



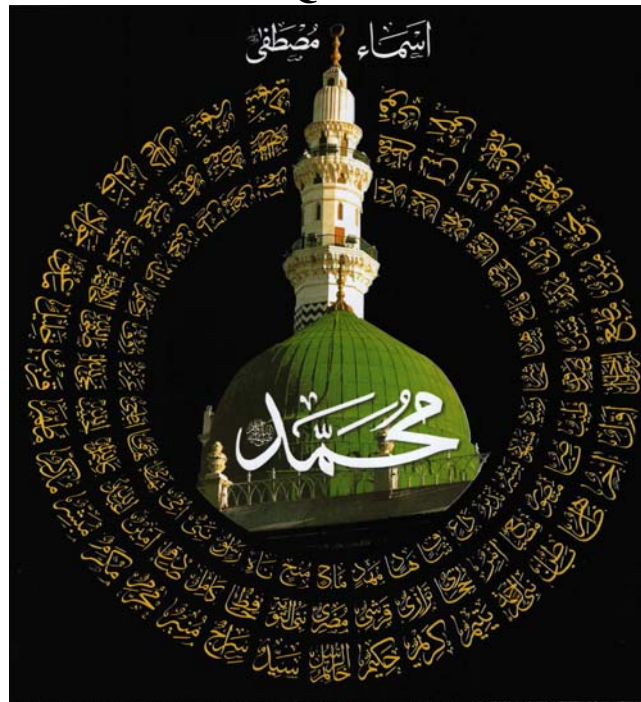
IMAMIA SUNDAY SCHOOL

The most valuable treasure is knowledge and wisdom and the worst misfortune is ignorance". Amir al-Mu'minin, Imam Ali (AS)

STUDENTS NOTES FOR CLASS 11

2006/2007

AQAID



The names of Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S)

NAME: _____

TEL: _____



Imamia Sunday School

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NOTE: All lessons take from **The Faith of Shi'a Islam** By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar except an noted

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 1

Doctrine of Belief in Allah

We believe that Allah is One (wahid), Alone (ahad), Peerless (laysa kamithlihu shay'), Eternal (qadim), without Beginning or End; He is the First and the Last (al-awwal wa al-akhir). He is the All-Knowing (al-alim), the Wise (al-hakim), the Just (al-'adil), the Living (al-hayy), the Omnipotent (al-qadir), Independent of all things (al-ghaniy), the All-Hearing (as-sami'), the All-Seeing (al-basir).

He is not to be likened to His creatures, therefore He has neither body nor appearance nor substance nor form; He is neither heavy nor light, neither moving nor motionless; He has no place nor any time, and no-one can point to Him as there is no-thing like Him. Nothing is equal to Him, nor has He any opposite. He has no wife, no child, no partner and there is none comparable to Him. Vision does not perceive Him, yet He perceives everything.

Anyone who likens Him to His creatures, for example one who supposes that Allah has a face, hands and eyes, or says that He comes down to the lowest heaven, or that He will appear to the people of paradise like a moon, and so forth, he is as one who does not believe in Allah and is ignorant of the true nature of Allah, Who is above all deficiency. Yet everything we imagine will be a creature like ourselves.

As Imam Baqir (A.S.) said:

He is far greater than the explanation of the wise, and far beyond the reach of discriminative knowledge ('ilm daqiq).

Similarly, one who believes that He will be seen by His creatures on the Day of Judgment is an unbeliever, even though he does not liken Allah to anyone in appearance. Such pretenders have merely accepted the letter of the Qur'an and the hadith without using their intelligence. Indeed, they have chosen to ignore their intelligence, for they have not taken note of the use of figures of speech which the nature of language necessitates. Thus they have misunderstood the true meaning of the Qur'an and the hadith.

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 2

Doctrine of Divine Unity (Tawhid)

We believe that the Unity of Allah (tawhid) must be in all respects; just as for His Unity of Essence (tawhid dhati) we believe that Allah must be One in His Essence and in the Necessity of His Existence (wujub alwujud).

Secondly, His Essence must be one with His various attributes, as we shall explain below. Likewise, nothing is similar in its attributes to Him. His Knowledge and Ability are unparalleled and He has no partner in Creation nor in Providing for His creatures; therefore none is like Him in any of His Perfections.

Thirdly, His Unity must exist in the worship of Him, and worship of any other than Him is not permitted. Nothing must be made a partner to Him in worship, whether the worship be obligatory (e.g. salat) or not (e.g. du'a'). One who ascribes a partner to Him in worship is a polytheist, like one who pretends to be worshipping for the sake of Allah but is in fact worshipping for the sake of some other being. In the eyes of Islam he is akin to an idolater, and both of them are polytheists.

However, pilgrimages to sacred place, such as the graves of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) or the Imams (A.S.), and mourning are not kinds of polytheism, as some people who have attacked the Shi'a have alleged.

These people have not looked to the reason behind the pilgrimages, for they are a way of approaching near to Allah through good deeds, in the same way as we can approach near to Allah by the performance of such good acts as visiting the sick, escorting a funeral, visiting our brothers in Islam and helping poor Muslims.

For example, visiting a sick person is a good act through which a believer obtains nearness to Allah. It is not for the glorification of the sick person himself; therefore it is not an act of polytheism.

In the same way, other good acts, such as pilgrimage, mourning, attending a funeral and meeting with our brothers are not kinds of polytheism. Moreover, it is known from religious jurisprudence ('ilm al-fiqh) that pilgrimage and mourning are among the good deeds of the religion, but this is not a place to go into an exposition of this.

In brief, these actions are not a kind of polytheism as some people suppose, neither is the intention behind them that of worshipping the Imams (A.S.). Rather, their meaning is to bring the deeds of the Imams (A.S.) to life again, to renew their memory in the minds of the people and to glorify the rites of the religion.

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

And whosoever venerates the rites of the religion, that is of the godliness of their hearts. (22; 32)

It has been shown in the law (shar') that these acts are mustahabb. If a man performs these actions with the intention of pleasing Allah, he deserves to be rewarded for them.

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqid Class 11 - Lesson 3

Doctrine of the Attributes of Allah

We believe that Allah's primary, positive attributes (as-sifat ath thubutiyyah al-haqiqiyyah), which we call the attributes of Beauty and Perfection (al-jamal wa al-kamal), such as Omniscience ('ilm), Omnipotence (qudrah), Self-Sufficiency (ghina), Divine Will (iradah), Everlasting Life (hay'ah), are identical with His Being and are not in addition to Him, and that His attributes are not apart from His Being.

Thus His Omnipotence is dependent on His Everlasting Life, and His Everlasting Life is dependent on His Omnipotence. He is Powerful because He is Living, and He is Living because He is Powerful. In fact, there is no duality either between Him and His attributes or between the attributes of perfection themselves; they must be considered as a unity.

They differ in their meaning and their sense, but not in their substance and existence. For, if they differed in their substance, and given that they are eternal in the same way as is His Essence, it would become necessary to assume that the Self-Existence of Allah had number, and the very foundation of tawhid would be destroyed.

However, the positive attributes other than the attributes of perfection (the secondary, positive attributes, as-sifat ath-thubutiyyah al idafiyah), such as those of being the Creator (khaliqiyyah), the Provider (raziqiyyah), being Without Beginning (taqaddum) and being the First Cause ('illiyyah), are all contained within one attribute which is His Self-Subsistence (qayyumiyyah), and we extract these other attributes from the central attribute when we observe the several effects (at har) of its manifestation (e.g. when we observe His Self-Subsistence in its Creating aspect, we call Him the Creator).

In contrast to this, negative attributes, which are called attributes of Majesty (jalal), are contained in only one negative attribute which is the negation of the possibility (imkan) of these things. This means that He has no body, no appearance, no movement, nor is He motionless; He has no heaviness, nor any lightness, etc.; in reality He has no imperfection.

The result of the negation of these possibilities is a return to the Necessity of His Being (wujub al-wujud), which is one of the positive attributes of perfection. So the negative attributes of Majesty ultimately refer back to the positive attributes of perfection, and Allah is One in all respects; there is no number in His Holy Existence, and there is nothing compound in His Essence.

It is not surprising that some persons, accepting that the positive attributes are, as it were, reflected in the negative attributes, but failing to understand that Allah's attributes are One with His Essence, have imagined, in order to reassure themselves of the Unity of Allah, that the positive attributes depend on the negative ones. However, in this they have committed a great wrong, for they suppose that Allah's Essence, which is Absolute

Being without the possibility of imperfection, is complete negation and therefore non-existence.

Neither is it surprising that some persons say that His positive attributes are in addition to (idafah) His Essence, therefore saying that His attributes are pre-existent like His Essence, the result being that they are partners of His Being. Similarly, others say that Allah is a compound of His attributes, but Allah is far above these things. As the first Imam, Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Ali (A.S.) said:

The perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed, and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute. Thus, whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognizes His like, and whoever recognizes His like regards Him as two, and whoever regards Him as two recognizes parts for Him, and whoever recognizes parts for Him has mistaken Him. (Nahj al-Balaghah, Khutbah 1)

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 4

Doctrine of al-qada' (Predetermination) and al-qadar (Divine Decree)

The sect of the Mujabbirah maintained that Allah was entirely responsible for the actions of His creatures; that he forced them to do evil and then punished them for it, and forced them to do good and then rewarded them for it. They maintained that the actions of people were really His actions, but that they were figuratively attributed to people because humans are the locus of Allah's activity. The reason for this view was that the Mujabbirah denied natural causes (as-sababiyyah at- tabi'iyah) between things, and said that Allah was the real cause (as-sabab al-haqiqi), there being no other cause besides Him.

They denied natural causes between things because they supposed that this followed from the necessity of believing that Allah is the Creator without any partner. But one who has made such a claim has in truth attributed injustice to Allah.

Another sect, the Mufawwidah, maintained that Allah had given full power to His creatures for their actions, and that the power, foreordaining and decree of Allah had no part to play. The reason they held this belief was because they considered that the attribution of man's actions to Allah necessitates attributing imperfection to Him, and that all existing things have particular causes (asbab al-khasah), and that this can be traced back to the cause of causes, the first cause, which is Allah. However, those who made this claim had separated Allah from His Power, and had given Him partners in His Creation.

Now our belief in this matter follows the teachings of our Imams that the reality is between these two extremes, a middle way between the two opinions, something which cannot be understood by these disputants in theology (ahl al-kalam) who have gone some to one extreme, some to the other. Knowledge and philosophy were unable to clarify this matter until after many centuries, so it is not surprising that those who are not familiar with the wisdom of our' Imams (A.S.) and their sayings suppose that our belief comes from an investigation of the most recent western philosophers, whereas the truth is that our Imams were ahead of them by ten centuries in this matter.

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) truly said in clarifying the middle way that:

There is no compulsion (jabr) (from Allah), nor is there absolute delegation of power (tafwid) (from Allah to man), but the real position is between the two extremes.

What marvelous significance lies in this saying, and how exact is its meaning! It points out that our actions are, from one angle, really our own actions, and we are the natural cause so that they are under our control and subject to our free choice; and from another angle they are decreed by Allah and are subject to His Power, because it is He Who gives existence.

He does not compel us in our actions in such a way that He wrongs us by punishing us for evil deeds, for we have the power and the choice in what we do. But He has not delegated to us the creation of our actions so that they become beyond His Power, for to Him belongs Creation, Judgment and Command. He is Powerful over all things, and He has complete authority over people.

For, after all, our belief is that predetermination (qada') and Divine decree (qadar) are one of the secrets of Allah, and if someone can understand them as they should be understood, without going to either of the extremes, he is correct. Otherwise, it is not necessary for him to force himself to understand them exactly, for he may then be led astray, and his belief may be corrupted. It is one of the most difficult topics in philosophy which can only be understood by a few people, and because of this many theologians (mutakalimun) have been led astray.

The obligation to arrive at an understanding of this matter is an obligation which is too great for the understanding of an ordinary man. It is enough for someone to believe in this in a general way following the sayings of our Imams (A.S.): that it is a reality between the two extremes, i.e. that there is neither compulsion nor absolute free-will. Anyway, this matter is not one in which it is necessary to have faith based on investigation and profound thinking.

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 5

Doctrine of Religious Ordinances

We believe that Allah has sent His ordinances in the interest of His servants: that whatever is greatly to our advantage he has made incumbent upon us (wajib); that whatever is to our disadvantage he has forbidden to us (haram); and that whatever is to our advantage, but not greatly so, He has made mnustahabb, and has recommended us to do it.

And this is of His Justice and Mercy.

It is clear that Allah must give His commandments to cover any eventuality, and that nothing can be found which is outside the scope of His commandments, although we may not be in a position to understand this.

We also say that it is impossible for Him to order something of which a part is evil, or to prohibit something of which a part is good. But some Muslims say that evil is what Allah prohibits, and good is what He commands, and that therefore there is no intrinsic good or evil in the acts themselves.

This is not in accord with reason, however, as the same people also say that Allah can do things which are evil; thus He can order what includes evil and prohibit what includes good. It has previously been mentioned that this opinion is erroneous, because it requires that Allah is ignorant and unable to do certain things; far be He glorified and exalted above what they say!

In short, the correct belief is that there is neither interest nor benefit to Allah in His commandments to us, but that the interest and benefit is entirely for ourselves. It is impossible for Allah to command what is without interest or benefit or to forbid that which contains no evil, because none of His laws are without aim, and He has no need of His servants.

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 6

Doctrine of Prophethood

We believe that Prophethood is a Divine duty and a mission from Allah; He appoints to it those whom He selects from among His good servants, from those who are exalted among mankind. He sends them to the rest of humanity to be a guide to what is of benefit to them and is in their interest in this world and the next; to purify them from immorality, evil deeds and harmful customs, and also to teach people wisdom and knowledge and the ways of happiness and goodness until they attain to the perfection for which they were created, and reach the highest position in both worlds.

We believe that the Grace of Allah (lutf) requires that He send His messengers to His servants to guide them, to carry out reforming work, and to be intermediaries (sufara', pl. of safir) between Allah and his gerents (khulafa', pl. of khalifah). For we believe that Allah does not allow mankind to appoint, nominate or select a person as a prophet; indeed only Allah can choose and appoint someone as a prophet, because:

Allah knoweth best with whom to place His message. (6; 125)

It follows that people have no right to dispute over those whom Allah sends as guides, bringers of good tidings and warners of what is to come, nor over that which they bring, i.e. the commandments and religious laws.

Doctrine of the Attributes of the Prophet

Just as we believe in a prophet's infallibility, so also we believe that he must be endowed with the most perfect human attributes:

- bravery (ash-shaja'ah),
- diplomacy (as-siyasah).
- sagacity (at-tadbir),
- patience (as-sabr),
- intelligence (al-fitnah) and
- quick-wittedness (adh-dhaka'),

so that there is no-one who excels him in such qualities. Otherwise, it is not right that he should lead people and administer the affairs of the whole world.

He must also be of good descendency, honest, truthful and free from all vices, from before the beginning of his prophecy as well, so that people can trust in him and so that he may deserve this great, Divinely-given position

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 7

Imamat – Leadership

Our Belief in the Imams

We do not exaggerate about the Imams as some sects have done: “A monstrous word it is, issuing from their mouths. (18; 5)” but we believe that they are human beings like ourselves, i.e. that if they do good they are rewarded and if they commit sin they are punished.

Indeed, they are honored servants and Allah has given them great dignity and authority, for they have the highest perfections, namely knowledge, goodness, bravery, generosity, chastity and every virtue and worthy quality. Nobody can equal them as far as morality is concerned.

Thus, they deserve to be Imams; guides and authorities after the Prophet in those matters in which people require help: religious commandments (ahkam), judgment (hukm), legislation (tashri'), and the commentary (tafsir) and interpretation (ta'wil) of the Qur'an.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq said: “Whatsoever is reported about us, if it is possible for one of mankind and you do not understand or comprehend it, do not deny it, but you can attribute it to us. However, if it is impossible for anyone of mankind, then deny it, and do not attribute it to us.”

The Imamate must be from Allah

We believe that the Imamate, like the Prophethood, must be an appointment from Allah, through His Messenger, or an appointed Imam. From this point of view, the Imamate is the same as the Prophethood.

It is wrong for people to dispute against him whom Allah has sent as a guide and leader for all people, for they cannot elect him. One who is able to bear the responsibilities of the Imam of the people and the guide of mankind can only be recognized and appointed by Allah.

We believe that the Prophet declared who was to come after him (his khalifah), and that he appointed his cousin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib as the Commander of the Faithful (Amir al-mu'minin), guardian Of the revelation and Imam for the people on several occasions.

The Prophet obliged everyone to take an oath to agree to 'Ali's succession on the day of Ghadir, and he said at that time:

“O faithful! for whomsoever I am his master (mawla) and the authority whom he obeys, 'Ali will be his master. O Allah! be friendly towards the friends of 'Ali; help those who help him, and hinder those who hinder him, and may the Truth always be with him.”

The first place in which the Prophet declared the Imamate was when he had gathered his close relatives and kinsfolk and said to them: “He ('Ali) is my brother, inheritor (wasi) and vicegerent (khalifah).” You must listen to him and obey him. At the time the Prophet said this, 'Ali had not yet come of age.

The Prophet spoke many times on this matter: “O 'Ali! your place in relation to me is the same as that of Harun in relation to Musa; except that there will be no prophet after me.”

Other traditions indicate that 'Ali had guardianship over the people, as do the verses in the Qur'an such as:

“Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer and pay the alms while they do ruku'. (5:55)” The last part of this verse was revealed about 'Ali who gave his ring to a beggar while doing ruku' in prayer.

Imam 'Ali publicly declared the Imamate of Hasan and Husayn, and the latter declared the Imamate of his son 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, and similarly each Imam was appointed by the previous one.

Doctrine of the Number of the Imams

We believe that the Imams are twelve in number. that the Prophet publicly announced them by name; and that each of them announced his successor. They are:

- 1) Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, al-Murtada. Born 23 years before the hijrah (601 A.D.), died in the year 40 A.H. (661 A.D.)
- 2) Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn 'Ali, called Zakiy. (2-50/623-670)
- 3) Abu 'Abdillah Husayn ibn 'Ali, called Sayyidash-Shuhada'. (3-61/624-680)
- 4) Abu Muhammad 'Ali ibn Husayn, called Zayn al-Abidin. (38-95/658-713)
- 5) Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali, called al-Baqir. (57-114/678-732)
- 6) Abu 'Abdillah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, called as-Sadiq. (83-148/702-765)
- 7) Abu Ibrahim Musa ibn Ja 'far, called al-Kazim. (128-183/745-799)
- 8) Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Musa, called ar-Rida. (148-203/765-818)
- 9) Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, called al-Jawad. (195-220/810-835)
- 10) Abu 'I-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhanmnmad, called al-Hadi. (212-254/827-868)
- 11) Abu Muhanmmad Hasan ibn 'Ali called al-'Askari. (232-260/846-870)
- 12) Abu'l-Qasim Muhammad ibn Hasan, called al-Mahdi (256- /870-)

The last is the Imam of our time, but he is absent and we are waiting for his reappearance, may Allah hasten it to spread justice and equity throughout the world, filled as it is with oppression and wrong.

The Faith of Shi'a Islam

By Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 8

Imamat – Leadership

Doctrine of the Mahdi

Many people have narrated from the Prophet concerning the reappearance, at the end of time, of the Mahdi, who is a descendent of his daughter Fatimah, and how he will spread justice and equity throughout the world, after it has been overcome by injustice and oppression. All sects of Muslims have accepted this good tiding, but with different interpretations.

It is not a new opinion or idea that has come into existence only among the Shi'a, and in which they were prompted to believe by oppression, dreaming of someone who would come to clear the world of injustice, as some malevolent sophists have suggested.

On the contrary, the concept of the reappearance of the Mahdi has been well known among all Muslims, and they have believed in it. Proof of this is that some persons falsely called themselves Mahdi during the first century after the advent of Islam; such were the leaders of the Kaysaniyyah, the 'Abbasids and the 'Alawiyyah.

Only because people believed in the Mahdi could these persons have deceived them, exploited their belief and seized power. So they made their claims in order to impress the people and spread their influence.

We, the Shi'a, on the one hand, believe in the truth of the Islamic religion as the last Divine religion, and have no expectation of another religion to come and reform humanity.

But, on the other hand, we observe oppression and corruption spreading day by day throughout the world, resulting in a total lack of justice and improvement anywhere in the inhabitable countries of the globe. We have also witnessed Muslims forsaking every Islamic principle commandment and law in every single Islamic country. We know that we must wait for the reestablishment of Islam in all its power, to reform this world, drowned as it is in oppression and corruption.

Naturally, with such diversity of opinion among people pretending to be Muslim as we see today, it is impossible that the superiority of Islam should return, unless a great reformer appears to protect it, and, through Divine providence, unite people and eradicate the error, perversion and wrong which has become admixed with Islam.

To be sure, this guide must possess such a great position, such general authority and such supernatural power as to fill the earth with justice and equity when it is full of evil, injustice and wrong.

In short, the observation that humanity is in a pitiful condition, the assertion of the truth of Islam, and its position as the last religion leads to the expectation of such a great reformer (mahdi) to bring salvation to the world.

All Muslim sects and the peoples of other religions believe in this expectation, the difference being that the Imamate sect believes that this reformer is a definite person, that he is the Mahdi, and that he was born in 256 A.H. (870 A.D.), that he is alive now, the son of Imam Hasan al-'Askari, and that his name is Muhammad. Many narrators have passed to us ahadith (pl. of hadith) from the Prophet and his Household concerning his birth and his absence.

The Imamate must continue uninterrupted, although the Imam may live hidden among mankind until Allah wills that he reappear on a certain day, a Divine mystery known only to Him.

The fact that he has lived for such a long time is a miracle granted to him by Allah, and it is no more amazing than the miracle of the start of his Imamate for humanity at the age of five, when his father's life was taken away. Nor is it any more surprising than the miracle whereby 'Isa talked with people from his cradle, and was appointed a prophet when still an infant.

From the physiological point of view, it is quite certain that to live more than the natural span of life, or more than the imagined natural span, is not impossible, even though medical science is not yet able to prolong human life as much as possible. But while medicine is unable to do this, Allah can, for He is All- Powerful and Omnipotent. For the Qur'an states that Nuh lived to a very old age, and that 'Isa is alive now, and once one has accepted Islam, there can be no denying what the Qur'an says.

It is incomprehensible that a Muslim should dispute the possibility of these things, while at the same time calling himself a believer in the Glorious Qur'an.

We should remember at this point that the expectation of this savior and reformer, the Mahdi, does not mean that Muslims should stand idle in their religion, or abandon their religious duties, but that they should perform all the Divine commandments and make every endeavor to seek out the way of Truth.

It is an obligation for them to fight for Islam, to put the principles of Islam into practice, to order others to do likewise and to prohibit them as far as possible from doing wrong. As the Prophet said: "Every one of you is a shepherd, and every one is responsible for his flock."

Therefore it is wrong for a Muslim to pay no attention to his religious duties, and to abandon them because he is expecting the Mahdi, the one who brings good tidings; because such an expectation must not induce us to have no responsibility or duty, or to postpone any of our actions, and it will not leave people aimless like animals.

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 9

Explicit signs of the Qiyamat

Yajuj (Gog) and Majuj (Magog). Nuclear World War

According to the Muslim scholars, Yajuj and Majuj are the two big tribes from the children of Japheth. In Old Testament, Majuj has been referred to the chief of Mashech and Tubal. These places have been identified by the researchers as located now in present Moscow.

Some scholars have also identified the word Mangol as the Chinese word Mangog or Manchog. If this is true than the region associated to Yajuj and Majuj would cover the entire area between Russia and China from the Moscow River to Mongolia.

In the Tafseer Majma-ul-Bayan, the author says that “after dominating the earth, Yajuj and Majuj will aspire to conquer the space. They will shoot the arrows towards the heavens and it will return to them with something like blood-stain on it. So they will say: we conquered the inhabitants of the earth and the heaven.”

Allama S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi has interpreted the arrows as rocket and space-ships. If his analysis is correct then we can conclude from this that the whole story of Yajuj and Majuj indicates a “World War” between the future nuclear powers such as Russia, China and the United States, using the rockets from the various space stations to launch nuclear arsenals. The Smoke, another major sign of the Qiyamat, may be the result of this nuclear war.

Dabba-tul-Ardh

The meaning of Dabbat-ul-Ardh is a “walker of earth”. There is a lengthy hadiths explaining the nature of Dabbatulardh.

Aqid Class 11 - Lesson 10

Doctrine of the Resurrection

We believe that Allah, the Exalted, will revive all people after their death on a certain day which he has promised them, and that He will then reward the obedient and punish the wrong-doers. In this simple form, this is what all the Divine religions and philosophies have accepted, but Muslims must believe in it because it is contained in the Qur'an which our Prophet brought, and one who believes in Allah and Muhammad, His Messenger, must also believe in what is related in the Qur'an: resurrection on the Day of Judgment, reward and punishment, Paradise (al-jannah) and its blessings (an - na'im), the Fire (an-nar) and Hell (al-jahim). About one thousand verses in the Qur'an have mentioned the Day of Resurrection. There is no reason to doubt it, unless one doubts Allah, His Power and His Messenger. In fact this amounts to doubting all religions.

Doctrine of Bodily Resurrection

This is one of the fundamentals of Islam, as it is said in the Qur'an:

What! Does man reckon We shall not gather his bones. Yes, indeed, We are able to shape again his fingers. (75;4)

If thou wouldst wonder, surely wonderful is their saying: What, when we are dust shall we indeed then be raised up again in a new creation. (13;5)

To state it briefly, bodily resurrection means that man's terrestrial body will be revived after having been destroyed, and it will return to its first form after it has rotted in the earth. It is not necessary to believe in resurrection in its details, and more than has been revealed in the Qur'an. But we must believe in those particulars which are mentioned in the Book, such as al-hisab (the reckoning), as-sirat ¹ (the bridge), al-mizan (the balance), al-jannah (Paradise) and an-nar (Hell), ath-thawab (reward) and al-'iqab (punishment).

Knowledge of these subjects in detail is not incumbent upon us:

whether these earthly bodies will return or identical ones; whether souls will be lost like bodies or whether they will wait to join their bodies on the Day of Resurrection; whether resurrection is only for humans or if it is for all animals as well; whether it will happen suddenly or gradually. As long as we believe in Paradise and Hell, it is not necessary for us to know if they have already been created or whether they will be created in the

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As-sirat is the way of Allah as in the first surah of the Qur'an, 'Al-Hamd, .but. such things, it is believed will take a material form on the Day of Judgement, and there are hadith which describe it then as a bridge. Shaykh Saduq said: "our belief about sirat is that it is true, and that it is the bridge over Hell, and that over it all people shall pass. Allah has said: Not one of you there is, but he shall enter it (Hell); that for thy Lord is a thing decreed, determined.'" (19; 71)

future; if they are in the sky, or on the earth or in various different places. Similarly, when we believe in al-mizan, it is unnecessary to know if it is a spiritual entity or a physical one with two pans, nor is it necessary to know if as-sirat is a thin material object or a spiritual straightness".

So Islam has stated these things about the resurrection in outline. If someone wants to question about them further than their mention in the Qur'an, in order to satisfy himself and remove doubts which have been raised by those who seek a rational explanation or to understand these things through the senses, such a person does wrong, and will fall into difficulties and disputes that have no end. There is nothing in the religious texts concerning those details with which the philosophers and theologians have filled their books. Nor is there any religious, social or political necessity which causes them to fill their books with such writings and discussions. There is no use in these inquiries, unless it is to consume energy by thinking. It is enough to say that the details of resurrection raise doubts which we are unable to dispel and problems which are beyond our understanding.

That the resurrection will come is beyond doubt, because Allah, Who is Omniscient and Omnipotent, has announced it. Human knowledge, experiments or other methods of verification are incapable of discovering anything which is beyond human experience, and man can neither observe nor see the resurrection until after his death and his removal from the terrestrial world to the everlasting world, so how can he prove or deny it independently by thought or experiment? And he is even less capable of understanding its details and peculiarities because he depends for this on prediction, intuition, and mere fascination with amazing and surprising things. This is what human nature is accustomed to do with anything with which it is unfamiliar through its senses or through the sciences.

It is the same with the man who shows his ignorance concerning the strangeness of resurrection. So Allah has mentioned his amazement in the Qur'an:

Who shall quicken the bones when they are decayed. (36;78)

The only reason for his amazement is that man has never seen any decayed or rotten corpse that has been brought back to life, but he forgets how he was when he was created in the first place, when he was nothing, and the components of his body were scattered here and there. Then they were collected from the earth, from this place and that, so that he became a perfect, intelligent man possessing speech. The Qur'an says:

Has not man regarded how We created him of a sperm-drop? Then lo, he is a manifest adversary. And he has struck for us a similitude and has forgotten his creation. (36; 77-78)

It should be said to such a man:

Say, He shall quicken them (the bones) Who originated them the first time; He knows all creation. (36; 79)

While he professes faith in the Creator of all beings, His Power. His Messenger and what he brought, how can he deny the resurrection? His science is so limited that he does not know how he was created and how he changed from a sperm drop which has no sense, will or wisdom, into higher states, climbing gradually; how he was built up from different particles so that he became a perfect man possessing wisdom, foresight, sense and feeling. So, after noting these facts, how can he still find it so strange that he will be resurrected after having rotted away? Is it so very surprising that, with his limited knowledge and experience, he cannot understand what he can see? There is no way, except he must believe, submit and profess this truth which has been taught by the Disposer of all beings, Who is Omniscient and Omnipotent and has created man from nothing.

Every discussion about seeking knowledge which is impossible to find, and which present knowledge is unable to discover, is as useless as a man who is lost in the desert, or who wants to distinguish between two colors in pitch darkness. Man, who has discovered radar, electricity and split the atom still hasn't discovered the true nature of either electricity or the atom. If someone had mentioned these discoveries in previous centuries, man would have thought them impossible and ridiculed them at once. So how can he hope to investigate Creation? or discover the facts about resurrection?

He must, after accepting Islam, avoid following his desires, and start doing that which has value for his hereafter and this world, and that which will raise his rank in the presence of Allah, the Exalted. He should think about that which can help him when he dies, and those difficulties which he will encounter in his grave and at his resurrection, when he will find himself in the presence of the Omniscient King. So he should:

Beware of a day when no soul for another shall give satisfaction, and no intercession shall be accepted from it, nor any compensation be taken from it, neither shall they be helped. (2; 48)

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 11

Re-appearance of Imam Mehdi (as)

Does identifying the residence of Imam invalidate the purpose of occultation?

The Ghaibah of Imam has a Divine scheme that no one should know the whereabouts of the Imam. Some one can argue that if we know precisely where Imam is living then the purpose of occultation is not served.

But our guess work of pinpointing a specific place of residence for Imam does not invalidate the philosophy of occultation. If our assumption that Imam is stationed on these islands is true and if the whole world realizes his presence there, even then they will not be able to see him, to approach him, or to reach him by any means. This is the purpose of Ghaibat of Imam which is fully preserved.

Al -Imam al- Hujjaah Al- Mehdi (as) said:

“Rest assured that no one has a special relationship with Allah. Whoever denies me is not my follower. The appearance of the Relief (al-faraj) depends solely upon Allah ; therefore , those who propose a certain time for it are liars. As to the benefits of my existence in occultation, it is like the benefit of the sun behind the clouds where the eyes do not see. Indeed my existence is an amnesty for the people of the earth. Pray much to Allah to hasten the Relief, for therein also lies the release from your sufferings.”

This statement of the Holy Imam has made it very clear that everything regarding the Imam’s occultation i.e., where he is staying, what he is doing and when he would reappear is an absolute secret and if anyone claims that he knows about it accurately and with certainty then he is a liar.

So, I want to clarify once again that whatever I have said is merely a guess work which may or may not be true. But the rationality of my guess work can clear the self-caused mystification, confusion and astonishment which is always disturbing the minds of our youths and of the people who have seen the UFO’s objects and disappearance of several airplanes and ships. There can be no other possible explanation of the unidentified objects which is a proven reality.

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 12

Doctrine of the Mahdi

Many people have narrated from the Prophet concerning the reappearance, at the end of time, of the Mahdi, who is a descendent of his daughter Fatimah (as), and how he will spread justice and equity throughout the world, after it has been overcome by injustice and oppression. All sects of Muslims have accepted this good tiding, but with different interpretations.

It is not a new opinion or idea that has come into existence only among the Shi'a, and in which they were prompted to believe by oppression, dreaming of someone who would come to clear the world of injustice, as some malevolent sophists have suggested. On the contrary, the concept of the reappearance of the Mahdi has been well known among all Muslims, and they have believed in it. Proof of this is that some persons falsely called themselves Mahdi during the first century after the advent of Islam; such were the leaders of the Kaysaniyyah², the 'Abbasids and the 'Alawiyyah. Only because people believed in the Mahdi could these persons have deceived them, exploited their belief and seized power. So they made their claims in order to impress the people and spread their influence.

We, the Shi'a, on the one hand, believe in the truth of the Islamic religion as the last Divine religion, and have no expectation of another religion to come and reform humanity. But, on the other hand, we observe oppression and corruption spreading day by day throughout the world, resulting in a total lack of justice and improvement anywhere in the inhabitable countries of the globe. We have also witnessed Muslims forsaking every Islamic principle, commandment and law in every single Islamic country. We know that we must wait for the reestablishment of Islam in all its power, to reform this world, drowned as it is in oppression and corruption.

Naturally, with such diversity of opinion among people pretending to be Muslim as we see today, it is impossible that the superiority of Islam should return, unless a great reformer appears to protect it, and, through Divine providence, unite people and eradicate the error, perversion and wrong which has become admixed with Islam. To be sure, this guide must possess such a great position, such general authority and such supernatural power as to fill the earth with justice and equity when it is full of evil, injustice and wrong.

In short, the observation that humanity is in a pitiful condition, the assertion of the truth of Islam, and its position as the last religion leads to the expectation of such a great reformer (mahdi) to bring salvation to the world. All Muslim sects and the peoples of other religions believe in this expectation, the difference being that the Imamate sect believes that this reformer is a definite person, that he is the Mahdi, and that he was

² The Kaysaniyyah were followers of Kaysan, a freed slave of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and supposedly a student of his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah. They exaggerated in their belief about him, ascribing complete knowledge to him. They held an esoteric belief that religion involved following a human, that Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was immortal and the Mahdi. There were subsequent divisions into the Mukhtariyyah, the Hashimiyyah, the Bayaniyyah and the Razamiyyah sects

born in 256 A.H. (870 A.D.), that he is alive now, the son of Imam Hasan al-'Askari, and that his name is Muhammad. Many narrators have passed to us ahadith (pl. of hadith) from the Prophet and his Household concerning his birth and his absence.

The Imamate must continue uninterrupted, although the Imam may live hidden among mankind until Allah wills that he reappear on a certain day, a Divine mystery known only to Him. The fact that he has lived for such a long time is a miracle granted to him by Allah, and it is no more amazing than the miracle of the start of his Imamate for humanity at the age of five, when his father's life was taken away. Nor is it any more surprising than the miracle whereby 'Isa talked with people from his cradle, and was appointed a prophet when still an infant. From the physiological point of view, it is quite certain that to live more than the natural span of life, or more than the imagined natural span, is not impossible, even though medical science is not yet able to prolong human life as much as possible. But while medicine is unable to do this, Allah can, for He is All-Powerful and Omnipotent. For the Qur'an states that Nuh lived to a very old age, and that 'Isa is alive now, and once one has accepted Islam, there can be no denying what the Qur'an says. It is incomprehensible that a Muslim should dispute the possibility of these things, while at the same time calling himself a believer in the Glorious Qur'an.

We should remember at this point that the expectation of this savior and reformer, the Mahdi, does not mean that Muslims should stand idle in their religion, or abandon their religious duties, but that they should perform all the Divine commandments and make every endeavor to seek out the way of Truth. It is an obligation for them to fight for Islam, to put the principles of Islam into practice, to order others to do likewise and to prohibit them as far as possible from doing wrong. As the Prophet said:

Every one of you is a shepherd, and every one is responsible for his flock.

Therefore it is wrong for a Muslim to pay no attention to his religious duties, and to abandon them because he is expecting the Mahdi, the one who brings good tidings; because such an expectation must not induce us to have no responsibility or duty, or to postpone any of our actions, and it will not leave people aimless like animals.

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 13

Belief in the Qur'an

We believe that the Qur'an was Divinely inspired, and revealed by Allah on the tongue of His honorable Prophet, making clear everything, an everlasting miracle. Man is unable to write anything like it because of its eloquence, clarity, truth and knowledge, and no alteration can be made to it.

The Qur'an we have now is exactly what was sent to the Prophet, and anyone who claims otherwise is either an evil-doer, a mere sophist or else a person in error, and all of them have gone astray, because it is the speech of Allah, and:

Falsehood cannot come at it from before it or from behind. (41;42)

One of the testimonies to the miraculous nature of the Qur'an is that as time moves on and the arts and sciences advance, it remains as fresh and harmonious as ever, its supreme aims and ideals preserved. There can be no grounds for dispute with it, nor does it contradict true scientific facts, and there is nothing in it contrary to positive philosophical thinking. On the contrary, it is the books of scientists and even the greatest of philosophers, at the pinnacle of learning, which contain at least a few trivialities and contradictions and even incorrect assertions.

Moreover, with advances in scientific research and with modern scientific theories, even the greatest philosophers of Greece, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, whom all those who have come after have recognized as the fathers of science and the masters of thought, have been shown to have made some errors.

We also believe that we must respect and give dignity to the Glorious Qur'an, and this both in word and in deed. Therefore, it must not be defiled intentionally, not even one of its letters, and it must not be touched by one who is not tahir. It is said in the Qur'an:

None can touch it save the purified. (56; 79)

Neither is it permitted to burn it or to be impious towards it by any behaviour which is deemed to be insulting, such as throwing it, making it unclean, or putting one's foot on it; nor is it permitted to put it in a filthy place. If someone intentionally does any of these things or anything similar, he is not a believer in the Qur'an and its sanctity, and he is considered to be an unbeliever. In fact he has rejected the Lord of all the worlds.

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 14

The Proof of Islam and the Previous Religions

If someone (a non-Muslim) should argue with us and ask us for reasons to demonstrate the truth of Islam, we could prove it through the eternal miracle of the Qur'an, and by reference to its miraculous nature, as we have explained before.

Here, however, it is our intention to satisfy our own minds, in the event that we should wish to find assurance concerning the truth of Islam; for sometimes it happens that such a question arises on the mind of a liberal-thinking man, when he desires to strengthen his faith.

As for the previous religions such as Judaism and Christianity, there is no way to prove the truth of them or to satisfy ourselves or anyone else who doubts them, without there being faith in Islam; for they have no eternal miracle like the Qur'an. And the miracles of the former prophets which their followers bring forward as evidence are unacceptable, because the verity of the narration is suspect. The books of the former prophets which have been handed down to us, that is to say the books which are related to these prophets such as the Torah and the Gospels, are in no way an eternal miracle which can be put forward as a convincing reason for the truth of their religions, which, nevertheless, have been confirmed by Islam.

It is clear that when we accept and believe in Islam, we must also believe in whatever it has brought and confirmed, and one of its teachings is the Prophethood of many previous prophets, as we have described above. It therefore follows that a Muslim, after he has accepted the teachings of Islam, is not required to evaluate the truth of Christianity or Judaism or other such religions, because belief in Islam necessarily entails belief in the former religions and prophets. What is more, the Muslim does not need to verify the truth of the miracles of the former prophets.

However, if someone investigates the Islamic religion, but is not convinced of it, it is incumbent on him, as a rational necessity, to evaluate the truth of Christianity, because it is the last religion previous to Islam.

Then, if he is not convinced by Christianity he must consider Judaism, because it is the religion previous to Christianity and Islam, and he must continue in this way until he finds a religion about whose truth he feels certain.

By similar reasoning, it is clear that someone who has grown up believing in Judaism or Christianity must consider other religions to which people have been called by a prophet who came after their own prophet. For example, the Jews must evaluate Islam and Christianity according to what was said previously about the necessity to consider religions rationally, and Christians must consider the truth of Islam. It follows that neither of them can be excused for believing in their own religions while ignoring the subsequent religions because there is nothing in Judaism or Christianity which could contradict these religions, for neither Musa (A.S.) nor 'Isa (A.S.) stated that no prophet

would come after them. It is surprising how Christians and Jews can be sure in their belief and in their religions without considering the truth of the subsequent and last religion.

Wisdom dictates that they weigh the truth of the subsequent religion or religions. And if the truth is not established, then they should continue with their original beliefs. The Muslim, on the other hand, as we stated earlier, because of his belief in Islam, has no need to consider the truth of the previous religions or of any future ones. As for the previous religions, Islam has confirmed them; however, the Muslim should not follow their commandments or their books, because Islam has superseded them. And as regards future religions, the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (A.S.) said:

No prophet will come after me.

Since in the eyes of a Muslim the Prophet is honest and truthful, and, as Allah has said:

Nor does he speak from his own desire. This is naught but a revelation revealed. (53; 3-4) there is no need to prove the falsity of any new religion.

Now it is the duty of a Muslim, when a long period has elapsed since the time of the Prophet, and many opinions, beliefs and sects have arisen, to choose the way which he can be sure will guide him to the commandments of Allah as they were sent to Muhammad (S.A.), because the Muslim must carry out all the commandments as they were revealed to the Prophet. So how can he be sure that these commandments are the same as were revealed to the Prophet? Just as Muslims are divided into different sects on the basis of their opinions, so their prayer, worship and behavior vary. What, then, should he do? What school should he follow in his worship and in such matters as marriage, divorce, inheritance, buying and selling, punishment, blood-money and the like?

It is not correct that he should follow his father, family or friends, for he must be certain of what he believes in. There can be no insincerity, partiality or fanaticism in religion. He is obliged to select rationally the way he believes to be the best, so as to be sure of his religious obligations and his responsibility towards Allah, and so that Allah will not punish him or reproach him for what he has done, believing it to be correct. Also, he should not listen to those who deride him for following the true path. Allah has said:

Does man think that he is to be left aimless? (75; 36)

Also he has said:

Nay, man shall be a clear proof against himself. (75; 14)

and

Lo! this is a reminder, that whosoever will, may choose a way unto his Lord. (76; 29)

The first question he must ask himself is whether the way of the Household of the Prophet, or another way, should be followed. Then if he chooses the way of the Household of the Prophet, he must choose between the *ithna 'ashariyyah* and other sects. Or, if he chooses the Sunni path, he must choose which of the four *madhahib* (pl.

of madhhab) he should follow. All these questions arise for a liberal-minded person, so he should keep a clear mind and not be confused.

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 15

The meaning of "Shi'a" in the Opinion of the Household of the Prophet

The Imams of the Household (A.S.) did not receive the leadership of Islam, although, , they never had any designs towards it. So they devoted themselves to educating the Muslims, and to instructing them as Allah had ordered. They remained with those who were faithful to them, and confided in them their secrets, took great pains to teach them all the religious commandments and instil in them religious knowledge, and showed them what is of advantage to man and what is harmful.

They recognized no-one as Shi'i or as one of their followers unless he obeyed the commands of Allah, kept himself apart from his desires and carried out what they taught and guided him towards. Only to love them will not suffice to save someone, if that person also follows his desires making excuses for his disobedience to Allah, because they have clearly said that love of them will save no-one unless it is accompanied by pure actions, truth, honesty, piety and virtue.

Imam Baqir (A.S.) said:

O Khuthayma! Say to our friends that we can be of no help to them before Allah unless their actions are pure, and that they cannot attain our friendship and love except through their virtue. For surely, one who reveres justice, but does not act in accordance with it, will be stricken with grief and remorse more than anyone else.

The Imams desired and expected their followers to guide others and show them the correct path of goodness, and they instructed them to call the people to the truth by good actions, saying that this was more important than calling by word.

Call the people unto the truth by your behavior, so that they can see your obedience, and know that you are truthful and obedient.

We shall give some extracts here from conversations between the Imams and their followers, so that the reader may see how they were anxious to educate the people.

1. From Imam Baqir's conversation with Jabir al-Ju'afi:

O Jabir! How can someone who claims to follow us be content with only loving us? I swear that our follower is one who carries out his duty to Allah and fears Him. Our followers are known by their humility, modesty, exceeding remembrance of Allah, fasting, prayer, being sympathetic and helpful towards the poor, their reading of the Qur'an, saying nothing about a person except concerning his good actions, and they are most trustworthy among those close to them. (O ye who follow!) Observe your duty to Allah, and perform good actions for His reward, for there is no preference by Allah towards anyone. The most beloved of His servants in the presence of Allah is the best

in conduct and obedience to Him.³ O Jabir! Nobody can come close to Allah except through obedience. Without this nobody will be saved from Hell, nor can anybody excuse himself before Allah without it. Whosoever obeys Him, he is our friend, but whosoever disobeys Him, he is our enemy. You cannot attain to our friendship except through good actions and virtuousness.

2. From Imam Baqir's conversation with Sa'id ibn al-Hasan:

al-Imam: 'Does it happen to you that one of you approaches his brother and puts his hand into his brother's pocket to take some money of which he is in need, without his brother preventing him?'

Sa'id: 'I do not know of such a thing.'

'Then truly, there are no real Shi'i among you.'

'Shall we all perish, in that case?'

'Yes, indeed, for such people do not put into action what they say.'

3. From Imam Ja'far's conversation with Abi as-Sabah al-Kanani:

al-Kanani: 'How much harassment we receive from people for your sake!'

al-Imam: 'What harassment do you receive from them?'

'When there is a dispute between one of us and one of them, they immediately condemn us for following you.'

'Do they condemn you for my sake?'

'Yes, indeed!'

'But there are only a few of my followers among you. Only those who possess great and real virtue, whose acts are only for the sake of the Creator and to obtain his reward, only these are my followers.'

4. There are many traditions from Imam Ja'far concerning these matters. Here we have chosen some of them and written them down.

- If a man lives in a town with a hundred thousand inhabitants or more, and there is someone in that town whose virtue is greater than his, then that man is not one of my followers.

- We do not count among the believers anyone unless he obeys all our commandments. Indeed, righteousness is the only sign of one who follows us. Adorn yourselves with it, and may Allah have Mercy on you.

- One whose chasteness and abstinence from unlawful sexuality is not the subject of talk among women is not one of our followers. And one who lives in a town with ten thousand inhabitants and one of them is greater in righteousness than he, then that man is not one of our followers.

³ In illustrating the same point, Imam 'Ali, Amir al-Mu'minin, (A.S.) said in his sermon known as 'al-Qasi'at'. "Verily, for all creatures of the heaven and the earth His command is the same, and there is no leniency in His law between Allah and anyone, so that he may do unlawful things."

-Truly, a follower of Ja'far is one who does not listen to his stomach or to his carnal desires who endeavours in the path of Islam, who acts for the sake of Allah, hoping only for His reward and fearing His chastisement. Yes, indeed, such are the followers of Ja'far.

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 16

The Imams call People to Islamic Unity

It is well known that the Household of the Prophet tried hard to preserve the rites of Islam, to call Muslims to restore its glory, to unify their beliefs, and that they also strived to maintain the brotherhood of Islam and to remove malice and enmity from the hearts of the Muslims.

We cannot ignore Imam 'Ali's dealings with his predecessors to the khilafah. He treated them with consideration although he believed that they had taken what was his right. He agreed with them and kept his peace with them and refrained from expressing his opinion about his own right to the khilafah in public until after he had attained to it. Then he called together the remaining followers of the Prophet (those who were still alive and who had been present on the day of Ghadir when the Prophet had appointed 'Ali as his khalifah), so that they could bear witness to his appointment to the khilafah.

He never withheld his opinion about what was helpful or in the interests of Islam and the Muslims, and he often said:

I was afraid lest I should not help Islam and the Muslims, and that they would fail.

He said and did nothing against the position, power and authority of the khulafa', but kept himself to his house and remained silent, despite the fact that he saw what they were doing.

He acted thus for the sake of Islamic interests, up to the point where he was famous for his admirable qualities. The second khalifah, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, said many times: "I would never encounter a difficulty without Abu 'l-Hasan being there to contribute to its solution." And "If it were not for 'Ali, 'Umar (himself) would have perished."

History cannot forget the way Imam Hasan (A.S.) dealt with Mu'awiyah. He made peace with him, because he realized that if he continued to fight, the light of the Qur'an and just government would be extinguished, and moreover the name of Islam would vanish for all time, the Divine shari'ah would be lost and the Imams that were to come would be obliterated. So he chose to protect the edifice of Islam and its name. For this reason, he made peace with Mu'awiyah, who was a resolute hated Imam Hasan and enemy of the religion and of Muslims, and his followers. He knew that Mu'awiyah would deal unjustly with him and his companions, and, although he could have counted on his family and followers to fight for their rights and defend themselves, he believed that the highest interests of Islam were above all these things and more important than them.

It was for the same reason that the third Imam, Husayn, the Holy Martyr, rose up against the Banu Umayyah; for he realized that if they continued in their vicious ways without anyone taking arms against them and proclaiming their wicked intentions, they would eradicate Islam and its glory. Thus he wished to point out their oppression and iniquity for posterity, so as to expose their evil plans against the Prophet's religion. Naturally, events turned out as had been predicted. If it had not been for his holy

campaign, Islam would have been recorded as a religion of the past, and it would have been thought a false religion.

In completing his holy campaign, following through and pursuing his sacred aim against iniquity and oppression, the Shi'a revive and remember the tragedy at Karbala' every year and in various ways, as the Imams have commanded.

We should obtain a better and clearer understanding of how the Descendents of the Prophet tried hard to preserve the glory of Islam if we study the behavior of Imam Zayn al-' Abidin towards the Umayyid kings, despite the fact that his family had been killed and that his reputation had been destroyed by them. He was continually despondent and heart-broken over the murder of his father and family by the Umayyids at Karbala', but, in spite of these things, he always prayed that the armies of the Muslims would be victorious, and secretly asked Allah to keep the Muslims in safety and to ensure the increase and glory of Islam. He propagated knowledge of Islam, and by means of prayer alone he taught his followers how they should ask Allah for victory for the Muslims. He said in his famous du'a', for the guardians of the frontiers of Islam:

O Allah! Send down peace upon Muhammad and his Family increase their numbers, sharpen their swords, protect their homes, preserve their country, cause friendship to spread among them, improve their conduct, provide them with sustenance and the means of livelihood, help them, bestow on them patience, teach them the ways of cleverness . . . (and then after calling for the wrath of Allah on the unbelievers) O Allah! In this way strengthen the people of Islam, protect their lands, increase their property, let the soldiers of Islam be free from fighting that they might worship Thee privately. Let nothing be worshipped over the whole of the earth but Thee. Let no-one prostrate himself before anyone but Thee.

Thus he continued his du'a' (it is one of his longest), telling of the duties of the Muslims armies, how they must behave and be of good character and have good equipment. It contains teachings on the Holy War (jihad), showing its purpose and its results, warning Muslims to keep clear of their enemies, instructing them how to deal with their attacks and defend themselves. It also contains instructions on their obligations, such as continual remembrance of Allah, avoidance of unlawful things and keeping the jihad pure for Allah.

Likewise, other Imams have dealt with the kings of their times, although they were being tortured and cruelly and severely maltreated by these kings with many kinds of suffering and pain. When they realized that an' Islamic government was not going to be re-established, they tried their best to teach the religion to the people, pointing out to them the excellence of Islamic knowledge. No insurrection which happened either through some of their family or through others during these times was ordered by them; on the contrary, these were in opposition to their explicit orders, because they made the utmost effort to protect the government of Islam. No-one, not even the 'Abbasid khulafa' tried harder than them to protect it.

It is enough just to look at the advice of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (A.S.) to his followers:

I charge you to obey your king and not to lose your strength through disobedience. If he is just, ask Allah to protect his life; if he is an oppressor, ask Allah to reform him. For your interests are identical with his interests. Verily, a just king is really like a father - wish for him what you wish for yourselves, and do not wish for him what you do not wish for yourselves.

This is one of the best sayings on the subject of the protection of a king by his people: "wish for him what you wish for yourselves, and do not wish for him what you do not wish for yourselves."

Compare with this the great offence some writers who are contemporary with us have committed. They have spoken of the Shi'a as a hidden destructive group, as a band of revolutionaries and avengers. Now, it is correct that every Muslim who obeys the teachings of the Household should, from the moral point of view, despise oppression and oppressors, keep clear of them and their evil deeds feel repugnance and contempt for them and their fellows and helpers and dislike them all. The Shi'a have had these feelings engrained in their souls from generation to generation. However, they are not rebels. Nor do they like to stir up trouble or foment insurrection against a rebellious government which says that it is an Islamic government, neither secretly nor openly.

The teachings of the Imams do not allow them suddenly to take the life of someone who is a Muslim, or to betray him, although his beliefs may differ from theirs. But, according to their teachings, a Muslim who professes tawhid and the nubawwah of Muhammad (S.A.) is to be respected; his blood, his property and his family is secure. "It is not right to take the property of a Muslim except by his permission." All Muslims are brothers to each other, and to each of them belong the rights of brotherhood, as we shall now explain

Aqaid Class 11 - Lesson 17

Doctrine of the Rights of Brotherhood between Muslims

One of the highest and most excellent instructions of Islam to all Muslims is brotherhood without distinction of birth, rank or position. But, unfortunately, Muslims have always neglected this. One of the smallest duties of Islamic brotherhood is that a Muslim should wish for his brother what he wishes for himself, and that he should not wish for his brother what he does not wish for himself, as we shall point out in a tradition from Imam Sadiq.

One must study this duty well, and it is accounted a very small one in the opinion of the Descendents of Muhammad. One sees that Muslims find it difficult to fulfill this small duty, for their morals and behavior are not in accordance with the Islamic spirit. Concentrate carefully on this small responsibility; if people were to respect it, neither oppression, nor enmity, nor theft, nor falsehood nor backbiting, nor informing would be found anywhere among them. If they realized the result of this and were careful in carrying out this duty, oppression and enmity would disappear; they would live as brothers with each other and attain the height of happiness among themselves. Madinah al-Fadilah of the ancient philosophers would become a reality, no government would be needed, no court of law, no police, prison or criminal law they would be free from colonizers and tyrants; oppressors could not force their iniquity on them; and the earth would become paradise.

Furthermore, if Islamic brotherhood reigned among people, as Islam has said it should, then the word justice would disappear from our dictionaries; justice and its laws would not be needed, and brotherhood alone would suffice to ensure goodness, peace, happiness and pleasure among us. For humanity, in such a situation, would have no need for justice and its laws; these are only needed when there is a lack of love between people. A mother is kind and good towards her children because of her love and compassion, not because of the commandments of justice. We can understand why a man loves only himself and that which is agreeable to him; it is impossible for him to love something or someone unless it belongs to him. And when he does love something or someone, it is impossible for him to give them to someone else whom he dislikes unless there exists a principle which is stronger than his desires, like a belief in justice and kindness, and in this case, he may devote his interests to someone else whom he does not like.

Such an ideal, when it dwells in the human mind, keeps it in a position above all material things, so that it is able to realise the superiority of justice and goodness and to show kindness to others. It will be seen that man needs such superior ideals when there is no kindness and brotherhood between him and his fellow men. That is to say that as long as he lacks the feeling of brotherhood - and the fact that he does is because of his egotism and desires as long as this feeling is missing, he must believe in the goodness of justice and kindness, following the guidance of Islam. And if he fails to believe in this as well, then he does not deserve to be thought of as a Muslim; such a man even in name, is not a friend of Allah; he has done nothing for the sake of Allah as we shall see in the tradition of the Imam which follows. Usually human desires overcome man, and it

is difficult for him to prepare himself even to believe in justice, and so it is much more difficult for him to attain that perfect belief through which he can vanquish his desires.

We can see that the brotherhood of man is very difficult to obtain as long as its desirability is not sensed. For this reason, Imam Sadiq did not wish to explain to al-Mu'alla ibn Khunays more than he could understand, because Ja'far was afraid to teach him what he could not put into practice. Mu'alla asked:

'What does one Muslim owe another?'

'There are seven duties incumbent upon him. Should he neglect but one of them, he is not a friend or servant of Allah and truly he has done nothing for the sake of Allah.'

'What may these things be?'

'I feel compassion for you. I am afraid lest you learn them, but you neglect to put them into practice, or you cannot. There is no power but in Allah.'

Mu'alla then relates that the Imam told him the seven:

'First. the smallest duty is that you should wish for your brother what you wish for yourself, and that you should wish that what you do not desire for yourself should not befall your brother.'

So, this is a small duty'. Do we find this easy? That is to say, we present-day Muslims? May those who call themselves Muslims but do not act in accordance with this small but strict duty find themselves disgraced.

It is amazing that the backward state of the Muslims should be ascribed to Islam, while the only reason for it is the behaviour of the Muslims that is those who call themselves Muslims but do not carry out this humble duty.

Having reminded ourselves and mentioned our present circumstances, we shall now list the seven duties as related by Mu'alla from Imam Ja'far (A.S.).

- (a) Wish for your brother what you wish for yourself, and wish that what you do not desire for yourself should not befall your brother.**
- (b) Do not make your brother angry, but seek to please him and obey his wishes.**
- (c) Help him with your soul, your tongue, your hands and your feet.**
- (d) Be his eye to see by, his guide to lead him and his mirror.**
- (e) Do not eat your fill when he is hungry, nor drink and clothe yourself when he is thirsty and naked.**
- (f) If he has no servant, but you do, it is incumbent on you to send your servant to him to wash his clothes, cook his food and spread out his mattress.**
- (g) Accept his promise and his invitation; visit him when he is sick, attend his funeral, and see to his needs before he asks you, hurrying to do them if you can.**

When he had finished, Imam Ja'far said:

If you fulfill these duties you can call yourself his friend, and he will be your friend also.

There are many traditions told from our Imams, and most of them are collected in 'Kitab al-Wasa'il' in the relevant sections.

Some people have imagined that the Imams meant brotherhood only among the Shi'a, but if they were to read the traditions they would understand that their imagination is deceiving them, although the Imams did strongly repudiate those whose way was against the Shi'a and who did not follow their guidance. Let us mention here the conversation of Imam Sadiq with Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab.

'How should we treat those who do not follow our ways?'

'Look to your Imams whom you obey, and obey them and imitate them. They visit them (i.e. those who are not Shi'a) when they are sick, go to their funerals, give evidence for or against them and repay their trust.'

No, the brotherhood that the Imams envisaged among their followers is higher than ordinary Islamic brotherhood, and it has been mentioned briefly in the introduction. It will suffice to read the following conversation between Imam Sadiq and Aban ibn Taghlab.

Aban relates: While I was circumambulating the Ka'bah with Imam Sadiq, one of our friends signaled to me that I should immediately go with him to help him. The Imam noticed and said to me:

'O Aban, does he mean you?'

I replied: 'Yes.'

'Does he believe in what you believe in?'

'Yes.'

'Then go with him and break your circumambulation.' I asked if it was incumbent on me to do so, and he said that it was. Then I went with the man to help him, and after doing so I returned to the Imam and asked him about the rights of the believers.

'Do not ask me concerning them,' he said.

But I insisted.

'Give your brother half of what you own,' he told me, and looked at me. He understood my surprise and said: 'O Aban! Do you know that Allah admires those believers who prefer others to themselves?'

I replied: 'Yes.' 'When you give your brother half of what you own you do not prefer him above yourself, but only when you give him the other half do you really prefer him above yourself.'

If we feel shame at this, then really we should not call ourselves believers. We are quite remote from the teachings of the Imams. Everyone who reads this tradition becomes astonished as did Aban, but then he pays no further attention to it and forgets it, as if he were not the person addressed, and as if he were not responsible.