THE MESSAGE
Ramzan-ul-Mubarak 1437 A.H.

The month of Ramadan is one in which the Qur`an was revealed.
OUR ONGOING PROJECTS

INSTALLED 5 DEEP HAND PUMPS AT THARPARKAR SINDH

Desert area of Sindh especially district Tharparkar is struggling with severe scarcity of potable water. Some places where deep wells were dug have become insufficient as the water level has gone down at such levels from where getting the water has become difficult and at some places the water has become toxic. In order to eradicate these serious issues; Alhamdulillah, recently Zahra (S.A.) Academy has installed deep hand pumps in 5 different villages of remote Tharparkar.

INSTALLED 58 HAND PUMPS IN SINDH, BALUCHISTAN AND PUNJAB

With the grace of Almighty Allah (S.W.T.), 58 more hand pumps have been added in Zahra (S.A.) Academy’s water project. These hand pumps are installed in different villages of district Larkana & Tehsil Naro - Sindh, Gandakha - Baluchistan and Bhakkar - Punjab. Alhamdulillah now more than 5,000 families will benefit from this facility.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Food for Thought: <em>Sayings of Imam Ali (a.s.)</em></td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>From The Editor’s Desk</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Your Daily-Life Questions Answered</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A Philosophical Perspective on the Uniqueness of the Quran</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Spring of the Holy Quran</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thankfulness for the Bounty of Life &amp; Perception of Ramadan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>An Everlasting Remembrance</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Imam Hassan Al-Mujtaba (A.S.) - A Brief Look into His Life</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Imam Ali (A.S.): The Imam of Humanity</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Splendor of Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My Daughter Turned Nine!</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>International Quds Day</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Reality of Eid</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Glorious Month of Ramadan</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Birth Anniversary of Imam Hassan (A.S.)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Imam Ali Ibn Ali Talib (A.S.)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>How Should We Promote Religion?</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Sayings of Imam Ali (A.S.)

1. Verily the friends of Allah are those who remember Him the most, are constantly grateful to Him and have greater patience in the face of His trials.

2. It is incumbent upon you to seek forgiveness and supplicate excessively in the month of Ramadan. By means of supplication, calamities are warded off from you, and by means of seeking forgiveness, your sins are wiped away.

3. The nourishment of the body is food, while the nourishment of the soul is feeding others.

4. Be good to your orphans, help your poor folk and be kind to the weak amongst you.

5. Fasting of the body means restraining oneself from food. Fasting of the soul means restraining the five senses from all the sins and emptying the heart of all the motives of evil.

6. Fasting of the heart is better than fasting of the tongue, and fasting of the tongue is better than fasting of the stomach.

7. Many persons get nothing out of their fasts but hunger and thirst.

8. When the virtues of a man are more than his vices, then that [person] is ideal, and when his virtues and vices are equal then he has protected himself [from destruction], but if his vices are more than his virtues then he is doomed.

9. Beware of making your tongue a medium for slandering your brothers, or of saying that which will become proof against you and a reason for harming you.

10. Extravagance is blameworthy in everything except in doing good deeds.
In the name of Allah, the all mercy, the ever mercy.

Brothers and Sisters,
Salam Alaikum.

The month of Ramazan has a lot in it for the humanity as explained and expressed in QuranMajeed and hundreds of Hadiths from Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.w.) and his pure progeny (a.s.). It is the best month for connecting with Allah (s.w.t.).

Some of the specialties of this month can be counted as follows:

- Fasting,
- Special Namaz,
- Special Duas in days, nights, sahar and iftar,
- Revelation of Quran Majeed,
- Shab-e-Qadr,
- Charity,
- Sawab of giving iftar to Momineen,
- Too much sawab for the recitation of Quran,
- The month of getting excused from sins.

And many more which will need pages and pages to be fulfilled.

It is important to remember that our stay in this world is too short; and due to this short period we cannot afford to waste even a single second.

But this world is so glittering that it makes us forget that we need to collect a very huge and special baggage for the life hereafter.

We need to;

- Build our character,
- Perfect our faith,
- Move towards perfection,
- Perform our religious duties in all aspects,
- Prepare for the hereafter.

For all this, Ramzan-ul-Mubarak is the best chance. If we concentrate, it will be clear for us that in normal days it is not easy to find time and connect to Allah (s.w.t.) the way we can do in this holy month. We wake up for sahar and that is an opportunity to offer namaz-e-shab and recite
duas related to sahar, specially dua Abu Hamza Thumali which is full of marefat and helps one understand what has to be done and what we need to stay away from in a beautiful way. Please do read its translation during the holy month.

Similarly, we get chance to recite duas at iftar and ask our wishes at that time, which is one of the rarest time for the fulfillment of our wishes. Then we get special opportunity of reciting Quran and at times its translation also. Shab-e-Qadr is another grand opportunity for getting closer to Allah (s.w.t.) and getting connected to Him in the best possible way.

In short, it is a grand-sale for acceptance of duas, connection to Allah (s.w.t.), repentance from sins and making new promises with Allah (s.w.t.).

We have prepared a special dua book named "Aamal for the month of Ramadan" for the benefit of Momineen so that they don’t have to search for all those duas and aamal which are to be done in this virtuous month. The main theme is from Mafatih-ul-Jinan of Marhum Sheikh Abbas Qummi with some modifications and additions.

I am sure Momineen shall get the most benefit out of it in the best possible way and pray for all those who support our projects and give us opportunity to serve the ummah in a different way.

May Allah (s.w.t.) bless them all and may Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.) accept our humble services towards Islam and Muslimeen.

May Allah (s.w.t.) bless you all. You are requested to recite Fateha for the marhumeen of these sponsors specially for our Shuhada.

May Allah (s.w.t.) give us tawfeeq to benefit maximum from this blessed month.

Long live Islam.

Long live Pakistan.

Editor,
Shabbir H. Maisami (Lakhani)
Your Daily-Life Questions Answered

Q.1: I work in construction and can’t work and fast at the same time because of the hot weather, poor health and physical weakness, so what do I do?

Ans.: It is not permissible to break the fast just for the weakness except if it harms you or causes an illness or if this work is necessary to secure your livelihood and leaving it will cause awkwardness, then there is no harm in drinking a necessary amount of water and do the qaza later in the year.

Q.2: Is it permissible to inject a needle and the nutrient during the state of fasting?

Ans.: Injecting a medicine or other via a needle in a muscle or the jugular vein does not invalidate the fast. Similarly using liquid drops in the ear or the eye does not invalidate the fast even if it caused an appearance of color or taste in the mouth. Also the fast is not invalidated by using the spray that facilitates the respiratory process if the substance goes in the wind wipe and not the food pipe.

Q.3: Kindly explain the ruling in relation to vomiting by a fasting person?

Ans.: If a fasting person vomits intentionally his fast becomes void, though he may have been obliged to do so on account of sickness. However, the fast does not become void, if one vomits forgetfully or involuntarily.

Q.4: Does the fast of a person remain valid if he quotes a narration of the Prophet (S) or Imam(a.s.) with the understanding that it is a true narration?

Ans.: If a person quotes something as the word of Allah or of the Holy Prophet or Imam with the belief that it is true, but realizes later that it is false, his fast does not become void.
A Philosophical Perspective on the Uniqueness of the Quran

Edited excerpts from the book, “Understanding the Uniqueness of the Quran” By: Ayatollah Shaheed Murtaza Mutahhari

Allah (s.w.t.) says in the Qur’an:

“And seek (Allah’s) assistance with Patience and Prayer; and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for those with full submission. Who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord and that unto Him they are going to return.” 2:45-46

The Three Distinguishing Characteristics of the Qur’an

Our study of the Qur’an acquaints us with three distinguishing characteristics of this holy book. The first distinguishing characteristic is the absolute authenticity of its source. That is, without the slightest need of any comparison between the oldest manuscripts, it is evident that what we recite as the verses of the Holy Qur’an, are exactly the same words presented before the world by Muhammad ibn ‘Abd-Allah (S).

The second characteristic feature of the Qur’an is the quality of its contents: its teachings are genuinely original and have not been adopted or plagiarized. It is the duty of an analytical study to prove this fact.

The third characteristic of the Qur’an is its Divine identity: its teachings have been delivered to the Prophet from a world that transcends his thought and mind. The Prophet (S) was only a recipient of this revelation and message. This is the result that we obtain from the study of the sources and roots of the Qur’an.

But the study of the sources of the Qur’an, and confirmation of its originality, depend upon the analytical study. So I
resolve to open this discussion with the analytical study of the Qur'an. We shall first see what is the subject matter of the Qur'an, what kind of problems are discussed in it, what type of problems have been given priority, and in what manner those subjects are presented in it.

If we are successful in our critical analysis, and acquire a sufficient understanding of the Qur'anic teachings, it will bring us to an acknowledgment of its principal aspect, which is the Divine aspect of the Qur'an, the quality of its being a Divine miracle.

**Conditions Necessary for the Study of the Qur'an**

The understanding of the Qur'an requires certain preliminaries which are briefly described here.

**The first** essential condition necessary for the study of the Qur'an, is the knowledge of the Arabic language. To acquaint oneself with the Qur'an without knowing the Arabic language is impossible.

**The second** essential condition is the knowledge of the history of Islam; since, unlike the Bible and the Torah, this book was revealed gradually during a long period of 23 years of the Prophet's life, a tumultuous time in the history of Islam. It is on this account that every verse of the Qur'an is related to certain specific historical incident called shan-inuzul. The shan-inuzul, by itself does not restrict the meaning of the verses, but the knowledge of the particulars of revelation throws more light on the subject of the verses in an effective way.

**The third** condition essential for the understanding of the Qur'an, is the correct knowledge of the sayings of the Prophet (S). He was, according to the Qur'an itself, the interpreter of the Qur'an par excellence. The Qur'an says:

“We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may
make clear to men what has been revealed to them ... “(16:44)

The Qur'an also says:

“It is He who has sent among the illiterate a Messenger from among them, to recite His signs to them, and to purify them and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom.” (62:2)

According to the Qur'an, the Prophet (S) himself is the exegetist and the interpreter of the Qur'anic text. Whatever has reached us from the Prophet, is of great help in our understanding of the Qur'an. For the Shi'ah, who believe in the infallible Imams (A) also, and believe that the Prophet (S) has transmitted everything he obtained from God to his spiritual successors (awliya'), those genuine riwayat (narrations of Holy Prophet) that have reached us through the Imams, possess the same degree of authenticity as those obtained directly from the Prophet (S). Accordingly, the authentic riwayat of the Imams are of great help to us in our understanding of the Qur'an.

A very important point to remember during the initial stages of study, is that we should try to understand the Qur'an with the help of the Qur'an itself; because, the verses of the Qur'an constitute a completely united integral whole, a coherent unified structure. If we single out any verse from the Qur'an and try to understand it in isolation from the rest of the Book, it would not be a correct method.

However, it is possible that we may happen to understand it, but the method is not recommended by caution, as certain verses of the Qur'an are explanatory for certain other verses. All great commentators of the Qur'an have affirmed this method; the infallible Imams also had approved of this manner of
interpretation of the Qur'anic verses.

The Qur'an has its own specific mode of discussing various problems. There are instances where if a solitary verse is studied without placing it in its proper context, it gives quite a different sense than when it is seen under the light of the verses dealing with a similar subject.

For instance, the specific mode and style of the Qur'an may be noticed from the distinction drawn between al-ayat al-mohkamat (the firm verses) and al-ayat al-mutashabihat (the ambiguous verses). There is a prevalent view regarding the mohkamat and the mutashabihat. Some people imagine that al-ayat al-mohkamat are such verses as whose meaning is quite simple and clear, whereas the meaning of al-ayat al-mutashabihat is cryptic, enigmatic and puzzling. According to this notion, men are only permitted to cogitate upon the meaning of al-ayat al-mohkamat, and al-ayat al-mutashabihat are basically inscrutable and beyond their understanding.

Here, the question arises, what is the philosophy underlying al-ayat al-mutashabihat? Why has the Qur'an put forward such verses that are incomprehensible? A brief answer to this question is that neither mohkam means "simple" and "clear", nor mutashabih means "ambiguous", "cryptic" and "enigmatic." "Ambiguous" and "enigmatic" are adjectives applicable to sentences that do not convey the meaning in a direct and simple manner, as are sometimes met in the writings of various authors.

We shall see whether there are actually any enigmatic and abstruse verses in the Qur'an. Such an assumption contradicts with the text of the Qur'an which clearly states that it is a clear & comprehensible book whose verses provide guidance and shed light. The core of the problem
is that some of the issues dealt with in the Qur'an are related to metaphysical matters and the transcendental world, which cannot be expressed in ordinary language.

Since the language of the Qur'an is the same as used by men, inevitably, the same diction is used for the most sublime and spiritual themes as we human beings use for earthly subjects. But in order to prevent any misunderstanding about certain problems, some verses have been devised in such a way that they need to be explained with the help of other verses. There is no way except this. For example, the Qur'an wanted to point out to a truth namely, seeing God through the heart; that is, to witness the presence of God by means of one's heart. This idea has been expressed in the following terms:

‘(Some) faces on the Day shall be bright, looking towards their Lord.’ (75:22-23)

**Uniqueness of the Qur'an**

The Qur'an makes use of the verb “looking,” and no other word more suitable could be available for the expression of the desired sense. But to avert the possibility of any doubt, the Qur'an explains in other place:

‘Vision perceives Him not, and He perceives all vision.’ (6:104)

The second verse makes the reader distinguish between two different meanings conveyed by the same word. In order to avoid any possibility of ambiguity in its exalted themes, the Qur'an asks us to check the mutashabihat against the mohkamat:

“He sent down upon you the Book, wherein are verses firm (ayat mohkamat) that are the essence of the Book.” (3:6)

Thereby, the Qur'an means that there are certain verses whose firmness cannot be denied and other meanings
cannot be derived from them, except their real ones. Such verses are the 'mother' of the Book (umm al-kitab). In the same way as a mother is the refuge to her child, or a cosmopolitan city (umm al-qura) is the center of small cities, al-ayat al-mohkamat are also regarded as the axes of the mutashabihat.

Al-ayat al-mutashabihat are, of course, to be cogitated upon and understood, but they are to be pondered upon with the help of al-ayat al-mohkamat. Any inference drawn without the help of the mother-verses would not be correct and reliable.

**Is the Qur'an Understandable?**

During the analysis and study of the Qur'an, the first question that arises is whether the Qur'an can be studied and understood. Has this book been introduced for the purpose of studying and understanding it, or whether it is just for reading and reciting and obtaining reward and blessing?

The reader, possibly, may wonder at raising of such a question. To him it may appear beyond doubt that the Qur'an is meant for the purpose of knowing and understanding it. Nevertheless, in view of various undesirable currents, which due to numerous reasons came into existence in the Muslim world regarding the question of understanding of the Qur'an, and which had an important role in bringing about the decline of Muslims, we shall discuss this matter in brief.

Regrettably, the roots of those degenerate and dangerous notions still persist in our societies. So I consider it necessary to elaborate on this topic.

Among the Shi'ah scholars of three or four centuries ago, there appeared a group which believed that the Qur'an is not a hujjah ("proof", meaning a legal source usable for
vindication). Among the four sources of fiqh that have been regarded as the criteria and standard for the understanding of the Islamic problems by Muslim scholars, i.e. the Qur'an, the sunnah (tradition), 'aql (reason) and ijma' (consensus of opinion), they did not recognize three of them. Regarding ijma', they said that it belongs to the Sunni tradition and they could not follow it.

Concerning reason, they maintained that reason can also err, and reliance on reason is not legitimate. About the Qur'an they respectfully asserted that the Qur'an is greater in station than being subject to study and comprehension by us humble human creatures. It is only the privilege of the Prophet and the Imams to ponder over the verses of the Holy Qur'an. We ordinary human beings have only the right to read and recite them. This group was that of the Akhbariyun or Akhbaris.

The Akhbaris regarded hadith and chronicles as the only permissible sources of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). One may be astounded to learn that in some of the Qur'anic exegeses written by these people, they mentioned only those verses about which the tradition existed, and refrained from mentioning other verses as if they are not a part of the Qur'an.

Such a kind of practice was an injustice to the Qur'an. This shows that a society that could neglect and alienate their own heavenly book and that too of the standard and stature of the Qur'an, is not at all up to the Qur'anic standards. Besides the Akhbaris there were other groups who also regarded the Qur'an as inaccessible to the ordinary human intellect. Among them the Ash'arites can be named, who believed that the knowledge of the Qur'an does not necessarily mean that its verses should be pondered over, but the real meanings
are the same as that the words literally communicate.
According to them, whatever we understand from the outward meaning, we have to be satisfied with it. We should not be concerned with the secret and inner meanings. It was quite natural that this sort of thinking regarding the Qur'an, very rapidly, gave rise to serious deviations and grave misunderstandings. Since they were forced on the one hand to the task of interpretation of the meaning of the Qur'anic verses, and, on the other hand, banished reason also from the realm of religious learning, as a result, they were forced to adopt merely vulgar and superficial interpretations of the Qur'anic verses.

On account of their faulty way of thinking, they deviated from the regular course of correct thinking, and thus gave way to distorted and faulty religious vision. As the result of this type of religious thinking, heretical beliefs like the personification of God the Almighty, and numerous other distorted ideas like the possibility of visual perception of God, His possession of physical characteristics etc., came into existence.

Opposing the group which abandoned the Qur'an, another group came into existence which used the Qur'an as the means to fulfill their selfish aims. They gave the Qur'anic verses such interpretations as were favourable to their selfish interests, and wrongfully attributed certain ideas to the Qur'anic text that were not at all in agreement with the spirit of the Qur'an.

In answer to every objection that was made against them, they said that none except themselves could understand the esoteric and secret meaning of the Qur'anic verses, and whatever they stated was based on the understanding and knowledge of the esoteric meaning of the verses.
The champions of this movement in the history of Islam consist of two groups: the first group are the Isma'ilis, who are also known as the Batinis (secret sect), and the other are the Sufis. Most of the Isma'ilis are found in India and some of them are in Iran. They had formed an empire in Egypt known as the Fatimid caliphate. The Isma'ilis are so-called Shi'ahs who believe in six Imams.

But all the Twelver Imami Shi'ah scholars are unanimous in the opinion that in spite of their belief in six Imams, the Isma'ilis stand at a greater distance from the Shi'ite faith than the non-Shi'ite sects. The Sunnis, who do not believe in any of the Imams in the same sense as the Shi'ah do, nevertheless are nearer to the Shi'ah than these “Six-Imami Shi'ahs.”

The Isma'ilis, on account of their batini beliefs and secretive practices have played a treacherous role in the history of Islam and have had a big hand in causing serious deviations in the realm of Islam.

Besides the Isma'ilis, the Sufis are also charged with distortion of the Qur'anic verses and had a long hand in interpreting them according to their personal beliefs. Here I present a specimen of their exegesis so that the extent and method of their misinterpretation may be known:

The anecdote of Ibrahim and his son Isma'il is described by the Qur'an as follows:

It occurred to Ibrahim (A) in his dream that he has to sacrifice his son for the sake of God. At first he is perplexed regarding such an instruction; but as he repeatedly has the dream reiterating the same theme, he becomes certain of the Will of God and decides to obey the Divine command. He puts the whole matter before his son, who also faithfully accepts his father's pro-
posal of executing the Divine command:

‘My son! I see in a dream that I am sacrificing you. See what you think.’ He said, ‘Father! Do whatever you have been commanded. If Allah wishes, you will find me to be patient.’ (37:102)

Here the aim is the expression of total submission and resignation towards the Divine decree. For the same reason the father and son are ready to execute the Divine command with whole-hearted purity and sincerity, but the execution of the command was stopped by the Will of God. But the same incident is interpreted by the Sufis in this fashion:

‘Ibrahim here represents intellect and reason (‘aql) and Isma'il represents the self (nafs); the Qur'anic anecdote is an allegory that hints at the attempt of reason to murder the human self (nafs).’

It is obvious that such interpretation of the Qur'an is like wanton treatment of it, and presents a distorted perspective of its teachings. It is in the context of such deviate interpretations of the Qur'an based upon personal or sectarian bias and interests that the Prophet (S) has said:

‘One who interprets the Qur'an according to his wish, should be certain of his place in hell.’

This kind of frivolous attitude towards the verses of the Qur'an amounts to the betrayal of the Qur'an and that too of a grievous degree. The Qur'an itself strikes a middle course between the stagnant and narrow-minded attitude of the Akhbaris and the unwarranted and deviate interpretations of the Batinis. It recommends a course of sincere, disinterested study and asks for unbiased and unprejudiced meditation over its meanings. Not only the believers and the faithful, but even the infidels are invited
by it to contemplate over its verses.

The Qur'an demands that its verses should be first contemplated over, before forming any adverse opinion against them. Addressing the opponents, it says, why they don't ponder over the Qur'an, what sort of hearts they possess, they are as if shut close and sealed:

‘Do they not contemplate the Qur'an, or are there locks on the hearts?’ (47:24)

The Qur'an also says in one of its verses:

‘[It is] a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs.....’(38:29)

That is, We have not sent the Qur'an to be kissed, embraced and put on the niche to gather dust, but for men to read and to contemplate about its contents:

‘..... And that those who possess intellect may take admonition.’(38:29)

The above verse and scores of other such verses emphasize the importance of contemplation in the Qur'an and interpretation of the Qur'anic verses, although not an interpretation based on personal caprices and bias, but a just, truthful and balanced interpretation free of all traces of selfish interests. If we try to comprehend the Qur'an in an honest and unbiased way, it is not at all necessary to solve all problems that we find in it. In this regard the Qur'an is similar to Nature.

In Nature, too, a number of mysteries have neither been solved yet, nor can they be solved in present conditions, yet are likely to be solved in the future. Moreover, in studying and understanding nature, man has to tailor his ideas in accordance with Nature itself. He is forced to interpret Nature in accordance with its reality. He cannot define Nature in terms of his own caprices and inclinations.
The Qur'an, like the book of Nature, is a book that has not been sent for a specific age and time. Had it been otherwise, all the secrets of the Qur'an would have been discovered in the past; this heavenly Book would not have presented its charm, freshness and vitality.

But we see that the possibility of contemplation, reflection and discovery of new dimensions is inexhaustible in the case of this Holy Book. This is a point that has amply been emphasized and clarified by the Prophet and the Imams.

In a tradition, it is related from the Prophet (S) that:

The Qur'an, like the sun and the moon, will present its movement and continuity; that is, the Qur'an is not static or monotonous.

In some other place the Prophet (S) has said that outwardly the Qur'an is beautiful and inwardly it is deep and unfathomable.

In 'Uyunakhbar al-Rida, from the Imam al-Rida (A), it is quoted that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A) was asked about the secret of it that as the time passes and the more it is read and recited, the Qur'an increases in its novelty and freshness day by day. The Imam al-Sadiq (A) answered:

‘Because the Qur'an is not for an exclusive age or for an exclusive people.’

The Qur'an has been sent for all ages and for all human beings. It is so composed that in spite of changes in knowledge, outlook and approach through various times and ages, it surpasses all learning and knowledge in all ages. While it encompasses mysteries and abstruse intricacies for the reader of every age, at the same time it presents a great feast of meanings and ideas that can satiate the needs of every time in accordance with the capacity of that particular age.
And the Messenger will say, "O my Lord! Surely my people have treated this Quran as a forsaken thing (1)".

Based on the verses of the Holy Quran, this is how the Messenger of Allah (S) will complain to Allah (SWT) about his nation. Since the Holy Quran is the manifest of personal and social life for all Muslims at all times, ignoring and abandoning it is a great oppression, the consequences of which affects the entire Islamic nation.

Although paying attention to the Holy Quran is necessary at all times, it is more emphasized at specific occasions, among which is the Holy Month of Ramadan. Imam Baqir (a.s.) has said, "Everything has a (period of) spring, and the spring of the Quran is the month of Ramadan (2)". Therefore, it is important that we expand our relation with the Holy Quran and strengthen it during this month, so that we will remain committed to it during the rest of the year.

The beginning point of establishing this relation is the recitation of the Holy Quran. Many Hadiths have been narrated mentioning the reward of reciting the Holy Quran. But what is exceptional is that the reward for reciting one single verse of the Holy Quran in the month of Ramadan is equal to reciting the entire Quran in other times (3). In fact, this is one of the unique merits of the month of Ramadan which the other eleven months do not have; hence, we can say the Holy Quran and the month of Ramadan have an extensive, unbreakable relation.

The second step, which is more important than recitation of the verses, is to understand and comprehend
the meanings of the verses of the Holy Quran. We need to realize what the Holy Quran says and what it asks. If a person understands the meaning of one verse by reading or attending lectures of teaching the Holy Quran, he would receive a great reward which is due to the knowledge he has gained about that verse. Once he has achieved this understanding of the verse, he has reached a level which is superior and more valuable than just reciting the Holy Quran. The reward for a person who recites the verses of the Holy Quran with reflection and comprehension in the month of Ramadan is undoubtedly greater than one who recites as much but without comprehension. Besides that, considering the atmosphere of this Holy month which is the spring of the Holy Quran, reflecting and comprehending the verses of the Holy Quran is extremely more valuable and beneficial.

The third level, which is higher than the two previous ones, is to act based on the Holy Quran; recognize its prohibitions and refrain from them, and fulfill its orders. Although the Holy Quran cannot be compared to anything, in order to make it more sensible, we can compare to a medical prescription. For example, imagine a person goes to a doctor and gets a prescription. The person takes the prescription to a drugstore. Now the question is that would reading the prescription, understanding it, and knowing the effects of the medicine be sufficient to cure the disease? The answer is that these steps are just preliminary actions; in order to cure the disease, one has to act according to the prescription of the doctor. The Holy Quran is similar; one has to fulfill its commands, refrain from its prohibitions, and act according to its guidelines in order to achieve salvation in this world and the Hereafter.
Thanks to God Who granted us the great bounty of life. Man must always be thankful, that is, he should appreciate every bounty. The basis of every bounty and its benefits is the life of man. When life ends, the file is closed. Thereafter, there is no more gain. If man knows the original and main bounty, the perfection of bounty, the benefits of them all turn to life. When your breathing is over, neither is there any remedy for your sins, which can be purified by repentance, nor your reward is going to increase. How true has the poet said: This breath which goes and which returns is a precious pearl.

How much valuable it is! He is stupefied. He understands in the grave. He realizes inside the grave. He breathes on dust. How many benefits were there in the world (during his life), which he could have obtained? At last, when he realizes he says, "My Lord, send us back that we may perform good deeds! My God! Now I have understood how valuable my lifespan was. How effective were the hours of my life! I have realized only now. O Lord! Make me return so that I may take full benefit of my life." It is then said to him, "Never. It is over. No more life now. Who has been given two lives that you may also be given? Everyone who has died has finished his role. Now you know what a great bounty God gave you that once again the holy month of Ramadan has been a part of your life?"

Recall those who were here last year but now they are beneath the earth, even those who were younger than you have met with some accident and died. Now that you and I
are here, how many times must we say, "Praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds. I want to be thankful." So thank God as Ramadan has arrived once again and we are fortunate to get its benefits. Firsts of all pray for the dead and know that special emphasis for prayers for the dead has been made during Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, the dead have more than usual hopes from the living that they (the living) may send supplications for them and also make charities for them. O Lord! Now that You have favored us and preserved us, give us good sense also so that we may thank You and may take full benefit from Your bounty. Let us now begin in the name of Allah and gain the benefits.

**Observance of fast and recitation of Qur’an**

The Holy Prophet said: Pray with purity of intention and sincerity of your hearts to God so that He may give you wisdom to fast in this holy month of Ramadan and to recite the Holy Qur’an. This should not be only verbal; your heart should really wish so. Truly, how greedy is your heart for wealth and passions. So you pray for these things. What should be the right thing is that you should pray with a pure heart: O Lord! Let me not be ill in the holy month so that I may fast for all the days of this month. O God! Make me recite the Holy Qur’an in this month. Some of our Imams used to recite Qur’an forty times during this holy month. All of you cannot do likewise. Recite and go on reciting Surah Tawheed and all those little Surahs, which you have learnt by heart. But, in any case, do not give up the recitation of Qur’an.

**Salawat, the Best Recitation**

The first and foremost benefit is by reciting Salawat as many times as possible, every day and every night, a thousand times in a sitting. Say, "O Allah, bless Muhammad and
the Progeny of Muhammad." After the ‘Asr prayer say a hundred times, "O Allah, bless Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad and hasten their reappearance." Doubtlessly, among all the recitals mentioned for Ramadan is the recitation of Salawat during the day and night of this month. Only one narration is sufficient to realize its importance.

Shaykh Saduq has, in his book Amali, narrated authentically that from the Asr time on Thursday, a number of angels holding books made up of heavenly silver and pens made of heavenly gold come down to the earth and they rise up by sunset on Friday. Their only job is to note down the Salawat recited for Muhammad and his Progeny.

**Explanation of Surah Hujurat is appropriate**

Now as regards the subjects in the Holy Qur’an (The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur’an was revealed), since this is the month of Qur’an, the topics of sermons are based on some holy Surahs, and one of them is Surah Hujurat, so that its subjects and revelations may be heard by all and everyone may benefit from them.

**Importance and Bounties of the holy month of Ramadan**

Ibn Babawahy has, through authentic chains narrated in Amali, that the Holy Prophet said, "O Muslims! Be glad. Be happy, as the Month of God has arrived. How nice. How has it come? With Mercy, with Forgiveness, with Bounties!"

Bounty means abundance, benefit-taking. What abundance can be higher than this? This holy month has lots of bounties. Every breath that is inhaled and exhaled has the reward of reciting: ‘Glory be to Allah’. O the one who fasts in this holy month of Ramadan! Your breathing in it is also worship. Moreover, your sleep is counted as worship.
Reciting of one verse of Qur’an in this month is like reciting the whole Qur’an in any other month. The offering of two units of obligatory prayer in this month is equal to offering seventy units in any other month.

**Organs are restrained from Prohibited deeds**

All efforts are aimed at strengthening of spirit and spiritualism and in weakening the forces of animalism. Doors of Satan are closed. Do you know how it is done? All these tongues are put under strict control. Right from the first night of the month of Ramadan, a believer does not say any wrong to another believer. Thus, he closes the door of hell. The tongue, which is the door of hell, is shut. One no more backbites anyone. One does not slander others. He does not spread rumors. He does not lie.

The eyes, which were the gates of hell, got closed since last night. One who fasts is restrained from all sins. He does not indulge in dishonesty through these eyes. He does not look at banned scenes. If it happened last night, it happened. Now it should not recur. Ears too are closed. They were also leading to hell and now they are sealed. Thus the gate of hell is locked. The feet which, God forbid, were moving towards prohibited places have also stopped.

I would like to talk about abundance. The holy month has many bounties. They are beyond men’s counting power. Just know this much that Imam Zainul Abideen says,

"Salam and greeting to you, O month of Ramadan!"

Salam to you O Eid of the friends of God!"

The Eid of the wise people is the holy month of Ramadan. The festival of those whose character is like animals, who are belly worshippers is the day when their animalitymul-
tiplies and gets perfected through eating and drinking and all kinds of merry making involving lust and passion. The character of such people is child-like. But what is the day of happiness for wise and intelligent people? It is when their spirit or soul becomes strong, not their belly or stomach. Belly filling, belly worshipping is the occupation of animals. I tell you, O man! However much you may give to your stomach you will not reach the level of a cow. The cow is cleverer than you. The more she eats, the more gratification she gets. After all, it is not this eating and sleeping to which man should give importance. This trend is animal-like. Man eats due to helplessness and compulsion. It is not, like a donkey or cow, an aim in itself. The eating must be only to fulfill the need, not gluttony.

**Month of wakefulness and self-realization**

By and by, you have missed yourselves. The month of Ramadan is for regaining yourselves, for reaching yourselves. Who are you? I mean, your spirit and soul, not your flesh and skin. This flesh and skin is a means of riding for you. Your reality, your true self is something else. It is a precious pearl. A siren is sent to you from the turret of the Divine rostrum. It reveals the Truth. During the month of Ramadan you close the road leading to animalism. You weaken inclination towards eating more, sleeping more, voluptuousness and excessive talking. Observing Ramadan honestly strengthens your spirit. It brightens your soul until, on the basis of knowledge and certainty, you say, "I witness that there is no god except Allah." You proclaim this with conviction, awareness and your knowledge of the Oneness of the God and... When does man's soul realize? When his spiritualism becomes strong and his trend towards animalism becomes extremely weak?
A full belly is not in harmony with spiritualism

Imam Sadiq has said, as mentioned in Furu al-Kafi, that the worst condition of man, in the sight of God is when the stomach of man is full to the brim. A belly full of spiritualism makes man perfect. A belly-filled gluttonous man is no different from a cow. (Indeed they eat like the cattle eat, and the Hellfire is their dwelling). Let us now move forward. The bounties of Ramadan are innumerable. So, I say, "O Muslims! Make prostration of thankfulness to God and recite, 'I thank you my God' that I did not die and got Ramadan once more. I obtained the Day of Joy for the friends of God. I got the month of God. I got the bounties of this holy and most precious month." Fasting during its days, rising earlier at its dawns, its prayers, its recitations, its charities, its remembrances and various kinds of good deeds. This month provides you every good opportunity.

Bonds of relationship with kinsfolk and Divine Mercy

The good deeds towards which you must pay more attention during this holy month are mentioned in the tradition of the Holy Prophet, "Do you want to attract God's Mercy? If so, then try your utmost to behave nicely and generously with your blood relatives. Join with them." This good deed can be accomplished in many ways. If your relative is poor, fulfill his needs; give him money. Make him your guest (host them). Who are such relatives? Father and mother, through whom you came into the world, then those who are your relatives through your mother and father, that is, brother, sister, cousins. Likewise look downward: Aunt, children of aunt. Take their care especially in Ramadan so that God also joins His Mercy with you.
The Prophet never refused to declare his devotion toward her. No one else could compete with her as the object of the Prophet’s high esteem. The time was passing year after year; however, the early years which were tied to her name was an exclusive period. During the time when Prophet Muhammad (S) was suffering harm from the infidels, there was a person who relaxed his mind, diminished the weight of his grievances, and caused him to forget his anguish. That person was none other than Lady Khadijah (S.A.), the faithful and respected lady who was the supporter and partner of Muhammad (S).

The smiles of Khadijah (S.A.) diminished the weight of the grievances of the Messenger of Allah (S); the love apparent in her face caused him to forget his pains and sufferings, and her faith-filled heart bestowed happiness on him.

Therefore, the presence of Lady Khadijah (S.A.) was an important factor in the life of the Prophet. She had a key role in the life of Islam, which was in the beginning of its growth at that time. The greatest threat Prophet Muhammad (S) faced in the beginning of his mission of prophethood was the economic blockade of Muslims. However, the property of Lady Khadijah (S.A.) was the key to breaking this blockade. She used to buy food for all the Muslims for several times as much as the real price until they passed the period of blockade safely, and the plan of the infidels of Quraish was defeated.

Prophet Muhammad (S) lived with Lady Khadijah (S.A.) for 25 years in the best manner.
and ultimate mutual agreement. Even after her death, the Prophet (S) used to reminisce about his life with Lady Khadijah (S.A).

Although Prophet Muhammad (S) had other wives after Lady Khadijah (S.A.), his heart always belonged to her.

But why was that?

It was because of the faith in Allah (SWT) and the testimony to His Messenger he had observed in Lady Khadijah (S.A.). On the other hand, Lady Khadijah (S.A.) had offered all her wealth in the way of Islam; yet, she had utmost respect, honor, and love towards Prophet Muhammad (S.A.).

Ibn Hajar, a prominent Sunni scholar, has narrated that:

"One of the distinctions of Khadijah (S.A.) was that she always respected the Prophet (S) and endorsed his statements both before and after his appointment to the prophethood." (1)

This love has become so obvious that one of the Arab Christian literary men (2) has described it as follows:

"Khadijah offered her love to her spouse; while she did not feel offering; rather, she felt like grasping love, kindness, and prosperity from him. She offered all her wealth to him; yet, she did not feel offering; rather, she felt like receiving guidance, which is more valuable than all treasures, from him..." (3)

In return for her emotions and feelings, Prophet Muhammad (S) acted the same and appreciated this love. Prophet Muhammad (S) spent the spring of his life with Lady Khadijah (S.A.), and when he became mournful upon her demise, he felt lonely and their separation was difficult for him.

As a result, he named the year of demise of Lady Khadijah (S.A.) and his beloved uncle, Abu Talib (A.S.) as the year of grief.
Prophet Muhammad's (S) admiration of Lady Khadijah (S.A.) is a lengthy topic which the historians and narrators of Hadith have mentioned in their books. Here, just as an example, we will quote a portion of it from Hazrat Aisha, one of the wives of the Prophet (S) after Lady Khadijah (S.A.). She describes the love of Prophet Muhammad (S) for Lady Khadijah (S.A.) as follows:

"I had never seen Khadijah; however, I envied her more than any other wife of the Prophet, because he used to remember her a lot."(4)

"The Prophet never came out of his house unless he had remembered Khadijah and admired her."(5)

"He never became tired of admiring her and asking Allah (SWT) to forgive her."(6)

"Whenever the Messenger of Allah (S) slaughtered a sheep, he ordered that it be sent to the friends of Khadijah (S.A.). Once, I asked him about the reason for that. He replied: "I also love the friends of Khadijah."(7)

Does not such a woman, who has grabbed the respect and love of the Prophet (S) during and after her life, deserve becoming eternal in the history, and that researchers make efforts to study her life and characteristics so that they would be inspired by her true beliefs, firm faith, and magnificent example?

Footnotes:
1- Al-Isabah, vol. 4, p. 275
2- Sulaiman al-Katani
3- Fatimah Al-Zahra, Watron Fi Qimd (An Arrow in Sheath), p. 112
6- SeirA'alam al- Nubala, vol. 2, p. 82
7- Al-Isabah vol., 4, p. 275
Imam Hassan Al-Mujtaba (A.S.)
A Brief Look into His Life

Source: www.roshd.org

Resemblance with Aaron:

After Imam Hassan (a.s.) was born (on 15th of the holy month of Ramadan), Lady Fatima (s.a.) asked Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) to give the child a name. Amir al-Muminin (a.s.) replied: "I won't precede Prophet Muhammad (S) in giving name to the child."

Imam Hassan (a.s.) was taken to Prophet Muhammad (S), when he recited Adhan in his right ear and Iqama in his left. Then he asked Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.): "Have you given him a name?"

Amir al-Muminin (a.s.) replied: "I won't precede you."
Prophet Muhammad (S) said:" I won't precede Allah (SWT) either."

So, Allah (SWT) ordered Gabriel: Muhammad (S) has got a new son. Descend to the earth, send him my regards and congratulate him. (Then) tell Him:

"The position of Ali towards you is similar to that of Aaron towards Moses. So name his sons as Aaron’s son."

Gabriel came to Prophet Muhammad (S) and offered Allah's (SWT) message.

Prophet Muhammad (S) asked:" What was his (Aaron's son) name?"

Gabriel replied:" His name was Shabbar."

Prophet Muhammad (S) said:" My language is Arabic."

Gabriel said:" Name Him Hassan."

So He was named Hassan, because the equivalent for Shabbar in Arabic is Hassan and the greater son of Aaron was named Shabbar.

The Prophet's (S) Love for Imam Hassan (A.S.)

The favour and attention of Prophet Muhammad (S) towards Imam Hassan (a.s.)
was obvious as in his birth
and naming and several other
cases, one of which is men-
tioned below:

Ibn Masoud narrates:"I heard
Prophet Muhammad (S)
saying:"Anyone who loves
me, shall love Hassan and
Hussain, because Allah (SWT)
has commanded me to love
them."

Accordingly, it is narrated that
once Prophet Muhammad (S)
was saying prayers, when
Imam Hassan (a.s.) was
sitting beside Him. As Prophet
Muhammad (S) prostrated,
Imam Hassan (a.s.) climbed
to his back. Prophet Muham-
mad (S) elongated the
prostration.

When he finished his Prayers,
the companions asked: "You
elongated the prostration
more than before, so we
suspected that you were
receiving revelation."

Prophet Muhammad (S)
replied: "I was not receiving
revelation, but my son (Has-
san) was on my back. Since I
didn't want to rush him down,
I elongated the prostration."

(Edited excerpts from Jala'
al-Oyun, by Allama Majlisi)

A Peace Treaty for an
Uprising

After the martyrdom of Amir
al-Mu'minin (a.s.), the Shiites
paid allegiance to Hassan ibn
Ali (a.s.) in Kufa, and he left
the city with the army his
father had gathered on the
last days of his life in order to
battle Mu'awiyah. He sent
Qays ibn Ibadah with twelve
thousand soldiers in advance
and moved towards Madaa’in
himself. On the other side,
Mu’awiyah and his army
settled close to Mosul.

One day, someone in the army
of Imam Hassan called, "Qays
ibn Ibadah is killed; run away!"
The army became mixed-up;
some people attacked the tent
of Imam Hassan (a.s.) and
even pulled the mat he was
sitting on, and one of the
revolutionaries stabbed Imam
Hassan (a.s.) in his thigh with
a dagger. In that situation, it
became obvious that it was useless to face the organized and obedient army of Mu’awiyah with such people.

After the martyrdom of his father, Imam Hassan (a.s.) faced a diversified and unfounded society. On one hand, the society had gone through consecutive battles of Camel, Siffin, and Nahrawan. On the other hand, the capital of Islam (Mecca and Medina) had missed a great educator for many years. The nations were filled with deceit misrepresentation, and the spirit of Islamic teachings was obliterated from the Islamic nations. The Islamic society of that day lacked a reliable prospect so that Imam Hassan (a.s.) would use the power of the people, raise them with a decisive order, and overthrow the usurping government. Therefore, even if this rising resulted in his death, his blood would have gone in vain, and there would have been no desirable and ideal effect for his blood.

Furthermore, the history shows that if Imam Hassan (a.s.) rose with the unprincipled army that accompanied him, he would not have been martyred as a hero, but would have been taken captive. As such, Imam Hassan (a.s.) would have not been martyred as a hero, just like the incident of Ashura; rather he would have been taken captive, and eventually been perished unknowingly. This would have been an enormous loss for the righteous party.

Besides that, if Imam Hassan (a.s.) rose, he would fail to execute plans which could eventually lead to a deep Shia movement. Thus, to interpret and explain the actions of Imam Hassan (a.s.) based on the political and religious jurisprudence, we say, “It was essential to give Mu’awiyah more opportunity.”

Based on that, Imam Hassan (a.s.) refrained from rising, and went on to train the hidden talents of people. He
began to spread the school of revolution through the most reliable social path, and established the background for the eternal movement of Ashura in the foundations of the society. This act of Imam Hassan (a.s.) automatically rejected weaknesses and brought the powers together. It made the losses due to dispersion more evident to the Shiites, so that they all would bow in front of the epic of martyrdom, if not became martyred as in Ashura; He did this so that Tawwabin (those who repent) would emerge; Zayd ibn Ali would rise; Yahya ibn Zayd would revolt and spread the movement to Sarakhs, Balkh, Haraat, Bayhaq, and Jozejan; the martyrs of Fakh would rise...; and so that this bloody torch would stand forever- the torch of the eternal epic of Ashura.

(Edited excerpts from “Imam in the Inner of the Society”, by Muhammad Reza Hakimi)

The Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and Politics

It has been narrated that someone asked Imam Hassan (a.s.) about politics, and he replied:

“Politics includes the observance of the rights of God, and the rights of the alive and the dead; The rights of God consists of doing what He has ordered and avoiding what He has discouraged; the rights of the alive consists of fulfilling the duties towards the religious brothers and not hesitating to serve the faithful, and being earnest toward the ruler until he is earnest toward the people, and to shout against him if he leaves the right conduct; But the rights of the dead consists of telling their positive traits and not mentioning their faults and sins for they have a God who will judge them.”

In the view of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) the true politics that should prevail upon the Islamic territories is a politics
based on common prudence, and it should seek to provide the means to spiritual and material social progress and to pursue its ideals.

Some of the most important goals that the family of the Prophet championed and is evident in the political conducts of Amir al-Mu'minin and Imam Hassan (a.s.) include:

1. **Justice:**

   Islamic politics, with all its concepts and peripheries, stands on the pillars of justice, and has an absolute inclination toward it, and concentrates all of its programs under its shade; to an extent to that if a ruler gets derailed from it he must quit; as Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) sacked a ruler because of the complaint of a woman called “Sudeh.”

2. **Straightforwardness and Honesty**

   The Islamic politics that the Family of the Prophet promoted is free from any hypocrisy and swindle. Politics, in the view of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) does not deceive the people with false promises and will not lead them to false hopes; however, in every plan it shows straightforwardness and honesty.

   Imam Hassan (a.s.) used the same true method too, and never resorted to means against the religion; he said to Sulaiman Sard in this respect, “If I thought for the world and worked for it and tried, Mu'awiah wouldn't be stronger and more effective than me.”

   Imam (a.s.) at the same time shows in this discourse that if he worked for this world he would become victorious; however, he loved the observance and the guarding of the Islamic rules more than any other Muslim.

3. **Meritocracy for the Rulers and Agencies**

   The politics of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) stands on the principle that the agencies of the
Islamic state should be consisted of the best people in having merits, piety, ability and power for statecraft, in order to fulfill common prudence, and to promote genuine justice and merits among the people, and be credible, and use the wealth of the society for the welfare of it.

4. Military Service

The politics of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) never forced the people to join military service for sending them to the battlefields; however, they were invited to Jihad and reminded that Jihad is a divine duty. In this case, if the person goes to Jihad he has obeyed the order of God. But if he sits in his house he has disobeyed God, nevertheless he should not be threatened. Although Jihad is compulsory in the religion and the faithful person should take part in it, but he should do it voluntarily. Imam Hassan (a.s.) in the battle with Mu'awiah observed this rule too. However, Bani Umayyah used force and terror to gather armies. If Imam Hassan (a.s.), too, used force to gather armies, and punished the disobedient and those whom he doubted, the outcome of the war would be different. But he didn’t do so, rather he invited the people to Jihad.

5. Financial Politics

The Islamic financial policy of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) was based on the expenditure of the common wealth for the common prudence and the regulation of the vital interests so that the shadow of wretchedness vanishes forever. They didn’t spend a coin in anyway except the common prudence.

If Imam Hassan (a.s.) did not follow this glorious path, and used the wealth of the Muslims, as Mu'awiah did, for the sake of the profits of the wealthy and powerful leaders of the tribes, Mu'awiah would never succeed. But Imam (a.s.) chose the safeguarding
of Islam and the future of it, and continued the path of the Prophet (S) and his father (a.s.); the path that did not accord with anything except the right way of Islam and observed the equal share of each person in the common wealth.

Yes. Politics, from the viewpoint of the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), never rested upon the bases of deception, hypocrisy, chaos and unreal methods. It rather rests upon a clear method in all programs and goals in order for the justice to prevail.

(Edited excerpts from “The Life of Imam Hassan (a.s.)”, by Hujjat al-Islam Baqir Sharif al-Qurashi)

The Words of Imam Hassan (A.S.)

Amidst the chaos of the everyday life, certain phrases like Brotherhood, Dignity, and Forbearance have lost their meaning. One might think those phrases belonged to a previous age and to another period of time. The age that a father would ask his son while he did not need to ask; and the son would reply while he knew the father already knows the answer. It was all so a time would come, when some exhausted souls like me, you, and us, would ponder upon their dialog and break the barriers of ambiguity to these strange words.

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) asked his son Hassan: O my son, What is righteousness?

Hassan Ibn Ali (a.s.) replied: O father, righteousness is to replace the bad things with good deeds.

What is Dignity?
To be good with relatives, and to remain tolerant of their cruel deeds.

What is Bravery?
To be chaste.

What is Lowliness?
To think of cheap things in life and to refuse giving even smallest belongings in charity.

What is Generosity?
To give away (in charity) before requested.

What is Cheapness?
To seek owns comfort and ignore one’s spouse.

What is Mercy?
To give and benefit others, whether we are in need and whether full.

What is Brotherhood?
To have devotion and loyalty in the time of hardship and peace.

What is Forbearance?
To control one’s anger and to keep resentment.

What is Wealth?
To be satisfied with what Allah (SWT) has given, no matter how small?

What is Poverty?
To greed for everything.

What is Abjectness?
To fear the truth.

What is Worthless Suffering?
To talk about something that does not benefit you in any way.

What is Greatness?
To give away (in charity) in your time of need and to forgive the bad deeds of others.

What is Wisely?
To take good care of what is given to you...

What is Great status?
To do what is beautiful and to refrain from what is ugly.

What is Providence?
To be very patient and to treat people with leniency.

What is deprivation?
To lose a benefit that had been granted to you.

What is Foolishness?
To rush in reaching opportunities before having them available, and to refrain from answering (to what one already knows). Nonetheless, silence is a great companion in most cases, no matter how eloquent of a speaker you are.

(Edited excerpts from "The Words of Imam Hassan (a.s.)" by Syed Hassan Shirazi)

* * * * *
Allah says in His Glorious Book: "And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants." (02:207).

The Martyrdom of Ali (a.s.)

In these days, we commemorate the memorial of the martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.), recalling all the pain that the Muslims were inflicted with, as they saw their Imam, who filled their lives with thought, knowledge, Jihad and openness on all their issues, lying dead after Ibn Muljam had hit him with his poisoned sword...

In this memorial, we also recall the feeling of the Commander of the Faithful, in his last moments, who – despite his pains and injuries – was so happy that his dream was about to be realized, which is to meet Allah and acquire His satisfaction, after he had devoted himself to the message and fulfilled his role, and when Ibn Muljam hit him, he cried out loud: "In the name of Allah and [believing] in the religion of His Messenger, I have won by the Lord of the Kaaba."

Thus, it is a moment of victory, in which he flash-backed his life that was never indulged into this world, knowing that he addressed it several times:

"O world, O world, get away from me! I have divorced you thrice and now there is no return for you."

Actually, he only took from this world what he told his companions that he has taken:

"Know that your leader has left this world only in two old clothes and who had taken only two pieces of bread for food, but you are not able to
act as such. Yet, assist me through piety, efforts, cleanliness and walking on the true path."

We might not be able to act the way he did, but, truly, we can help him by abstaining from what is forbidden and dedicating all our efforts for the sake of the good. He devoted his entire life for the sake of Allah and to raise His word and defend His Messenger (S) and the Message that he believed in and devoted himself for.

**The first in worshipping Allah and Jihad**

Imam Ali (a.s.) was among the first to worship Allah and obey Him, which was clear throughout his life, for he was the first to adhere to Islam and the Messenger of Allah (S) was the only one who performed prayers before him.

He was born in the Holy House of Allah and he was the only one who had this honor... Allah also honored him with the fact that the Messenger of Allah (S) took care of him and undertook the mission of educating his mind, morals and his relation with his Lord... This is what he pointed to when he (a.s.) said:

"I followed him (S) wherever he went, like a baby-camel following its mother."

Imam Ali (a.s.) took most of the Messenger's time, asking him questions and inquiring about issues. On his part, the Messenger made sure to make the Imam ready for the big role he will have to play in the future, which he expressed as follows:

"The Messenger taught me one thousand fields of knowledge of each a thousand door is opened to me."

Therefore, the Messenger of Allah honored him by making him the gate to the city of his knowledge, for he (S) said:

"I am the city of knowledge, and Ali (a.s.) is its gate."

Imam Ali (a.s.) shouldered the responsibility of the message...
with the Messenger of Allah (S), defending it and willing to sacrifice everything for its sake.

Actually, he stepped into the real experience for the first time when the Messenger of Allah (S) called him to sleep in his place in bed at night; the day the Messenger decided to leave Mecca. He (S) knew that the Quraish tribe has set a scheme to assassinate him whilst sleeping, and they prepared forty men to carry out this mission. At the time, Imam Ali (a.s.) did not hesitate; not even for a second, and he accepted the Messenger's request despite the lurking danger, although he was still young. He did not even ask him about what might happen to him; rather, he was concerned about the safety of the Messenger (S), for he knew that the safety of the message depends on the safety of the Prophet (S); thus, he (a.s.) asked him (S): "If I sleep in your place, will you be safe?"

Allah revealed an Ayah, which He attributed to Imam Ali as a medal of honor, for he did nothing for personal interests, but rather he dedicated his entire life for the sake of Allah, and he was worthy of this medal:

"And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants." (02:207).

And what devotion could be better than this devotion [to the extent] that Allah cherished the traits of Ali before His angels.

In the battlefield, Imam Ali (a.s.) was the champion of Islam, and it was he who led the army in every battle that the Messenger of Allah (S) embarked on, although he was not trained more than the other knights, but his secret lies in that he used to fight armed with his faithful belief in Allah and genuine relation with Him that he (a.s.) said about the door of Khaybar:
"By Allah, I did not uproot the door of Khaybar with bodily strength, but a celestial power supported me."

In the battle of Badr, he was at the forefront and it was he who killed half the number of the polytheists on his own, while the Muslims took part in killing the other half. Throughout the battle, Imam Ali (a.s.) had his hand on the sword and his eyes on the Messenger of Allah (S).

When it seemed that the Muslims were about to be defeated in the Battle of Uhud, he (a.s.) supported the few that stood unwavering, defending the Messenger of Allah and his message, and willing to sacrifice himself to safeguard the Prophet; thus, Gabriel revealed:

"There is no brave youth except Ali, and there is no sword which renders service except Zulfiqar."

In the battle of Ahzab, Imam Ali was at the head of the army that the Prophet (S) said:

"The whole faith stood out to fight the whole polytheism."

When Imam Ali (a.s.) killed Amr ibn Abd al-WudAl-'Amiri, the Prophet (S) said:

"The strike of the sword of Ali on the day of Al-Khandaq is superior to the worship of all men and jinn."

Actually, recalling the heroism of Imam Ali (a.s.) cannot be completed without mentioning Khaybar, whose door was uprooted by his hands, having been granted another medal by the Prophet who said:

"Tomorrow, I will give the banner to a man who loves Allah and His Prophet, and whom Allah and His Prophet love; he attacks and does not flee, and he does not stop until Allah establishes victory on his hands."

**The caller for dialogue**

Although Ali was ready for fighting with his sword, he was also a pioneer in calling for dialogue, for he considered the dialogue with the other as a solid basis and that
engaging in a war takes place in exceptional cases, for he said:

"I did not put off fire even for a day except in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me and see my light with their weak eyes. This is dearer to me than to kill them in the state of their misguidance, although they would be bearing their own sins."

Imam Ali (a.s.) never regarded the war as a goal; thus, he always made sure not to initiate fighting unless it was imposed on him.

Actually, Imam Ali (a.s.) regarded Islam as the compass on the basis of which he takes his stands; thus, he resorted to peace, preserving his strength and ability, when the Islamic interest necessitated so. When the caliphate was taken from him and noted that fighting those who deprived him of the caliphate will create sedition that will benefit those who wish harm for Islam, he said: "I will keep peace as long as the affairs of Muslims are secured and the only injustice falls on me."

The supporter of the wronged

The right was the ultimate goal of Imam Ali (a.s.), and the Messenger (S) said: "The right is with Ali and Ali is with the right."

This inflicted upon him an unbearable suffering, for people wanted him to mix between the right and falsehood at a time he saw the right as right only and the falsehood as absolute falsehood, without a middle ground lying in between them. This attitude he adopted left him with no friends.

Therefore, he saw that the caliphate has a certain value if it was used as a means to make the right prevail and falsehood fail. This is what he revealed to Ibn Abbas who visited the Imam and saw him fixing his shoes, so the Imam asked him: "What do you
think will be the price of this shoe?"

Ibn Abbas answered: "It would be worthless."

The Imam (a.s.) said: "By Allah, to my mind this torn shoe is more valuable than my ruling over the people if I do not enforce the right and eradicate the falsehood."

And for the sake of this right, he had to put up with all the traitors, hypocrites and renegades.

Imam Ali (a.s.) devoted himself for the sake of supporting the weak and the oppressed, for he said:

"The weak among you is dignified until I bring him back his rights, and the strong among you is weak till I force him to restore the rights of others."

He also had his door wide open for the claimers of right and the seekers of justice. He made no boundaries between himself and people, and he always used to say to them:

"Do not talk to me as you talk to tyrants. And do not think that I can tolerate words of truth or calls for justice. He who cannot tolerate words of truth or prepositions of justice, it will be more difficult for him to abide by them."

In the face of ignorance

He loved the people and he lived with them, and he used to say:

"Would I be satisfied with myself to be called Amir Al-Mu'mineen "the Commander of the Faithful" while I do not share with them the calamities of time and be an example to them in the rough living?!"

We can see how Imam Ali dedicated himself for serving people and he never hesitated to use his money, all his money, for this purpose. He also served people at the level of the thought and the creed, seeking to transfer them from the world of darkness and falsehood into the world of light and right... He saw that ignorance is a flaw that ought
to be eradicated, and perhaps, dear brothers and sisters, the most dangerous problem that Imam Ali (a.s.) encountered was ignorance which was pointed against him, but he fought back by patience and wisdom...

He spared no word, stand, time or place... He was keen to save people from their ignorance until the last moment of his life, even when he was lying in bed awaiting death, he said: "Ask me before you lose me," and pointing to his chest he said: "Therein lies abundant knowledge..."

Besides, Imam Ali (a.s.) was keen to leave to the people, the entire people, an intellectual, spiritual and educational provision as evident in his book "Nahjul Balagha" (The Peak of Eloquence). He also made sure to leave recommendations to everyone, the individuals, people, the society and the nation... He called on them to look after the weak, the youngsters, the poor, the needy and the orphans. He focused in one of his wills on the Muslims’ administrative affair and their social solidarity that he said to his sons, Al-Hassan (a.s.) and Al-Hussain (a.s.):

"I advise you, and all my children, my relatives, and whosoever receives this message, to be conscious of Allah, to remove your differences, and to strengthen your ties. I heard your grandfather (S) say: Reconciliation of your differences is more worthy than all prayers and all fasting."

That is because he was aware that the pursuit to accomplish the big goals might be lost amidst chaos and internal seditions.

**Are we the followers of Ali?!**

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the life of Imam Ali (a.s.) that he filled with the right, the good, worshipping and spirituality; it is he who said before his death:
"I have won by the Lord of the Kaaba."

Are we, the followers of Imam Ali and his Shiites, able to sincerely say what he said?!

When we recall the course of our lives, do we find that we filled them with devotion, knowledge, high morals, struggle and sacrifices, just as his life was?!

Are we truly able to say: "I have won by the Lord of the Kaaba," as we depart this life?!

Or when death comes to collect our souls, would we say: "Send me back, my Lord, haply I may do good in that which I have left." (23: 99-100).

O people, Ali is calling on us to be prepared to meet Allah and to meet the responsibility we ought to shoulder, for when he (a.s.) was asked: "How can we prepare ourselves for our fate of death?" He answered:

"By performing our rites, abstaining from doing what is Haram and adopting sublime manners."

O beloved, Imam Ali did not want followers who only repeat his name and cherish it or attach themselves to it, knowing that if he wanted that he would have had it. On the contrary, he wanted missionary people who support him and help in fulfilling his message and going forth with his course; thus, he said to all those who wish to be his followers:

"Yet, assist me through piety, efforts, cleanliness and walking on the true path."

May Allah shower you with His mercy, and reward you good dedication in upholding Islam and defending and educating the Muslims. Your martyrdom brought about a tragedy, but we are for Allah and to Him we shall return... Peace upon you the day you were born, the day you martyred and acquired a status beside Allah and the day you will be brought back to life.
The most important thing of this month (Ramadan) is the Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr) - the night which is superior, than a thousand months, one thousand months jihad, one thousand months reign, and the worship in it is superior than one thousand months of worship, (as has been narrated in the traditions). Yes! the Night of Power is a very precious and distinguished night, in accordance with the Qur'anic interpretation it is a very auspicious night; and as could be derived from the traditions, in this night the sustenance and age of servants, and the good and evil of their affairs are destined; the Holy Qur'an was descended in this night; also the angels are descended all over the earth, and when they pass through the gathering of believers, send salutations and praises upon them, and consider their prayers until the dawn.

"It has been narrated that during this night the prayers of all are accepted, and the prayer of no one remains unanswered except the following:

- The one who has displeased and angered his parent and was declared disinherited or rebellious by them.
- The one who has cut off his relationship with his kith and kin.
- The one who possesses animosity and vengeance of a believer in his heart.
- The one who consumes alcoholic drinks.

In the book "Iqbal", a tradition has been narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that Prophet Moses (a.s.) in his prayer said: 'O' Allah! I desire Your nearness and union.
'My nearness and union belong to someone who remains vigilant and awake during the Night of Power' replied Allah.

Prophet Moses (a.s.) said:
'O' Allah! I want Your blessing and forgiveness.'

'My blessing belongs to someone who is kind towards the destitute on the Night of Power' replied Allah.

Prophet Moses (a.s.) said:
'O' Allah! I want to pass through the bridge of Serat on the road to Paradise safely.'

'The safety in passing through the bridge of Serat belongs to someone who pays alms on the Night of Power,' replied Allah.

Prophet Moses (a.s.) said:
'O' Allah! I wish to have your pleasure and consent.'

My pleasure and consent belong to someone who offers two rak'ats of prayer during the Night of Power' replied Allah.

In the same book of Iqbal it has been narrated from the Holy Prophet (S):

"On the Night of Power the gates of Heaven are opened. There is no servant who offers prayer in this night, but Allah for every prostration stores a tree in the Paradise - the tree whose branches and shade is so vast that if a rider travels for one hundred years through its shade he would not be able to cross it; for every rak'at would build a home for him in Paradise - the home decorated and built by pearls, topaz, and rubies; for every verse recited a crown from the crowns of Paradise; for every praise (tasbeeh) a bird from the birds of Paradise; for every sitting a rank from the ranks of Paradise;
for every witnessing (tasha-hud) - a chamber from the chambers of Paradise, and for every salutation - a robe from the robes of Paradise would be bestowed upon him by Allah."

**The Ranks of the Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr)**

It may be derived from some of the traditions that there are ranks and degrees for the Night of Power and each one of the nights of 19th, 21st, 23rd, and 27th may be considered possessing one of those degree. And the night which possesses the most superior distinction, has been mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as equal to thousand months, and whatever is destined in that night wouldn't be changed is the night of 23rd of the Holy Month. And the one, who wants that his actions should be exact and precise, better be vigilant during all these four nights. Of course, regarding the Night of Power there are some other narrations as well, but since their authenticity is not confirmed, it would not be appropriate to describe them here.

**Preparation for the Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr)**

The other decent efforts for this night are that before its arrival, the prudent wayfarer should arrange for its preliminaries and necessities, e.g. for worshipping in this night a suitable place, dress, and perfume should be arranged in advance for engaging in private humming communications with Allah (SWT), as well as for communications with his masters, i.e. sinless Imams (a.s.) he should arrange suitable themes and contents; for paying alms during this night should allocate some money, even for the invitation of guests and for payment of alms, he should plan in advance to select the most suitable guests and the genuinely poor people who really deserve financial support.
Let us imagine that if an emperor dispatches a special courier before someone, with compassion and mercy invites him for a special feast, gives him glad-tidings that if he appears in the royal feast with decency and decorum, rewards and magnificent gifts would be bestowed upon him, and the more respectfully he would behave in the assembly, the emperor too would increase his rewards and gifts in proportion with his behaviour.

Undoubtedly, after receiving such a message this person would become excited and pleased, and in order to prepare himself would not leave any stone unturned, and during this period would mobilize all his resources and efforts to procure whatever is required for being present in such an assembly, so that finally, when that moment arrives, being fully decorated in a respectable and decent manner, he could present himself over there.

The invitation of an emperor is responded in the above manner but how about the invitation of Allah (SWT), who is the King of all kings - the King of the Earth and the Heavens - has invited us for His feasts; in order to invite us has dispatched his favourite angels, pious prophets and sinless Imams as his couriers. He has assigned His angels to announce his invitation kindly and compassionately to us; has given us the glad-tidings of giving us permanent abode in Paradise in return for sincere worshipping during one single night (the Night of Power); has promised such bounties, which have not been seen by any eye, have not been heard by any ear, and have not been imagined through any human being's mind, as well as has given us the glad-tidings of illumination, ecstasy, majesty, splendour, nearness, union, and countenance, for whose least comprehension and understanding, faculties
of reason and thoughts find themselves astonished and helpless.

Are we among those who have prepared for this night and invitation, the way we ought to be, and must be, in order to attain the eternal blessing and salvation? Or are we among those negligent and idle ones, who do not achieve anything except loss and eternal doom? We must better know that the one who acts naively and lazily, and does not strive to take advantage of the magnificent generosities of this night, when in the Hereafter, would see that those who were zealous, committed, and vigilant during these nights what have they achieved, and what magnificence, splendour and glory have been bestowed upon them. But they would gain nothing except regret - the regret so great and painful that the Hell's blazing fire and its torturous punishments would seem smaller as compared to their regret, and then together with the losers and eternally doomed ones, would cry loudly:

"Ah! Woe upon me! In that I neglected (my duty) towards Allah."- Holy Qur'an (39:56)

But on that Day when the gates of repentance would have been closed, there would be nothing left for compensation of the damage, everyone would have seen the ultimate outcome of his deeds, and then feeling sorry and being regretful would not produce any gain. Therefore, we must take a look upon ourselves, and before falling into such regret and grief, must admonish ourselves for being so lazy, naive, and easy going. And before that we are called for accounting and are condemned into the state of wretchedness and destitution, for wasting our precious capital - the capital through which we could have accomplished most precious and greater gains we better put our self to scrutiny.
Selection of the Most Suitable Deeds

Other desirable efforts of this night are that with the nearing of these nights, one should increase his eagerness for receiving the promised bounties and blessings; should select worship and deeds which are more in harmony with his mood from the point of view of sincerity, heart's presence, and internal purification; in this matter should seek help from Allah (SWT), and the impeccable ones; and if he cannot diagnose himself what suits his mood properly, he should seek guidance from Allah (SWT), through consultation.

Meditation and Pondering

After recital of invocations and supplications one should also allocate some time for self-meditation and pondering, of course, this should be done at a time when he is free from whatever disturbs his thoughts like domination of sleep, over-eating, and pains of hunger etc.

Not to be Negligent from Allah

During these nights, one must strive his best to keep thinking about Allah (SWT), all along the night, and should not forget Him during any part of the night even for the sake of recommended and justified deeds. Also while offering prayer and supplications he should not think about any other thing even though if they happen to be recommended things.

For example, during prayer, one should not think about recommended deeds such as paying alms or the like, because this is an indication of negligence; even during a part of the prayer, he should not think about the next portion of the prayer, e.g. in the state of standing, to think about the prostration is negligence. He must try to concentrate upon whatever act of the prayer he is performing and should not be negligent about whatever he is doing or reciting. In order to make this task easier,
before performing different acts of prayer, first of all, he should think about them briefly and then should perform them. And in case while performing a certain act, negligence dominates over him, and if a verse or invocation is recited with negligence, he must repeat it again.

For example, when he wants to stand towards Mecca (Qiblah) for prayer (salat) first of all, he should think briefly about the wisdom of standing towards Mecca, and then should turn his face in that direction; and when he wants to stand for the prayer, first of all, he should think about the meanings of standing, i.e., his standing is for truth and his resting upon his two feet is the indication of his hope (raj'a) and fear (khout) about the acceptance of his worship. When he wants to recite the phrase: "In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful."

First of all, he should think about its meaning in brief, and then recite it with his tongue, and similar is the case with other acts of the prayer.

Resorting (Tawassul) to Ahlul-Bait (a.s.)

The one who wants to be vigilant in this manner throughout the night, must take refuge in the sinless - the one to whom this night belongs - at the beginning of that night, should stretch his hands towards their generous threshold. With persistence, supplicating in a polite and soft manner, with words and content arousing their sympathies, should beseech them for bestowing upon him the grace of being vigilant during this night. Then he must surrender and hand over all his existence, reason, heart, self, virtues, deeds to them, and throughout the night, must be careful not to commit anything which is not in harmony with this surrender, because the one who succeeds in it, certainly would have achieved whatever he aspired for during this night.
My Daughter Turned Nine!

By: Jerrmein Abu Shahba

Yes, the day has finally come! My daughter has turned nine years old – according to the Islamic lunar calendar. As a mother, I will celebrate her birthday and invite her friends over. I will bring cake and sweets and shower her with gifts.

Yes, my daughter has turned one year older, however, it is not like any other birthday. That is because with the completion of nine years of age according to the Islamic calendar, my daughter has now reached the age of maturity (buloogh) which Allah (swt) has determined as the age for every girl. What exactly does that mean and how does it affect my daughter?

Nine years old marks the transition from childhood into a new level of maturity. Nine years old signifies the Islamic date by which the girl becomes officially responsible to performing her obligations and to be cognizant and accounted for the permissible and forbidden acts.

But my daughter is still young and she looks like a seven-year-old! She hasn’t developed physically and is still immature!

But she’s too young to fast and I can’t bear to see her whining from hunger during the holy month of Ramadan when the days are long and hot in the summertime!

But she’s too little to be waking up for morning prayers to pray on time just like grown-ups!

Althought these may appear to be valid excuses, they do not stand against the justice of Islam and Allah (swt) knows best.

Allah, the Wise and Knowledgeable, has determined that
regardless of looks, size, height, weight, or physical development, every girl officially reaches the official age of maturity, accountability, and responsibility at nine lunar years old. She is no longer a little kid and has transitioned to becoming a young lady and beautiful blossoming flower. With that said, it is a great day to celebrate!

What does that mean to the respected mothers of the nine-year-old daughters who have reached this key milestone of their lives?

Dear respected mothers, you are responsible for preparing your daughters to embrace and get ready for this day early on and the responsibilities which this day carries with it. It is your duty in front of Allah (swt) to nurture your daughters at any early age to get used to the idea of wearing the scarf and feeling comfortable with that dress code and the social conduct that accompanies it. So that when the time comes to wear it full-time consistently, your daughter finds that transition easy and there is no doubt or hesitation in her mind as to whether to wear it and why she is wearing it.

Dear believing mothers, it is your homework to make sure that your daughter has already learned and been trained on the basic rules of how to perform ablution, how to pray correctly, and to be prepared for fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. It is your obligation not only to show your daughter what needs to be done, but to also explain the basic reasoning and wisdom behind the obligatory act so that she understands and performs the deed with conviction.

Our daughters are a beautiful gift and bounty from Allah (swt), so let us protect our daughters from committing wrong-doing and discipline them to become students of Sayyida Fatima al-Zahra (as) and the followers of Sayyida Zainab (as). It is up to us how
we would like for our daughters to be. We should make every effort to train and discipline them from a very young age as to the principles and morals of Islam and the virtues of a pious woman. If we wait until our girls reach their teenage years, it is too late to start teaching or correcting, it is too late to start introducing the idea of modesty through the hijab because their personalities and tendencies may have already been developed, the transition will be much more difficult, and they may already have started to be affected by their friends who may not be the best examples to follow.

It is advisable to make sure that they are spending time with the right circle of friends and sisters who are modest in conduct and dress code. Peer pressure is one of the causes of struggles which affect young women, so as parents we should keep an eye on our daughters and make every effort to guide and direct them in a loving and gentle manner, and to surround them with friends who will have positive influence on them.

It is not enough to preach our daughters to observe the hijab and other obligatory responsibilities which are now incumbent on them. It goes without saying that we must also practice what we preach. The mother is the first and most important role model to a young girl. After all, how can we expect that our daughters observe hijab when we ourselves don’t?

Let us prepare for this beautiful birthday early on and mark this significant event in our daughter’s life by making a special celebration of takleef (becoming responsible for required deeds) where the daughter feels she has graduated from the stage of childhood to the stage of womanhood. It will be a sweet and special memory which she shall cherish and take seriously for the rest of her life.
International Quds Day – The Last Friday of the Month of Ramadan

Every year on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, worldwide rallies are held to commemorate the Palestinian people’s resistance against Israel and their struggles to liberate their territories which have been occupied by Israel for decades. Millions of pro-Palestinian demonstrators, including Muslims and non-Muslims, take to the streets to denounce Israel’s atrocities against the people of Palestine. This year’s Quds Day rallies will be held across the world on Friday, 1st July.

International Quds Day is seen as the legacy of the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini, who is revered as a spiritual leader by Muslims across the world. Back in 1979, shortly after leading an Islamic revolution which toppled the US-backed Shah of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini named the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan as Quds Day.

The annual event is seen as an opportunity for freedom-seeking people across the world, regardless of faith, to voice their support for the cause of Palestine and vent their anger against the Apartheid regime of Israel, which has occupied Palestinian territories since 1967.

Millions of people in Iran and other Muslim and non-Muslim countries worldwide hold rallies in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Quds Day is a far cry from a casual Islamic religious event. It is, indeed, a human rights event open to both Muslim and non-Muslims alike.

Anti-Israeli sentiments have been gaining ground on a regular basis following Tel Aviv’s onslaughts on the besieged Gaza Strip which
have killed thousands of people, many of them women and children, since 2009. The attacks were launched amid a muted response from the so-called international community which is spearheaded by the US - Israel's staunch ally. However, they raised global awareness of Israeli atrocities against the people of Palestine. Tel Aviv is now facing charges of war crimes over its military strikes against the impoverished enclave which has been under a crippling Israeli siege since 2007.

The Israeli regime has been facing increasing isolation among nations across the world. A global movement called Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) is one of the popular campaigns launched against Israel in an effort to force the regime to comply with international law and Palestinian rights. Initiated by Palestinian non-governmental groups back in 2005, the movement has been gaining momentum in recent years. Many universities, trade unions and organizations as well as human rights groups in Europe and North America have been joining the campaign. BDS is similar to the earlier boycotts of South Africa during its apartheid era and is aimed at piling up economic pressure on Israel by boycotting Israeli products and companies. BDS is estimated to cost Israel's economy $1.4 billion annually. It is expected to cost Israel's economy $47 billion over a decade.

Zahra Mustafavi, the secretary general of the NGO Union for Supporting the Palestinian Rights, pointed out during a recent summit that half of the Palestinians are displaced while the other half are being oppressed by Zionists in their homeland.

The daughter of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic also voiced concern over the fact that Palestine must be the
most important issue for the Muslim world but it is not.

Elsewhere in her remarks, she appealed all Muslim countries to support the Palestinian nation: “It is now the right time for all Muslim countries to stand up in support of Palestinian people.”

It is noteworthy that the Islamic Revolution’s victory under the wise leadership of Imam Khomeini in 1979 strengthened the Palestinian cause and defended the rights of the Palestinian nation.

Imam through his historic speeches and messages frequently used to denounce the crimes being committed by the Israeli regime against the oppressed Palestinian people.

The great Imam didn’t want to see the Quds remains in the hands of the enemies of Islam, and thereby show their support for the Palestinian fighters.

Concerning the true nature of the usurper Israeli government and its roots, the Imam has said:

“I regard the plan for independence of Israel and its recognition, a catastrophe for the Muslims and an explosion for Islamic governments.”

The founder of the Islamic Republic always considered returning to Islam and uniting as a prerequisite to saving Palestine and blocking Israel’s expansionist plans. The great Imam made it clear that main goal of Israel is the destruction of Islam and he repeatedly called on the Muslims to put aside all their differences, including the religious ones.

The world’s believers and free-minded people have expressed serious concern over the growing number of casualties in the Palestinian coastal enclave.

Anti-Israel rallies are being held worldwide in condemnation of Tel Aviv’s atrocities against Palestinians.

٥٧
The Reality of Eid

Edited excerpts from, “The Ahadith of Ramadan”, by Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Mudarrisi

Sometimes distractions deviate us from the path of obedience and take us away from the true path. One of the mercies of Allah (SWT) upon us is the possibility of returning to the path of obedience at all times. Allah (SWT) has put some turning points to remove our carelessness and direct us towards the right path.

The night of Eid al-Fitr is one of those opportunities; it is narrated in a Hadith that: The Almighty Allah (SWT) will forgive people who seek repentance on this night as many as He has forgiven throughout the days and nights of the month of Ramadan. In the Islamic view, Eid is a day on which a new beginning forms, and a new life commences (1).

Eid al-Fitr is an example to which we arrive after a month of fasting, Salat, and prayer, and we create a new page for the future based on love of Allah (SWT); this is a new beginning based on what we have collected in the preceding days.

Nevertheless, one should not forget that returning to the path does not guarantee staying on it. We unfortunately see people who repent one day but commit a sin the following day. These people wonder between sin and repentance; they do not know how their life would come to an end, or at least they do not have any plan for the condition in which their life would end.

In fact, it is an established fact in the religion that the condition of people on the Day of Judgment is related to the last moments of their life. If they are in a good condition on the last moments, they will be fine in the Hereafter, and if
not, they will suffer in the Hereafter.

Therefore, Allah (SWT) has addressed the believers in the Holy Quran by saying,

"O you who believe! Turn to Allah (repent) a sincere and firm turning (repentance); maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow...\(^{(2)}\)"

A sincere repentance means that the person is determined to stay committed to his repentance until the last moments of his life. This is what Allah (SWT) has ordered the believers to do. With such determination, it is hoped that Allah (SWT) will forgive our sins and evil acts, as the verse of the Holy Quran states.

A sincere repentance is one that removes all the sins and allows the believers to show the clear pages of their book of deeds free of any impurity to their Lord.

For instance, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) has referred to this issue in the Supplication of Repenters (Munajat Ta'ibeen):

"O Lord! You are He who has opened a door to Your pardon and named it 'repentance', for You said, "Repent to God with unswerving and sincere repentance"."

"What is the excuse of him who remains heedless of entering the door after its opening...?\(^{(3)}\)"

How beautiful it is to make a serious will to return to our Lord at this glorious moment; let us raise our hands towards His mercy and kindness and ask for a true, everlasting repentance from His Highness.

Footnotes:

1. The word “Eid” in Arabic is derived from the root “Awd” which means to return.
2. The Holy Quran, (66:8)
3. Mafatih al-Jinan, Munajat Ta'ibeen
The Glorious Month of Ramadan

The month of Ramadan enjoys a special importance in the Islamic calendar. As Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) said: "It is Allah's Own month." It is the chief of all months and the most glorious one. As we already know, 'Fasting' is one of the important pillars of Islam and it is the very month of Ramadan during which fasting has been made obligatory for all adults and sane Muslims. By fasting during Ramadan, a Muslim besides discharging an obligation imposed upon him by Allah (SWT), becomes entitled to great reward in the Hereafter. On the other hand, any lapse in the matter amounts to a great sin.

The blessings of Ramadan are not limited to fasting alone, because the performance of all sorts of worship and good deeds during this month is also a source of great Divine favor. The Holy Quran was revealed in this very month and it is therefore the duty of every Muslim to read and try to understand the meaning of the Holy Quran and thereby gain an insight into the Divine secrets enshrined therein. It brings peace and illumination to the mind and imparts purity to the soul.

Throughout this month a devout Muslim fasts during the day in the true sense of the word, that is, he had merely denies himself food and water, but as explained by Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.), exercises strict control over his tongue, eyes, ears, thoughts and
deeds and does everything possible to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

The Birth Anniversary of Imam Hassan (A.S.)

Dear kids, the second Shiite Holy Imam Hazrat Hassan (a.s.) was born on the 15th of Ramzan-ul-Mubarak 3rd Hijrah in Medina Munawarra. Imam Hasan (a.s.), like all other Imams was granted divine knowledge by Allah (s.w.t.) and he demonstrated it right from his childhood. Once the holy Imam (a.s.) was asked "What are the 10 strong things that are stronger than one another?"

Imam Hasan (a.s.) replied:

Among the strong things is Stone; Even stronger is the Iron which is used to break Stone; Even stronger is the Fire which melts Iron; Even stronger is the Water which extinguishes Fire; Even stronger are Clouds that carry Water with them; Even stronger is the Air which floats the Clouds with it; Even stronger is the Angel who moves the Air; Even stronger is the Angel who will give Death to the Angel who moves the Air; Even stronger is the Death which will come upon the Angel of Death; and Even stronger is the order of Allah (s.w.t.) which governs the Death.

Martyrdom of Imam Ali Ibn Ali Talib ('A)

Imam Ali ('a) was fatally wounded by the poisoned sword of Abdur Rahman ibn e Muljim (May Allah curse and punish him) on the 19th of Ramadan 40 AH, while offering the Fajr prayer in Masjid e Kufa, in the state of prostration. Ibn e Muljim was caught escaping, and with his hands tied behind him, he was brought to the mosque. The anger and fury of the people was at its
height. They were waiting for an order from their Imam ('a), but their faces showed that they wanted to tear Ibn e Muljim alive. They would have done it, had the Imam ('a), who was the victim of his dastardly act, allowed them.

Imam Ali ('a) called for the murderer to be presented before him. He, then, asked him, ‘Was I not gracious towards you?’

‘You certainly were.’

‘Then what was the reason for this murderous attack?’

‘I cannot reveal. However, I placed this sword in poisoned water for 40 days, and prayed to God to make this sword kill the worst man on earth.’

‘So it shall, for you will be killed by this same sword in a few days.’

Imam Ali ('a) then addressed the members of his family gathered around him, thus: 'Sons of Abdul Muttalib! I warn you not to let your anger get the better of you. Do not accuse anyone you think is involved in this conspiracy, without evidence, as that will lead to mob killing in the streets.'

He then addressed his son, Hassan ('a): 'My son, if I survive this wound, I will mete out justice to him. However, if I die, strike him but once, for he struck me but once, with the same sword. Do not cut off his nose, ears or tongue. The Holy Prophet (s) clearly forbade it, saying, "Avoid mutilating anyone as a punishment, even if it be a mad dog." Look after your prisoner’s needs. Provide him with food and drink.

After Imam Ali ('a) passed away, Ibn e Muljim was struck only once by the same sword that he had prepared for himself and he died on the spot.
How Should We Promote Religion?

Imam Jafar Sadiq (‘a) once told his followers a story to show how they should promote their religion: Two neighbors became good friends. One was a Christian, the other, Muslim. They often discussed their religions to see what was more conducive to a civilized way of life, and then they adopted it. The Muslim presented Islam with all its material and spiritual benefits, so the Christian, one day, embraced Islam.

A few days later, earlier than dawn, somebody knocked at his door.

‘Who’s there?’ asked the new convert, a little apprehensive.

‘I am your neighbour. It will soon be time for the morning obligatory prayer (Fajr), so wear your clothes, perform ablution and come with me to the mosque. Today, we will offer our prayers with the congregation. The new Muslim consented, and they both reached the mosque.

‘Fasting is a means of gaining nearness to God,’ the neighbor said. The convert declared the intention of fasting for the day.

Since there was some time left for the call for prayer (Aazaan), they both offered some units of prayer for spiritual satisfaction. Soon it was time, and they offered their Fajr prayer. After reciting all the supererogatory prayers advised by religious leaders, the convert got up to go home.

‘Where are you going?’

‘Home,’ he replied.

‘Hold on. It’s now time to read the Holy Quran.’

He placed the Quran before him, and they both read till the bright rays of the sun fell on them. The convert rose to go home, but the Muslim stopped him again.
This time he stopped him for the Zohr prayer, as only an hour remained. After the afternoon prayer and all the supererogatory prayers had been read, it was almost time for the evening, Asr, prayer. Having completed that, the man said he was going home to break his fast after sunset. His neighbor advised him to offer the Maghrib prayer. He agreed. After that, he stood up to leave.

'Only the Isha prayer is left. After that you can go home.' The neighbor urged.

After offering the night prayer, the new convert went home.

There was a knock at his door again, at the time of Sehr.

'Who's there?' he asked.

'Wear your clothes and come, we will offer our prayer in the mosque.'

'Excuse me. I returned to my religion after staying with you yesterday. Go find somebody useless who has nothing to do but pray. I am a family man, and need to provide for them. I have other duties and responsibilities to fulfill. I cannot just pray to God all day and survive on nothing. Get lost!'

After relating this incident to his followers, Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (a) said: 'Thus, a pious and God fearing Muslim converted a non-believer to Islam. But, it took the new convert only one day to give it up because of the extreme measures adopted by the Muslim. Remember, force and rigidity lead to unease, frustration, and discontentment. Promote religion affectionately, courteously, mildly, with mutual consent. Our methods should make people embrace Islam by choice, and practice it according to the level of their faith and energy- both physical and mental.'
MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE TO MORE THAN 300 FAMILIES

Alhamdulillah, Allah (S.W.T.) has enabled us to provide financial assistance to more than 300 families for marriage of deserving Sadat and non-sadat orphans, low income people, religious scholars, innocent captives and martyrs’ children. Momineen can avail this opportunity of good deed by contributing generously.

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With the help of Almighty Allah (S.W.T.) Zahra (S.A.) Academy has arranged tabligh programs in interior and distant areas of Pakistan by dispatching more than 200 preachers providing them with some financial assistance so that they can spread the teachings of Ahlulbait (A.S.) with ease of financial burden during the holy month of Ramadan.

Your contributions and generosity will go a long way in elevating the misery of the people of the area.

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Islamic financial obligations can also be used to contribute. Zahra (s.a.) Academy has permission to collect and use the religious dues from all present Marja-e-Taqleed for all its projects.

Contributions are also accepted at all our branches. For more details, please contact via:

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“Save yourself from the fire of Hell even with a piece of date....”
Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.)

Ramzan-ul-Mubarak 1437 A.H.
IFTARI & TABLIGH PROGRAM

Zahra (s.a.) Academy is arranging Namaz Jamaat, Iftari and Durs for momineen in the less privileged areas of Pakistan, as it has done in the past years.

- Ramadan Food package for a family = Rs.3,000 (US$30)
- Preaching and Iftari per centre = Rs.15,000 (US$146)

Please donate generously....!

ZAKAT-E-FITRAH

Zahra (s.a.) Academy has been providing services to collect and distribute Zakat-e-Fitr. During Ramzan-ul-Mubarak 1436 A.H. Rs. 461,535 were distributed amongst Sadat (Rs. 87,130) and non-Sadat (Rs. 374,405) deserving families belonging to religious scholars, martyrs, captives, widows, orphans, sick and disabled persons.

Fitrah can be deposited in advance in any branch of Zahra (s.a.) Academy during the month of Ramdan.

This year per person Fitrah is suggested to be:
(a) Wheat=Rs. 185/=; (b) Rice=Rs. 750/=; (c) Dates=Rs. 850/= 

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