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In this paper, the author examines the first three months of the Islamic Lunar Calendar 1432 i.e. Muharram, Safar and Rabi‘ al-Awwal.

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Editorial Volume 11, Number 4, Winter 2011/1432

We are grateful to God and pleased to present the final issue of volume 11 of the *Message of Thaqalayn*. This marks the completion of eleven years of publication of the *Message of Thaqalayn* and brings hope that God-willing it will continue and become stronger and stronger. Publication of this issue has coincided with the first three months of the Islamic Lunar Calendar 1432 i.e. Muharram, Safar and Rabi‘ al-Awwal.

Some of the most important highlights of this season is the anniversary of martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a) and his companions on the 10th of Muharram, martyrdom of Imam Sajjad (a) on the 12th or the 18th or the 25th of Muharram, birth of Imam Baqir (a) on the 3rd of Safar, birth of Imam Kazim (a) on the 7th of Safar, the Day of Arba‘in which marks the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a) on the 20th of Safar, demise of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and martyrdom of Imam Hasan (a) on the 28th of Safar, martyrdom of Imam Riz̄a (a) on the 30th of Safar, martyrdom of Imam Hasan Askari (a) on the 8th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal and birth of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and Imam Sadiq (a) on the 17th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal.

We have already discussed some of these events in previous issues. Thanks to God, in this issue, we are able to publish the first part of a very informative paper on the Prophet Muhammad (s) whose birth and demise anniversaries have coincided with the publication of this issue. Similar to the previous issues, this issue also contains seven papers on various aspects of Islamic thought.

The first paper is entitled: “Understanding God’s Mercy, Part I.” In this paper, Dr. Mohammad Ali Shomali highlights the importance of divine mercy as that which plays a central role in Islamic spirituality and morality. Dr. Shomali examines the infiniteness of God’s mercy and His aim in creating man as seen in His qualities and actions, in divine sayings, and in the supplications and hadiths of the Ahlul –Bayt (a).

As a result of this description, human beings are to aspire to have good deeds. Realizing God’s infinite mercy can also ensure the practice of sincerely loving God and extending that love in a person’s social sphere. This paper is based on a series of eight lectures given by Dr Shomali in July 2010 on Understanding God’s Mercy at the Islamic Centre of England, London.

The second paper is entitled: “*Islam, Humanity and Human Values.*” In this paper, Imam Sayyid Musa Sadr examines the definition of humanness by offering theories given by Greek peripatetics, determinists, socialists, and materialists. He concludes that God is the primary being capable of defining humanness, and offers ways in which humanness can be achieved as stated in the Holy Qur'an.

To further elucidate on this topic, Sadr also explains the effect that belief in one God has on a person’s spiritual and mental state. Human beings have an honourable status, are created by the best Creator, and are given the opportunity to be God’s vicegerent on earth. With this, they are given the choice to be God’s righteous servants by enduring life’s adversities as a means to develop in various ways, achieve humanness through Islamic morality, and work together as one united body to gain Allah’s (swt) pleasure in this world and in the afterlife.

This paper was delivered by Imam Musa Sadr at the Sixth Annual Conference of Assembly for Islamic Research (*Majma‘ al-Buhūth al-Islāmiyyah*) in Cairo, held on March 30th 1971. This paper was published in Farsi in *Adyān Dar Khedmat-e Insan* and has been translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqalayn* by Mohammad Reza Farajian. Where required, changes have been made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqalayn*.

The third paper is entitled: “Taqwa, Part I.” In this paper, Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari demonstrates the importance of taqwa, or self-restraint, as put forth in the Qur'an and *Nahj al-Balāghah* through explaining its definition, meaning, value, and effect. As a result, Ayatollah Mutahhari clarifies four misunderstandings and concludes:

- 1) fearing God is in reality fearing His justice and making the heart wary of Him,
- 2) taqwa is about living a pious life rather than merely performing religious obligations,

3) taqwa is a freedom, not a restriction, and

4) rather than acting upon pragmatic obligations that force one not to sin, true perfection lies in the person's freedom to do wrong and yet he or she refrains from doing so. While knowing that taqwa is a perfect state, it is still to be protected as the entities that weaken taqwa constantly surround people. And as taqwa guarantees a successful afterlife, it also serves as a shield in life's adversities.

This paper is based on a lecture delivered by Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari in 1339/1960 in Farsi, published in *Dah Gofteh*. It has been translated into English for the *Message of Thaqalayn* by Zeynab Rahimi Sabet, Nasibeh Ramezani and Hamideh Farajian. Where required, changes have been made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqalayn*.

The fourth paper is entitled: "Khums: A Support for the Financial Independence, Part II." In this paper, Ayatollah Nasir Makarem Shirazi presents an additional explanation of khums by refuting objections to it. These objections and refutations are explained using two categories:

1) khums as presented in hadiths,

2) khums during the absence of Imam Mahdi (a).

Ayatollah Shirazi responds to these objections to prove that khums is an obligation and it is to be performed along with the rest of Muslims' duties toward Allah (swt). As seen in some hadiths, the Imams (a) had temporarily forgiven khums only when the Shi'a were under pressure and upon scrutinizing these hadiths, there is no proof that khums is exempted during Imam Mahdi's (a) absence. The Imams (a) emphasized on the payment of khums and had assistants to help manage this income. The *Message of Thaqalayn* has revised and summarised the English translation of this paper by Bahador Shirazian. God-willing, in the next part, two more issues will be discussed:

1) practice of khums during the dawn of Islam, and

2) distribution of half of it to needy *Sayyids*.

The fifth paper is entitled: "Shi'ite Authorities in the Age of Minor Occultation, Part II." In this paper, Huj. Ali Naghi Zabihzadeh studies the personality and role of a great Shi'a jurisprudent and scholar of faith who led the community during the Age of Minor Occultation (260 –329 A.H) i.e. Muhammad ibn Ya'qub Kulayni. This paper is based on the second chapter of *Marja'iyyat wa Siyasat*, vol. 1, published in Qum in 2005 by the Imam Khomeini Education & Research Institute. This paper has been translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqalayn* by Hamideh Farajian. When needed, changes are made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqalayn*.

The sixth paper is entitled: "Hijab and Family Life." In this paper, Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali examines the impact hijab has on keeping the family structure intact. In doing so, he describes the need men and women have for each other as that which God observed in His creation and legislation. In this

description, sacredness of marriage, men and women's essential roles, and the strong society it builds as a result of its practice are explained. The author uses verses from the Qur'an to portray that it merely ensures its observance. Hijab in hadiths have also been used. The author uses verses from the Qur'an to show that the Islamic idea of hijab is rooted in the Qur'an. Hadiths on hijab have also been used to demonstrate its adherence by the Ahlul Bayt (a).

The seventh paper is entitled: "A Glimpse of the Character Traits of the Prophet Muhammad, Part I". In this paper, Ayatollah Sayyid Abu'l-Fadl Mujtahid Zanjani reviews the life and conduct of Prophet Muhammad (s) in a scholarly manner.

The paper first appeared in Persian under the title: "*Gush-e'i az Akhlaq-i Muhammad (s)*" (A Glimpse of the Character Traits of the Prophet Muhammad) in the book *Muhammad Khastam-i Payambar* (*Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets*), Husayniyyah-i Irshad, Tehran, 1347/1968.

This volume was published to commemorate the 1400th anniversary according to the lunar calendar of the prophecy of Muhammad (blessings be upon him and his household). The paper has been translated from Farsi into English by Dr Karim Aghili. This translation was first published in *Apostle of God*, edited by Mohammad Ali Shomali, Islamic Centre of England, London, 2009 and is now being republished with slight changes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed to this issue and pray for their success. I would also like to thank the Ahlul Bayt (a) World Assembly and the Islamic Centre of England for their continued support and encouragement. And last but not the least, I thank God the Almighty for His guidance and favours upon us in the past and present and ask request him to help us all achieve a unified worldwide community.

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February 2011

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