice. Can we sacrifice our money we love so much for charity, our precious time for the education of

our children, can we sacrifice our false pride in our race, color, language, and national origin, and of our sect, and accept other Muslims as brothers and sisters? Hussein Ibn Ali did all these and he didn't ask for anything in return. "And do not call those who die in the way of Allah as "Dead", no they are living, only you do not see them. (2:154) Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) also taught us that living with peace and forces of oppression is wrong. If Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) had pledged allegiance to a tyrant ruler, he could have saved his neck, and would have most likely given a high post by the Caliph who would have allowed him to do his prayer, fasting, and other ritual acts of worship. But he was the grandson of a prophet who said, "One of the greatest jihad is to stand up to a tyrant ruler, and say a word of truth. " Therefore, Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) in one of his speeches on the way to Karbala said,

"To live with an oppressor is a crime in itself". This way Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH)'s cause and his struggle became immortal. Thomas Carlyle has relayed this about

the epic of Karbala:

«The best lesson which we get from the tragedy of Karbala is that Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) and his companions were the rigid believers of God. They illustrated that numerical superiority does not count when it comes to truth and falsehood. The victory of Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) despite his minority marvels me»!

American historian Washington Irving wrote: “the death of Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) is something about which that I don’t like to talk about too much, because of the magnitude of this tragedy. In the history of Islam, nothing more nefarious than this has ever happened. Though the assassination of Ali ^(PBUH) was a heavy grief for mankind, but, the fate of Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) was so horrible that it sends shivers down one’s spine. It was a terrible tragedy. Irving said that the spirit of the uprising will last forever. Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH) could have saved his life by surrendering to Yazid’s will, but, his responsibility as the leader of the Islamic movement did not permit him to recognize Yazid as the ruler. He made himself well-prepared

for any other tribulation to free Islam from the clutches of Bani Omayyeh. I know, Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH)'s soul will remain forever under the scorching sun and on the hot sands of Karbala. I honor you, O, my Lord, the shining lesson of bravery and sacrifice!»

German orientalist Marbin also had the following to say about Hussein Ibn Ali ^(PBUH):

«By sacrificing his dearest people, Hussein ^(PBUH) showed that oppression and cruelty are not permanent. He proved that truth and righteousness will defeat oppression and cruelty, no matter how strong the oppressors are».

Mahatma Gandhi (Indian political and spiritual leader) writes: “I learned from Hussein ^(PBUH) how to achieve victory while being oppressed. I also learned from him how to be wronged and yet emerge a winner. Let's mock death and not fear from it in the fight for the liberation of our homeland. I brought nothing new for the Indian people. I only presented the outcome of my understanding from the personality of the hero of Karbala. We have no way

but to follow the lead of Imam Hussein (PBUH) .”

Actually Ashura and the lessons learned from it have also played a very important role in the victory of the Islamic Republic of Iran because Imam Khomeini (May His Soul Rest in Peace) was a staunch believer in the Hussein (PBUH)’s movement and struggles against oppression. Even after the victory of revolution in Iran and during 8 years of war imposed on Iran, Imam Khomeini and people of Iran looked at Ashura and Hussein (PBUH) for inspiration. In one of his famous speeches, Imam Khomeini said: “ Hussein (PBUH) taught us all how to stand up and resist cruelty and the government of tyranny. Although he knew that the path he had chosen would cost him his life and the lives of his disciples and kin’s and they would all be sacrificed for Islam, he also knew the consequences that without his uprising, Yazid and his men would distort Islam and present it to the people in a perverted form because they did not believe in Islam from the beginning; and they resented the rightful authorities and

were jealous of them. In addition, Imam Hussein's example taught us all that his is the true path in all history, - do not mind the inadequacy of numbers. It is the quality that counts not quantity. It is the quality of the jihad of numbers that triumphs....”

Selected verses from the Holy Quran

من عمل صالحا فلنفسه ومن اساء فعليها (جاثيه/15)
(15) If any one does a righteous deed, it ensures to the benefit of his own soul; if he does evil, it works against (his own soul). In the end will ye (all) be brought back to your Lord.

ان الله لا يامر بالفحشاء (اعرف/28)
Allah never commands what is shameful

ان الله يامر بالعدل والاحسان (نحل/90)
(90) Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin,

and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.

يا ايها الذين امنوا لا يسخر قوم من قوم عسي ان يكونوا خيرا منهم ولا نساء من نساء عسي ان يكن خيرا منهن ولا تلمزوا انفسكم ولا تتنازوا بالالقاب بئس الاسم الفسوق بعد الايمان ومن لم يتب فلولئك هم الظالمون (حجرات 11)

(11) O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter are better than the (former): Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.

لا تقربوا الزني انه كان فاحشه وساء سبيلا (اسراء 32)
(32)Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).

يا ايها الذين امنوا انما الخمر والميسر والالزام رجس
من عمل الشيطان فاجتنبوه (مائده/90)

(90)O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper.

احل الله البيع و حرم الربوا (بقره/275)

(275)Those who devour usury will not stand except as stand one whom the Evil one by his touch Hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury," but Allah hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (The offence) are companions of the Fire: They will abide therein (for ever).

يريد الله ان يخفف عنكم و خلق الانسان ضعيفا
(نساء/28)

(28)Allah doth wish to lighten your (difficulties): For man was created Weak (in flesh.)

ولا تركنوا الي الذين ظلموا فتمسكم النار (هود/113)
(113)And incline not to those who do
wrong, or the Fire will seize you;

لقد خلقنا الانسان في كبد .ايحسب ان لن يقدر عليه
احد (البلد /4)
(4)Verily We have created man into toil
and struggle. Thinketh he, that none
hath power over him?

Selected quotations from Mohammad
(PBUH)

قال رسول الله(ص):
انكم لن تسعوا الناس باموالكم فسعوهم باخلاقكم
Verily you cannot attract people
to yourselves with your money
possessions, therefore try to do so with
your good temper

الا اخبركم باشبهكم بي خلقا؟قالو بلي يا رسول الله قال :
احسنكم خلقا و اعظمكم حلما و ابرءكم بقرا بهته و اشدكم
حبا ل اخوانه في دينه و اصبركم علي الحق و اكظمكم
للغيظ و احسنكم عفوا و اشدكم من نفسه انصافا
The best and most virtuous people
in God’s eye are those who are good-
tempered, have great patience, kind to

their family, kind to other Muslims,
most staunch in their belief, powerful in
swallowing their wrath, and those who
are forgiving

الشديد من غلب نفسه

The mighty are those who can contain
their carnal desires

احب عباد الله انفعهم لعباده

Those who are most useful to others are
the ones who God loves the most

العبد مع من احب

You are at the level anything that you
love

من كان له قلب صالح تحننا لله عليه

Anyone with a pure heart will be favored
by God

باعدوا بين انفس الرجال والنساء فانه اذا
كانت المعايينه و اللقاء كان الداء الذي لا دواء له

Separate the men and women who are
not related to each other because if they
have illegitimate sexual intercourse
with each other, a plague will befall
your society

ما بني بناء في الاسلام احب الي الله من التزويج
No bond is more precious in Islam than marriage

سائلوا العلما خاطبوا الحكماء وجالسوا الفقهاء
Ask questions from those the knowledgeable, talk with the wise and consort with the poor

لا رهبانيت في الاسلام
Islam does not recognize celibacy and asceticism

طلب العلم فريضة علي كل مسلم فاطلبوا العلم من مظانه و اقتبسوا من اهله لانه يرفع الله به اقواما فيجعلهم في الخير قاده تقتبس اثارهم ويهتدي بفعالهم و ينتهي الي رايهم

It is a must for any Muslim to seek knowledge. Therefore go to any place in which you will learn something because God Almighty grants superiority to nations if they become knowledgeable and places them in good situations. If knowledgeable people become the leaders of the society their conduct, behaviors and wisdom will serve as the guides to the whole society to solve problems

Selected quotations from Ali (PBUH)

اولي الناس بالعفو قدرهم علي العقوبه

Those who forgive easily are superior to those who punish severely

العفاف زينه الفقر و الشكر زينه الغني

Chastity is the virtue of those who are needy and gratefulness is the virtue of those who are rich

المراه ريحانه ليست بقهرمانه فدارها علي كل حال
واحسن الصحبه لها ليصفوا عيشك

A woman is like a flower not a hero for difficult chores. Therefore, treat her gently and with kindness so that you will be happy in life.

اذا اجلت في يومين من عمرك فاجعل احدهما لادبك
لتستعين به علي يوم موتك

If you are informed that you will be alive for only two more days, you should spend the first on acquiring ethics so that you can use them for your death on the second

Ali's Order (Letter) to Maalik Ashtar

When Ali ^(PBUH) appointed Maalik Ashtar Nakhaeei appointed Maalik as Governor of Egypt issued and sent an exquisite and outstanding letter to him which deals with the duties and obligations of rulers, their chief responsibilities, the question of priorities of rights and obligations, dispensation of justice, control over secretaries and subordinate staff; distribution of work and duties amongst people,...In In his letter to this brave warrior of Islam, Ali ^(PBUH) stipulates:

order you, Maalik, always to keep the fear of Allah in your mind, to give priority to His worship and to give preference to obeying His Commands over every other thing in life, to carefully and faithfully follow the commandments and interdictions as are given by the Holy Book and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) because the success of a man to attain happiness in this world and in the next depends upon these qualities, and a failure to achieve these attributes brings about total failure in

both the worlds.

I order you to use your head, heart, hands and tongue to help the creatures of Allah because the Almighty Allah holds Himself responsible to help those who sincerely try their best to help Him. Allah has further ordered you to keep your desires under control, to keep yourself under restraint when extravagant and inordinate yearnings and cravings try to drive you towards vice and wickedness because usually your 'self' tries to incite and drag you towards infamy and damnation unless the Merciful Lord comes to your help.

You must know that a good and virtuous man is known and recognized by the good that is said about him and the praise which Allah has destined him to receive from others. Therefore, make your mind the source and fountain-head of good thoughts, good intentions and good deeds. This can only be attained by keeping a strict control on your desires and yearnings, however much they may try to incite and coerce you. Remember that the best way to do justice to your inner self and to keep it out of harm

is to restrain it from vice and from things which the ‘self’ inordinately and irrationally desires.

Maalik! You must create in your mind kindness, compassion and love for your subjects. Do not behave towards them as if you are a voracious and ravenous beast and as if your success lies in devouring them.

Remember, Maalik, that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have; they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than that of yours, they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that human beings are inclined to, they commit sins, indulge in vices either intentionally or foolishly and unintentionally without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect Allah to show mercy and forgiveness to you.

Maalik! You must never forget that if you are a ruler over them than the caliph

is the ruler over you and Allah is the Supreme Lord over the caliph.

Never say to yourself, “I am their Lord, their ruler and all in all over them and that I must be obeyed submissively and humbly” because such a thought will unbalance your mind, will make you vain and arrogant, will weaken your faith in religion and will make you seek support of any power other than that of Allah . If you ever feel any pride or vanity on account of your sway and rule over your subjects then think of the supreme sway and rule of the Lord over the Universe, the extent of His creations, the supremacy of His Might and Glory, His Power to do things which you cannot even dream of doing and His control over you which is more dominating than that which you can ever achieve over anything around you. Such thoughts will cure your mental weakness, will keep you away from vanity and rebellion (against Allah), will reduce your arrogance and haughtiness and will take you back to the sanity which you had foolishly deserted.

Take care never to think of bringing

yourself at par with Allah, never to think of matching your power with Him and contesting His Glory and ever to pretend that you possess might and power like Him because the Mighty Lord will always humble pitiless tyrants and will degrade all pretenders of His Power and Might.

So far as your own affairs or those of your relatives and friends are concerned take care that you do not violate the duties laid down upon you by Allah and do not usurp the rights of mankind, be impartial and do justice to them because if you give up equity and justice then you will certainly be a tyrant and an oppressor. And whoever tyrannizes and oppresses the creatures of Allah, will earn enmity of Allah along with the hatred of those whom he has oppressed; and whoever earns the Wrath of Allah loses all chances of salvation and he has no excuse to offer on the Day of Judgment.

You must know, Maalik, that the people over whom you rule are divided into classes and grades and the prosperity and welfare of each class of the society

individually and collectively are so interdependent upon the well-being of the other classes that the whole set-up represents a closely woven net and reciprocal aspect. One class cannot exist peacefully, cannot live happily and cannot work without the support and good wishes of the other.

Amongst them there are the soldiers of the army of Allah who defend His cause, the next class is that of the secretaries of the State to whom duties of writing out and issuing special or general orders are assigned, the third group is of the judges and magistrates to administer justice, the fourth is of officers who maintain law and order and guard the peace and prosperity of the country. Then there are common men, the Muslims who pay the taxes levied by the government, and non-Muslims who pay the taxes levied by the government, and non-Muslims who pay tribute to the State (in lieu of taxes). Then comes the class of men who carry on various professions and trades and the last but not the least are the poor and the have-nots who are considered as the lowest class of the society. The

Merciful Allah has fixed rights and duties of each one of them. They have been either mentioned in His Book or explained through the instructions of the Holy Prophet (s). A complete code of them is preserved with us.

As far as the soldiers are concerned, they are by the commands of Allah a fortress and stronghold to guard and defend the subjects and the State. They are the ornaments of the ruler and the country. They provide power and protection to the religion. They propagate and preserve peace among mankind. In fact, they are the real guardians of peace and through them good internal administration can be maintained. The upkeep and maintenance of an army depends upon the taxes collected by the State out of which Allah has fixed for them a share. With this amount they provide for their requirements, maintain themselves and their arms in sound position to defend the religion and the cause of justice.

The army and the common men (common citizens who pay taxes or tributes) are two important classes, but in a Welfare State their well-

being cannot be guaranteed without proper functioning and preservation of the other classes, the judges and magistrates, the secretaries of the State and the officers of various departments who collect various revenues, maintain law and order as well as preserve peace and amity among the diverse classes of the society. They also guard the rights and privileges of the citizens and look to the performances of various duties by individuals and classes. And the prosperity of this whole set-up depends upon the traders and industrialists. They act as a medium between the consumers and the suppliers. They collect the requirements of the society. They exert to provide goods. They open up shops, markets and trading centres. Thus providing the consumers with their necessities, they relieve the citizens of the need of running after their requisites of life.

Remember, Maalik that Almighty Allah will not absolve any ruler from his obligations unless he sincerely tries his best to discharge his duties, invokes Allah to help him in their performance,

remains steadfast and diligent on the path of truth and justice and bears all this whether the performance of these duties is congenial or hateful to him.

So far as the army is concerned its chief and commander should be a person who is most sincere and faithful to Allah, to the Holy Prophet (s) and to your Imam who is most pious, who is famous for his forbearance, clemency and gentleness, who is neither short-tempered nor does he get angry quickly, who sympathetically treats sincere excuses and accepts apologies, who is kind and compassionate with the weak, but severe against the strong and the powerful, who has no vindictiveness which might lead to violence or any inferiority complex or weak-mindedness which makes them helpless and dejected. To find and select such persons you should have contacts with pious and noble families with high ideals and exalted traditions, families well-known for their bravery and courage and generosity and magnanimity. They are the people who may be considered as sources of magnificence and sublimity of character

and fountain-heads of piety and good deeds.

When you have found and selected such persons then keep an eye over them and watch them as parents watch their children so that you may find out if there appears any change in their behavior. Treat them kindly and sympathetically. Do not grudge highest considerations to them (if they rightly deserve) and do not refuse small mercies. This kind of treatment will create reciprocal tendencies in them and they will trust you and will be faithful to you. Under the impression that you have paid enough attention to their major necessities and wants, do not close your eyes to their minor requirements and needs because small favors often bear better fruits though careful attention to major necessities is very important. Among the military officers those should receive your highest respect and consideration who pay most attention to the needs of the soldiers under their command who come forward to help the soldiers with their personal means and property so that the soldiers may lead a

happy and contented life and may have full confidence of the future of their families and children.

If the soldiers are thus satisfied and are free from anxieties and care then they will bravely and wholeheartedly face the conflicts. Your constant attention towards the officers and soldiers will make them love you more and more.

The thing which should most gladden the heart of a ruler is the fact that his State is being ruled on the principles of equity and justice and that his subjects love him. And your subjects will only love you when they have no grievance against you. Their sincerity and loyalty will be proved if they gather around you to support your government, when they accept your authority without considering it an unbearable burden on their heads and when they do not secretly wish your rule to come to an end. So let them have as many justifiable hopes in you as they can and fulfill as many as you reasonably can. Speak well of those who deserve your praise. Appreciate the good deeds done by them and let these good actions be known publicly.

When you are faced with problems which you cannot solve or with a difficult situation from which you cannot escape or when uncertain and doubtful circumstances confuse and perplex you, then turn to Allah and the Holy Prophet (s) because Allah has thus ordered those whom He wants to guide. The way to turn to Allah is to act diligently according to the clear and explicit orders given in His Holy Book and to turn to the Holy Prophet (s) means to follow those of his orders about which there is no doubt and ambiguity and which have been generally accepted to be correctly recorded.

So far as dispensing of justice is concerned, you have to be very careful in selecting officers for the same. You must select people of excellent character and high calibre and with meritorious records. They must possess the following qualifications: Abundance of litigations and complexity of cases should not make them lose their temper. When they realize that they have committed a mistake in judgment they

should not insist on it by trying to justify it. When truth is made clear to them or when the right path opens up before them, they should not consider it below their dignity to correct the mistake made or to undo the wrong done by them. They should not be corrupt, covetous or greedy. They should not be satisfied with ordinary enquiry or scrutiny of a case, but should scrupulously go through all the pros and cons, they must examine every aspect of the problem carefully, and whenever and wherever they find doubtful and ambiguous points, they must stop, go through further details, clear the points, and only then proceed with their decisions. They must attach the greatest importance to reasoning, arguments and proofs. They should not get tired of lengthy discussions and arguments. They must exhibit patience and perseverance in scanning the details, in testing the points presented as true, in sifting facts from fiction and when truth is revealed to them they must pass their judgments without fear, favor or prejudice.

They should not develop vanity and

conceit when compliments and praises are showered upon them. They should not be misleading by flattery and cajolery. But unfortunately they are few persons having such characteristics. After you have selected such men to act as your judges, make it a point to go through some of their judgments and to check their proceedings. Pay them handsomely so that their needs are fully satisfied and they are not required to beg or borrow or resort to corruption. Give them such a prestige and position in your State that none of your courtiers or officers can overlord them or bring harm to them. Let judiciary be above every kind of executive pressure or influence, above fear or favor, intrigue or corruption. Take every particular care of this aspect because before your appointment this State was under the sway of corrupt, time-serving and wealth-grasping opportunists who were lewd, greedy and vicious and who wanted nothing out of a State but a sinful consent of amassing wealth and pleasures for themselves. Then come the officers of your State.

You must supervise their work. They must be appointed after a careful scrutiny of their capabilities and characters. These appointments must be made originally on probation without any kind of favoritism being shown or influence being accepted otherwise tyranny, corruption and misrule will reign in your State. While selecting your officers take care to select experienced and honorable persons, members of respectable families who had served Islam during its early days because these are usually of noble character and good repute. They are not greedy and cannot be easily bribed. They mostly have before them the ultimate result of their thoughts and their deeds. Keep them also well-paid so that they may not be tempted to lower their standard of morality and may not misappropriate the cash of the State which they hold in their trust and if after being paid handsomely they prove dishonest, then you will be right to punish them. Therefore keep a careful watch over their system of work and rule.

You may also appoint trustworthy

and honest men to keep a watch over the activities of these officers. The knowledge that they are being watched secretly will keep them away from dishonesty, misrule, malpractice and tyrannizing the subjects. Protect your government from dishonest officers. If you find any of them dishonest and your confidential intelligence service submits acceptable proofs of his dishonesty, then you must punish him. This may be corporal punishment besides dismissal from service and taking back from him all which he has dishonestly collected. He must be humiliated and must be made to realize the infamy of his wicked deeds. His humiliation and punishment must be given publicly so that it may serve as a lesson and a deterrent to others.

Be very careful of the welfare of the poor people. Do not be arrogant and vain against them. Remember that you have to take particular care of those who cannot reach you, whose poverty-stricken and disease-ridden sight may be hateful to you, and whom society treats

with disgust, detestation and contempt. You should be a source of comfort, love and respect to them. Appoint a respectable, honest and pious person - a person who fears Allah and who can treat them honorably, order him to find out everything about them and to submit a report to you.

Then treat these poor people in such a way that on the Day of Judgment you can plead your case successfully before Allah because of all classes of your subjects this class deserves more of your attention, sympathy and fair-deal.

Though every one of these poor persons deserves your sympathy and you will have to do justice to His cause to achieve His favor, yet you should pay more attention to young orphans and old cripples. They neither have any support nor can they conveniently come out begging. They cannot reach you; therefore, you must reach them.

Remember that the fulfillment of this obligation and duty is considered as a tiresome burden by most of the rulers but to those who desire to achieve His Blessings and to enter into His

Realm, even this work seems light and congenial. They bear it happily, dutifully and sincerely. They find pleasures in it and they believe in the promise made by Allah.

Out of your hours of work, fix a time for the complainants and for those who want to approach you with their grievances. During this time you should do no other work but hear them and pay attention to their complaints and grievances. For this purpose you must arrange public audience for them during this audience, for the sake of Allah, treat them with kindness, courtesy and respect. Do not let your army and police be in the audience hall at such times so that those who have grievances against your regime may speak to you freely, unreservedly and without fear.

You must take care not to cut yourself off from the public. Do not place a curtain of false prestige between you and those over whom you rule. Such pretensions and show of pomp and pride are in reality manifestations of inferiority complex and vanity. The result of such an attitude is that you remain ignorant

of the conditions of your subjects and of the actual cases of the events occurring in the State.

Be fair in dispensing justice. Punish those who deserve punishment even though he may be your near relation or a close friend and even if such an action may give you pangs of sorrow and grief. Bear such a sorrow patiently and hope for Divine reward. I assure you this will bear good fruits.

If on account of your strict measures people get suspicious of your behaving like a tyrant and oppressor, then come out openly before them and explain to them the reasons of your actions and let them see the facts for themselves and realize the truth. This will give training to your mind, will be an act of kindness to the subjects and the confidence thus reposed in them will make them support justice and truth while you will achieve the end you have in view of obtaining their support in the cause of truth.

“O’rulers! What are you thinking of? Your swords and your powers are there to shed blood of innocent people or consume properties of the poor.”

And you cannot achieve this unless you constantly remember that you have to return to Allah and unless His fear overcomes every other sentiment.

You must always try to remember the good and useful things done in the past, activities of a just and benign regime, good deeds done by it, good laws promulgated, instructions of the Holy Prophet (s), commands of Allah given in His Holy Book and things that you have seen me doing or have heard me saying. Follow the good actions and advice found therein. Similarly, follow carefully the pieces of advice contained in these orders. Through them I have tried to teach you all that can be taught about a good regime. I have done my duty towards you so that you may not go astray and your mind may not crave for base desires. If it does then you will have no excuse before Allah.

I beseech Allah that by His Limitless Mercy and by His Supreme Might He may grant our prayers, that He may lead both of us to the Divine Guidance of achieving His Pleasure, of successfully pleading our cases before Him, justifying

our deeds before man, of gaining good repute, of leaving good results of our benign and just rule with ever expanding prosperity and ever increasing welfare of the State and of meeting our ends as martyrs and pious persons, as our return is towards Him only.

May the peace of Allah be upon the Holy Prophet (s) and His chosen descendants.

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