

Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Book of Government

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Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Book of Government

Imam Ali (a.s.) and Political Leadership

This text presents Imam Ali's policy in governmental, political, military, social, cultural, economical and judicial affairs in Islam. The author talks about: the political thought and practical policy of Imam Ali, the Imam's practical behavior during his imamate and caliphate, the features of Islamic government and Muslim governors, mutual responsibilities of Islamic government and people towards each other, the factors of weakness and fall of governments, the factors of weakness and strengthening societies, terms of pledging allegiance to Islamic soil and Muslim's (people and government) behavior towards opposed groups. The book also provides the analysis of Imam Ali's battles, and different aspects of Malik e Ashtar's protocol and Imam's orders for him are considered, too.

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A Word to the Readers

Siyasat Nama is the most efficient part of Mawsu'a al-Imam Ali b. Abi Talib – The Encyclopedia of Imam Ali (a.s.) – for ruling a country and the noblest asset for organizing the well-founded Islamic Civilization in the human society today.

In effect, Siyasat Nama of Imam Ali (a.s.) – Imam Ali's Book of Government – is a volume consisting of Sovereignty policies of human values. Thus, it is extremely helpful and instructive not only for the Islamic world and statesmen, but also for all those who are suffering from the dominance of power, gold, and

fraudulence under various rubrics, and those who yearn for the rule of values (on top of which lies justice). This part of the Mawsu'a was translated prior to other sections of this collection and presented hereby, in a separate volume, to the interested readers.

Before reading this volume, the esteemed readers are asked to pay attention to the following points:

1. Siyasat Nama is a complete translation [into English] of the fourth volume of Mawsu'a of Imam Ali (a.s.), which includes the Arabic text, too, for those interested in hadith and historical texts in the source language.
2. The prolegomenon to this version of Siyasat Nama is more detailed than the fourth volume of the Mawsu'a, consisting, besides new points, an analysis explaining the reasons for Imam Ali (a.s.)'s being left alone toward the end of his rule, as well as the reasons behind disruption of 'Alawi Rule despite his efficient policies.^{[1](#)}
3. Prolegomenon of Siyasat Nama is a summing up of 'Alawi policies. To learn more thoroughly about Imam Ali (a.s.)'s policies in various fields, however, it is necessary to refer to the main text [of this volume] in due order of the policies.
4. The references in the footnotes of the "Prolegomenon" are just part of the sources used in Siyasat Nama for further information about other sources; it is required to refer to the main chapters of the book.
5. Also, wherever reference is made to a "section", it is meant the sections of Mawsu'a al-Imam Ali b. Abi Talib.

In the end, I would like to thank all my respected colleagues and others who collaborated in compilation and authoring the Mawsu'a al-Imam Ali b. Abi Talib; particularly, the two eminent scholars, Mr. Sayyid Muhammad Kazim Tabataba'i and Sayyid Tabataba'i Nijad as well as the honorable Professor Muhammad Ali Mahdawi Rad, who took on organizing its analysis.

Also, I am sincerely grateful to Mr. Ahmad Ridwani who took on the English translation of Siyasat Nama as well as another brother for editing this work. I pray to the Beneficent God to bestow on them all, rewards befitting His Grace and the dignity of the Master of the Pious [Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.)]. O Lord! Accept this from us! Verily You are the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

Muhammad Muhammadi Rayshahri

January 22, 2001

^{[1](#)} This analysis is added to the prolegomenon of the present book from the Seventh Volume of "The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin", [The Persian translation of the "Mawsu'a"].

Prolegomenon

Politics in two Schools

Imam Ali (a.s.) took over the affairs of Muslims on Dhil Hajja 18, 35 AH / June 17, 656 CE, and was martyred in his prayer niche on Ramadan 21, 40 AH/ January 29, 661 CE. Hence, the reign of his holiness lasted only four years, nine months, and three days. Issues in relation to this period of his life are as follows:

1. How the Imam (a.s.) attained power; dimensions of 'Alawi reformation and its fundamentals.
2. Various kinds of resistance against 'Alawi policies; wars and clashes during his holiness' short period of rule.
4. Administrators of Ali (a.s.)'s government and his companions.
5. Plot for assassination of Imam Ali (a.s.), and his martyrdom.

Of the above mentioned topics, "'Alawi Policies in hukuma (rulership)" is of utmost importance and specific status due to its instructive and functional significance in the present era, and its guiding doctrine for rulers, particularly for the Islamic Republic of Iran's statesmen.

We believe that if "Politics" in 'Alawi and Umayyad schools is rightfully defined and the Imam's political principles in governing are, however briefly, delineated, objections that are made, and perhaps even now are manifested in some peoples' words and writings, on his political insight will be responded and his policies will be rightly and steadfastly defended.

Political insight, from the viewpoints of Imam Ali, is one of the most crucial requirements of leadership. The Imam not only considers "understanding politics" and having correct appreciation of it as the secret of durability of a government, but also stresses that "governing a state is the very politics".^{[1](#)}

He asserts that political incapability is a malady that threatens the statesmen's authority with downfall. In the Imam's view, rulers who do not possess acute and efficient political insight will not stay long in office. Eventually, incorrect policies, according to 'Alawi doctrines, are indicative of the decline of governments and downfall of states.^{[2](#)}

Thus, according to 'Alawi school, ruling a community on the basis of Islamic principles would be practicable solely through the right statesmanship of the rulers. In other words, statesmanship is one of

the general principles of management, equally important in various doctrines. The type of attitude and how politics is interpreted, appreciated, and perceived is what distinguishes Islam in this respect from other doctrines, outshines 'Alawi policies above other policies, and sets it against Umayyad policies.

Umayyad Policies

In Umayyad ideology, politics is defined as "recognizing the goal and attaining it through every possible means". The world politicians of the past and present seem to have had no perception beyond this. In reality, politics in Umayyad ideology falls in the same category of meaning as political trends of the governments that are not based on value foundations and are not prompted by the criterion for realizing truth and false that would guide them in their interactions and manners. Describing a feature of politicians, Oswald Spengler said: "a politician by nature has nothing to do with the truth or falsehood of things."

Moreover, Bertrand Russell has perceived political motives and behavioral roots of man in politics as such and stated:

"Political motives in most people include profiteering, selfishness, competition and love of power. For instance, in politics, all human actions originate from the above traits. A political leader who can convince people that he would be able to satisfy these needs, would also be able to subjugate people in such a way that they get to believe that two plus two equals five, or his authority has come down to him right from God.

The political leader who neglects these basic motives is usually deprived of the support of the masses. Psychology of public dynamics is the most basic part of successful political leader's education. Most political leaders achieve their posts by convincing people that they have humanitarian ideals. It is easily understood that such belief will be welcome as it is emotionally appealing. Fettering people, public lectures and sermons, illegal punishments, and wars are procedures of development of emotions. I think keeping people in emotions provides the followers of illogical thinking with a better chance to deceive them and make benefit from them."³

What is brought up in this analysis about political leaders of communities is consistent with the interpretation made of politics by Umayyad statesmen. Mu'awiya is the founder of this approach to politics in Islamic history. On this basic, and relying on the slogan "Politics is barren" in order to snatch power and safeguard the acquired power, he was ready to go to any extremes and use any hideous means to this end.

'Alawi Politics

Politics, in Ali (a.s.)'s view, is unfaltering administration of the community based on Divine criteria, and a truth – oriented movement. He is quoted as saying:

Administering a state is politics.[4](#)

He never approved of doing anything for achieving power and retaining it. On the contrary, he never considered resorting to illegitimate means as permissible, even to the cost of losing power.

According to 'Alawi doctrine, politics is the recognizing and employing legal instruments in administering a community, and providing people with material and spiritual welfare. In other words, by 'Alawi doctrines, exploiting illegitimate means and tools which are ostentatiously efficient but erroneous in effect, is not regarded as politics; rather, it is deception, fraudulence, and in Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.)'s words, "imposture".[5](#)

From the viewpoint of Imam Ali (a.s.), government is dominion over the hearts and conquest of wisdoms and affections, rather than subjugation of "bodies", dominance over individuals, and riding upon their shoulders. Such interpretation of government leaves no room for resorting to illegitimate political instruments. In his view, power has no sanctity except for administering justice, hence no need to fall back on false ways to preserve it. Dominion over hearts is in no way possible except by using the right methods and treatment based on values. Illegitimate and false policies may gallop along and go on dominating for a short while, but they will never last long and bring nothing to people but harm and loss:

Truth has a lasting sovereignty, and falsehood a short-lived flaunting.[6](#)

'Alawi Reformations

With this attitude towards government and sovereignty, and with such interpretation of politics, Imam Ali (a.s.) took over the reign, and right after achieving political power started the state reformations accordingly, with the motto, "Social and Economical Justice".

He had proclaimed the reason for accepting hukuma as "embarking on reforms and restoring the suppressed rights. Ali (a.s.) believed that whatever had happened before his time and after the demise of the Apostle of God, had radically changed the community and altered the values, creating a great gap and inconsistency between what was towed behind by the name of "Islamic State", and what the Holy Prophet (S) had originally founded. In his formal statement at the beginning of his caliphate, Ali (a.s.) asserted that what had been done had been inconsistent with the sira and sunna of the Apostle of God; the status quo was unbearable; and there was a strong need for providing a new way and a firmly set procedure which would be unlike "the tradition of the two Shayks", but of "'Alawi tradition and 'Alawi reforms" consistent with "the tradition of the Prophet" and Muhammadan reforms".

Surprisingly, Imam Ali (a.s.) has found out through his deep political insight that such procedure and reformation would not be tolerated by people who had for a long time been accustomed to reverse values: "Neither hearts can stand it nor can intellects accept it".[7](#)

However, he is a Truth-oriented statesman who regards "Politics" as honesty in speech and clarity in

position, as well as adherence to Truth, and no less than that. That is why in his very first statement, he declares explicitly an unrelenting struggle against alterations, deviations, abnormalities, and undue ups and downs, without the slightest fear of the political repercussions and social tension that would ensue. Of course, he started all this with resolution, far-sightedness, and accurate and firm policy-making and planning.

'Alawi Policies in Confrontation with Deviations

Imam Ali (a.s.) was profoundly and closely aware of what had befallen the people, and knew how they had acclimatized to the deviations, and now he is determined to embark on reforms; he knew both the depth of the calamity and the difficulty of removing it from every nook and cranny of the society. Thus, Imam Ali (a.s.) acted neither hastily nor unplanned. He divided the reforms he intended to make into two categories:

1. Fighting against administrative and economic corruption,
2. Fighting against cultural deviation.

The Policy of Administrative and Economical Reformation

Ali (a.s.) began encountering administrative and economic deviations and fighting against related corruption from the very beginning of his rule. He expelled incompetent, corrupt, and ill-behaved administrators from their posts and reclaimed the plundered public treasury.

On the first day of his rule, the Imam proclaimed his intended reform policy in the following thought – provoking words:

You should know that if I respond to you, I would lead you as I know I should and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse.⁸

That means you should comply with me, rather than the reverse. Ali (a.s.) is Truth-centered man, adept in the sunna, and absorbed in God. What is thought-provoking here is that the Imam indicates that he knows this complying would lead to hardships; above all, rebukes, faultfinding, and chantage and lobbying would follow. His motto, however, is: "I am Truth-centered and I safeguard the truth, and nothing else.

Then, on the second day of his Caliphate, he asserted in his lofty status of social guidance and in view of his great responsibility of leadership as follows:

Know that any land that 'Uthman has granted and any wealth from God's property that he has given as gift will be refunded to the public treasury; as nothing would violate previous rights and if I find the assets I will restore them to their rightful place even if they are given as marriage-portion to women or

distributed among cities; as justice is expanding in nature, and for whomsoever justice is constraining, oppression will be even more so.[9](#)

In a fervent, awakening and thought-provoking sermon, the Imam widely spoke on the same day about the responsibility of the authorities of a community in realizing social justice, stressing that he would not give a special privilege to anybody for utilizing public treasury; and those who have appropriated, through public treasury, plots of land, water, well-bred horses, and good looking maids should know that Ali will confiscate all those assets and return them to the treasury.

These words came down like thunderbolts, heavily striking like a smith's hammer on the heads of those who had plundered and pillaged, and now were extremely worried; and thus Ali (a.s.)'s outcry advocating justice reverberated more than ever among the well-known figures, who soon turned into staunch opponents of Alawi rule.

These mottos were uttered, and the people got familiar with a resonance unknown to them up to then.

On the third day of Ali (a.s.)'s rule, people sought to receive their portion of public treasury. The Imam ordered his notary, 'Ubayd Allah b. Rafi' as follows:

Start from Muhajirun (the emigrants). Call for them and give them three dinars each. Then, call for the Ansar (the helpers), and treat them similarly. Anyone else coming to you, black or red, or..., treat them the same way you treated Muhajirun and Ansar....[10](#)

The dignitaries from among the people found out that Ali (a.s.)'s plan of economic justice was not a slogan; it was real practice, and very serious indeed. Objections began to be raised in his presence. He reported the events. Not only the Imam was not shocked by the onset of oppositions, especially from pompous figures, and did not hesitate on his way, but also decisively asserted the continuation of his reforms. He said:

By God, if I remain [in power] and stay unimpaired, I will set them firm on a bright path.[11](#)

From this very moment, vengeance for 'Uthman's bloodshed began! Was it not ironic that some of the gold-hoarders and affluent stipulated their allegiance to the Imam on the following two conditions?

1. Ali (a.s.) should not meddle in the wealth that they have seized over the rule of 'Uthman;
2. He should identify, arrest and kill the murderers of 'Uthman.

The Imam, however, knew that vengeance for 'Uthman's bloodshed was only a pretext. What was of importance to them was prevention of taking back the illegitimate riches and treasured up properties left over from the era of 'Uthman. In this respect, the Imam had heard various proposals and had strongly rejected all the proposals, which were compromising, contradictory to restoring rights, and based on trampling upon public treasury.

- [1.](#) See 10/1 (Causes for Durability of Governments).
- [2.](#) See 10/2 (Causes for the Decline of Governments).
- [3.](#) Robert Edward Egner, Bertrand Russell, Best: Silhouette in Satyr.
- [4.](#) Al-Saduq, al-Amali, 132.
- [5.](#) Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) says about Mu'awiya's political wits: "It is imposture and devilishness; it looks like intellect, but is not intellect." (Al-Kafi: I, 11.)
- [6.](#) Al-Kafi: II, 447.
- [7.](#) See 1/3: ahadith 7 & 6. [Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 92. Translations of Nahj al-Balagha throughout this book are mainly adopted from Sayyid Ali Reza and William Chittick.]
- [8.](#) See 1/3, hadith 8.
- [9.](#) 2/3, hadith 72.
- [10.](#) See 2/1, hadith 62.
- [11.](#) Ibid.

Policy of Cultural Reformation

In parts of the Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.), the reason for and the quality of people's uprising against 'Uthman's rule is delineated, the most important of which is standing up against administrative corruptions and economic disturbances.[1](#) People had been fed up with the undue extravagance and nepotism, and would not tolerate the incompetent sovereignty and inefficient statesmen who had been assigned to their posts only because of their attachment to the Caliph. From the early days of his rule, Ali (a.s.) thus started his bureaucratic and economic reforms despite all the difficulties that arose thereby.

However, the ground was not paved for accomplishment of cultural and intellectual reforms and fight against value deformations and deviations which had taken place in various dimensions in the Islamic state. Ali (a.s.) had to delay and act hesitantly, preparing the ground to begin the struggle. In other words, the endeavor required more stability and stronger establishment of his government. That was why Ali (a.s.) would say:

If my steps acquire firmness out of these slippery places, I would alter several things.[2](#)

The Imam could not easily and immediately fight against what had over a period of 25 years rooted in people's minds, tongues, souls, and characters and made them accustomed to it, building a different culture for them.

Undoubtedly, this fight would have raised widespread discontent and exacerbated the already knotty affairs, hindering the chance for other reformations. So, forbearance had to be shown until the time for plucking fruits would come up.

Anyway, Ali (a.s.) embarked on reforms on the basis of a precise planning, a clear perspective, and

explicit goals aiming at restoring the community back to the prophet's sira and sunna. He took the first step toward creation and expansion of social justice and execution of administrative and economic reforms, carrying it on to the end of his life in order to lay the foundation for a thoroughly "Islamic" community based on the Qur'anic values and Divine doctrines. Evil-mindedness, ill-naturedness, inhumanity, and tyrannies regrettably hindered that man of justice and faith from achieving all those goals.

What we deal here with is an account of most fundamental 'Alawi Reform in bureaucratic, cultural, economic, social, judicial, security, military, and international areas on the basis of historical and hadith texts, as well as an explanation of reforms principles. Undoubtedly, a thorough account of the Imam's political foundations and an interpretation of his reformation, demands more time.

One: The Foundations of Ruling over the Hearts

Islam is the religion of hukuma, which is clearly evident in the doctrines of this Divine Faith. A close study of the Islamic texts dealing with foundations of Islamic hukuma, however, indicates that Islam is a religion that rules over the people's hearts rather than over their "bodies" and dominating them with political authority. Principles of this type of ruling and statesmanship are tantamount to the political foundations of the Islamic state; and political foundations of 'Alawi [ruling] system are the very foundations of Islamic management.

Islam is the code of material and spiritual evolution of human beings. Affection is the most basic element of this code. Affection is so functional in realization of the Islamic state and the plans provided by the Divine religion for development of human society that Al-Imam al-Baqir considers the religion of Islam as nothing but affection, and asserts:

Is religion anything but affection?[3](#)

In Ali (a.s.)'s view, main pillars of Islam and its principles of evolutionary planning are based on love for Allah. He says in this respect:

This Islam is the religion which Allah has chosen for Himself, developed it before His eyes, chose it as the best among His Creation, and established its pillars on His love.[4](#)

Religious guides and true political leaders of Islamic community are manifestations of people's love for God, and people's love for them is love for God. Accordingly, Islamic hukuma is basically stationed beyond people's allegiance and decision [by voting]. Islamic hukuma is rooted in people's love, which is indeed the secret of so much emphasis given by the Qur'an and Islamic hadiths about love of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.).

On the other hand, it is evident that love is not imperative. Man can not be forced to love someone or something merely by circulars, contrary to his inner drive.

Man loves beauty, and love for beauty lies deep in his soul. He, by nature, loves all types of material and spiritual beauties. Thus, if he views a person's insight, character, and manner as beautiful he would fall in love with him; and if he finds him displeasing, he would turn his face away from him. This is man's natural expediency, unless his inner nature shifts otherwise.

Hence, we realize that the secret of emphasis on love of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), and the philosophy of its necessity is persuasion to achieve a real knowledge about them; for their character, conduct, and treatment of people is so beautiful and attractive that true and unbiased knowledge of them simply leads to fondness for and attachment to them. How is it possible to see and know so much beauty in Ali (a.s.)'s conduct and not to love him, unless one has lost his human conscience and defiled his pure and noble nature? This is the secret of people's such fervent love and devotion toward Ali (a.s.). Obviously, these lovers consist of various types of people throughout the history and unbounded by ideologies and beliefs, from all schools of thought; as, beauty and love for beauty has no boundaries, like love for Ali (a.s.) which is the greatest manifestation of beauty.

Ali (a.s.)'s conduct in his life span was replete with adherence to Truth, Truth-centeredness, and spreading of Truth, especially in his demonstration of the most beautiful aspect of human rule during his brief period of hukuma. Would it be possible to behold Ali (a.s.)'s comely grace and beauty and its manifestation in his hukuma and not to fall in love with it?!

Now, before we elaborate on historical and hadith text relating to 'Alawi statesmanship, we intend to review the Imam's political principles in government. This review would be very brief, within our limited ability and time. In reality, restating these principles is, in itself, revealing the secret of creation of Ali (a.s.)'s beauties and attractions, and indicating the political principles of ruling over hearts. We hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran officials do their best in familiarizing with, introducing, and approaching these beauties and try to identify the reality of their political and administrative life as well as their transient responsibility with his; hence, delineating a perspective of 'Alawi comely hukuma for the people of the world.

Two: Administrative Policies

Imam Ali (a.s.)'s managerial policies in administration may be stated in the following principles:

1. Honesty in Politics

Honesty can be considered as the most fundamental principle in Ali (a.s.)'s managerial policies. Throughout history, statesmen were mostly dishonest to people; what they have told people was not what they had thought about it or acted accordingly. Ali (a.s.) had set honesty and truthfulness to people as a steadfast principle in his sovereignty and remained faithful to it from the early days to the moment of his martyrdom. Undoubtedly, honesty has been one of the most significant everlasting attractions of Ali (a.s.)'s rule over the hearts and throughout the history, and an explicit distinction bordering line

between 'Alawi and Umayyad politics.

In Umayyad culture, honesty is meaningless, with fabrication, telling lies, and imposture being the motif of their politics. As mentioned earlier and as it is evident to those having a slight familiarity with history of politics, most statesmen of the past had no implication of politics except for inversion of reality and spreading falsehood in their interactions. Narrating a memory of the late Imam Khomeini (ra) in this respect would be much self-evident and interesting. After his first raging attack against the tyrannical monarchy, that noble figure was arrested. One of the heads of state met with the Imam (ra) and talked to him about politics. Imam (ra)'s account of what that person told is as follows:

"[He said:] Politics is maliciousness, lying, rascality and... so, you'd better leave it to us!"

Imam Khomeini (ra) goes on to say:

"He was right in that. If politics is such things, let it be theirs."[5](#)

Such is the professional statesmen's business; if lying, deception, and double-facedness are eliminated from politics, nothing will be left of it. 'Alawi politics is in sharp contrast with this. At first glance, honesty is the prime requirement of statesmanship. If honesty is left out of statesmen's array of actions and interactions with people, the Truth-orientedness, adherence to law, human rights, social justice, etc., would be rendered meaningless and vain. In other words, all these in the absence of honesty would be mere slogans for deception of people and instruments for further violation of their rights.

In 'Alawi politics, employing "inverting" method is permissible only in battles, within all the restrictions, exceptions, and frameworks which will be pointed out when talking about "Imam's warfare policies".

2. Truth-Orientedness

Truth-orientedness is a manifestation of political honesty in 'Alawi Rule. Adherence to Truth and Truth-orientedness is evident all through Ali (a.s.)'s short period of rule. He thought of nothing but truth and intended anything except restoring of rights. His outcry is for restoring of rights, and his silence is for preparing the grounds for safeguarding the Truth. His teaching in this respect is very thought-provoking and awakening.

There were many who spoke of Truth and Truth-orientedness; but when their personal, group and sectarian interests happened to conflict with their slogans, their interpretations and justifications would come to their aid to sacrifice the Truth. But, it is surprising how steadfast Ali (a.s.) was in his Truth-orientedness. Truth, in his view, is the "Principle". So it must be equally practiced for all – friends, near of kin, insiders, outsiders, etc.

3. Adherence to law

Law is a strong cord that brings cohesion among different social strata. It is not a matter of lawlessness,

as a lawless society is a jungle rather than a human society; rather, it is a matter of law status, and the way rulers and people look at it. Respect for law, in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view, is irrefutable. This can be perceived throughout many texts, including the Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, where his interaction with people in financial matters, execution of legal punishments, etc., is introduced.

Deliberation on this collection will show us that in Ali (a.s.)'s view no one transcends the law, nor anybody or any authority can hinder the execution of Divine law. Obviously, Ali (a.s.)'s position indicates that he does not regard himself as a man of authority before law.⁶ That was why he did not tolerate compromise and struggled with flattery and hypocrisy in politics, strongly disagreeing with falsehood, affected rightfulness, justifications, and [personal] interpretations that were so prevalent in Umayyad's politics.

4. Administrative Discipline

Imam Ali (a.s.) frequently and emphatically enjoined orderliness in affairs and discipline in conducts. This instruction was so important to the Imam that even in his deathbed – where he would naturally have stated his most significant and efficient instructions – he emphasized orderliness in affairs.⁷

He views orderliness in life and discipline in action as among the lofty goals of Divine revelation:

Verily, in it (the Qur'an) lies the knowledge of the future and accounts of the past, remedy to your maladies, and [establishing] orderliness among you.

Again and again he would advise his administrators to attempt in maintaining administrative discipline and not forgetting orderliness in affairs, doing whatever they plan to in their due time and not wasting their time in disorder and confusion.

5. Appointment of Competent and Capable Administrators

Administrators are the executive arms of rulers, and agents of establishing justice and spreading of law in society. Their competence, capability, steadfastness and behavioral soundness are doubtlessly most effective in organizing the society in its various dimensions. Thus, from Imam Ali (a.s.)'s viewpoint in appointing administrators only competence and merits must be the criteria, rather than kinship and relations. "Meritocracy" is the quintessence of appointment in 'Alawi politics. Moral competence, familial originality, expertise, and capability should be the criteria for being appointed, rather than kinship, causal, factional, and sectarian relations, particularly if politically weighed.

By Imam's doctrine, directors and officials are not privileged to grant governmental posts on the basis of familial or political relations. They are not privileged to consign people's affairs to those who are not of noble birth; they are not privileged to assign those who are distanced from moral virtues and good disposition; they are not privileged to employ those who do not possess the proper expertise and due cheerfulness in executive jobs. Job of an administrator is a "trust" and should not be consigned to

anyone but a trustworthy person.

6. Providing the Administrators with their financial Needs

The Imam believed that the administrators must enjoy sufficient remuneration. From the viewpoint of Imam Ali (a.s.), to prevent form corruption and to prepare the ground for reformation, it is necessary that administrators be remunerated handsomely. In that case, on one hand, they will avoid clutching at the public treasury; and on the other, the officials will have the authority to punish the mutinous and treacherous and to discipline the corrupt, and the violators would not have a pretext for their violations.

7. Special Care for the Armed Forces

Armed forces are strong fortresses for guarding the sovereignty of a community. The latter's military power is undoubtedly very influential in maintaining security and preventing the enemy's intrusion, and above all, in barring even the temptation by the rebels to launch an invasion. Military forces, in Imam's view, must enjoy special care from the officials. They must interact with troops as fathers do with their children.

8. Necessity for setting up an Establishment to Monitor the Function of the Administrators

The world is a slippery abode, and the worldly attractions and glamour cause blunder and fall. The officials are to take utmost care in selecting administrators, to the extent that they appoint pure-hearted, good-tempered, and steadfast people for administrative tasks. Once they achieve this goal, they should not feel relieved of the possible administrative corruption, violation of the law, and behavioral abnormalities.

Therefore, setting up an organization for supervising the administrators' behavior and watching over the administrative violations and deviations would be mandatory. Imam Ali (a.s.) strongly forbade prying into people's privacy in a ruling system⁸; but he emphasized on surveillance over employees of an Islamic state and monitoring the administrators' behavior through certain intelligence establishments, lest they should neglect their duties or violate people's rights by means of their power and the authority at their disposal.

The part of Imam's letters in this respect and his letters to the wrongdoing administrators such as Ash'ath b. Qays, Ziyad b. Abih, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, Qudama b. 'Ajlān, Masqala b. Hubayra, and Mundhir b. Jarud, indicate that his holiness had employed very powerful intelligence establishments in his government to Monitor the administrators.

But what is extraordinary here is that the informants were both honest and faithful so that they would watch over carefully, follow up steadfastly, and investigate honestly on one hand, and would be veracious and faithful in their reports, on the other.

The ones that Ali (a.s.) had selected for this extremely important task were so highly endowed with justice, veracity, and authoritativeness that their reports were the bases for administrative rewards and punishments. Those doing good were rewarded by means of the reports, and the treacherous were punished once proved guilty, and the corrupt ones were expelled from work to serve as an example for others.

9. Never Accepting any Gifts

In order to put an end to bribery in the bureaucratic system and cleanse the society of this evil and corruptive practice, he banned acceptance of gifts. Anyhow, the imposters would try to penetrate by any possible means into the administrative body of the government to utilize the state facilities. Hence, the Imam ruled the acceptance of gifts as deception (ghulul) and bribery as polytheism (shirk).

10. Decisiveness Coupled with Tolerance

Ali (a.s.)'s behavior highly represented decisiveness and tolerance. From his point of view, the administrators must practice tolerance and condescendence while being decisive. He regards extreme violence as harmful to the management, as he considers too much leniency and being easygoing in administering justice in people's affairs as detrimental. In Imam's view, a successful manager would be the one who can devise a midway between decisiveness and compassion, strictness and leniency.

Wherever there is need for decisiveness, he should practice it and do not back down; and if leniency is demanded for being successful, he should not avoid using it. Decisiveness Coupled with Tolerance, and strictness joined with leniency is an 'Alawi strategy employed to prevent the rebels from turning more rebellious and the hopeful from becoming desperate. Taking a glance at the tangible examples of what was said here – and presented in this book – would be very instructive.

Three: Cultural Policies

Talking about various dimensions of cultural policies demands much wider attention. Here we bring up the issue just as an introduction to the historical and hadith texts, however briefly, as follows:

1. Development of Education

In 'Alawi system [of hukuma], cultural development precedes economic development, since beside the fact that economic development is not possible without cultural development, a slumbering society submerged in ignorance neither enjoys the economic possibilities, facilities, and blessings nor is endowed with the skills to utilize them or aware of the necessity to use them. Cultural and Educational development is a need of human soul and mind, and economic development is that of the body. It goes without saying that needs of the soul and mind precede [are more significant than] needs of the body.

Imam Ali (a.s.) considered knowledge as the origin and basis of all the physical and spiritual goodness,

and a criterion for evaluation of human beings and believed that ignorance is the origin of all evils and frustrations:

The value of every man is as high as his knowledge.[9](#)

Knowledge is the basis of all goodness, and ignorance is the origin of all evils. [10](#)

He also emphasized that people's needs for knowledge and acquisition of moral virtues are higher than their economic needs:

Verily, people need a good culture more than they need gold and silver.[11](#)

Verily, you need the acquisition of culture and courtesy (adab) more than acquisition of gold and silver.
[12](#)

Looking at this issue from another perspective, we notice that it is clearly stated in Divine doctrines that the philosophy of revelation and the secret of prophethood and the reason for hukuma in the Prophets' school is the education of human beings, removal of ignorance, and motivating the wisdoms. Similarly, Ali (a.s.), whose mind, tongue, and manners are above all else as exponents of Prophetic culture, has represented this fact very beautifully in his sermons[13](#); and clearly represented in his practical way of life the necessity of acculturating people, giving priority to education over bread and water for man, and stressing the development of culture along other dimensions of life. How beautifully he defines paganism (jahiliyya) as a symbol of spreading ignorance and stamping out knowledge. No doubt, a Divine, Prophetic, and 'Alawi community must be far beyond that.[14](#)

2. Correction of Public Culture

Included among sublime and eminent 'Alawi policies is the battle against false traditions, rude manners, unbecoming procedures, and emphasis on decent manners and befitting behaviors, or as briefly stated, rectifying the public culture. Ali (a.s.) would advise his administrators not to eliminate from the society anything on the pretext that it is left over from the past; to support the constructive and humane traditions; and to fight against evil traditions, not tolerating their perpetuation and expansion.

3. Criticism? Yes! But Never Flattery!

Criticism is a right by means of which other rights are restored and despotism – that is the most dangerous pitfall of governments – is banned.

In a society where criticism is free and people are able to disclose the rulers' deficiencies and flaws, the statesmen can better notice their own weak points, fight against corruption and injustice, and offer valuable services.

On the other hand, in the absence of criticism, the grounds will be paved for the emergence of flatterers

and sycophants; the statesmen's weak points in policies, plans and steps will remain unnoticed, and thus corruption, decadence, and injustice in governmental organizations will develop, leading to the fall of the governments.

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) took over the hukuma, undue praise and exaggerated compliments about authorities were part of the public culture. The rulers not only did not prevent them, but also further promoted them. This way, culture of flattery and sycophancy had developed and the cunning enemies of truth, had, by flattering the commanders and authorities, achieved political and social positions without being qualified for those jobs.

On the other hand, since the authorities were never criticized, they began to consider themselves immaculate and flawless to the extent that they took the constructive and compassionate criticisms as offensive and deemed it obligatory to stand against them.

Of the most comely and exciting 'Alawi measures taken in rectification of public culture was the battle against flattery and sycophancy and stress on constructive criticism.

The Imam required his administrators to appoint their associates, consultants, and companions from among those who were more straightforward in their impartiality and to treat them in a way that they would never appeal to flattery, to evade criticism or praise [others] to excess. He would himself also openly and staunchly challenge any eulogy and responded sarcastically to the eulogists and asked people neither to praise nor to flatter him for his Divine duties, and criticize him benevolently instead if they find anything wrong with his plans or if they find his manners criticizable, and not talk to him like they talk to the tyrants.

Interestingly enough, Amir al-Mu'minin had brought up the issue of letting others criticize him not in regular circumstances but on the most critical occasions of his hukuma, i.e., amid the battle of Siffin.

It so happened that the Imam, in an exciting speech, made some remarks regarding the mutual rights of leadership and the people. One of his companions, who was very excited by these points, began as usual to praise and applaud him in details while expressing his obedience. Without being affected by his praising and applause or even being concerned about the sensitive and critical current circumstances, the Imam responded to so much adoration as follows:

In view of the Virtuous people, the worst position of rulers is that it may be thought about them that they love glory, and their affairs may be taken to be based on pride. I really hate that it may occur to your mind that I love high praises or to hear eulogies. By Grace of Allah, I am not like this. Even if I had loved to be mentioned like this, I would have given it up in submissiveness before Allah rather than accept greatness and sublimity to which He is more entitled...

And do not address me in the manner despots are addressed, do not evade me as the people of passion are (to be) evaded, do not meet me with flattery and do not think that I shall take it ill if a true

thing is said to me because the person who feels disgusted when truth is said to him or a just matter is placed before him would find it more difficult to act upon them. [15](#)

And finally, he draws the following conclusion from his words:

Therefore, do not abstain from saying a truth of pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself above erring. I do not escape erring in my actions but Allah helps me in matters which He is more powerful than I. [16](#)

By these words, Imam Ali (a.s.) clearly expressed that if it were not through God's assistance and Divine infallibility, he would fall to blundering too, and despite his enjoyment of Divine immunity, he wanted the people not to be hindered by his political and spiritual status from criticizing him and stressed that if they realized anything mischievous in his government, they were to proceed to point it out to him.

In other words, by responding to the adoration of that person, the Imam firmly condemns the evil custom of eulogizing and praising the commanders and political authorities in the Muslim community on one hand, and on the other, he wants to promote in people the spirit of criticizing and delving into the actions of the Islamic state authorities, even if they were on the highest level of administration, i.e., the infallible Imam, and in effect to encourage the acceptance of constructive criticism among the Muslim community's high ranking authorities.

4. Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Reaction to Destructive Criticisms

The point which must be made at the end of this discourse is the Imam's sagacious reaction to criticisms. Taking into consideration his sira in encountering with criticisms and protests of three main political opposition trends, i.e., Nakithun (covenant breakers), Qasitun (deviators), and Mariqum (apostates) indicates that although he formally and practically asked people to express their criticism, he did not allow the seekers after power, the spiteful, and the plotters to tell and write whatever they wish to achieve their political goals on the pretext of criticism. [17](#)

5. Adherence to Truth, rather than to Personalities

However high the people soar toward the truth, the possibility of their deviation cannot be denied. Thus, it is worthwhile for the people to notice this fact when following personalities and never deem human beings as "absolute". Drawing attention to this issue and other awakening doctrines of Imam Ali (a.s.) should be viewed as the most fundamental guidelines of that holy Imam in rectifying public culture. Obviously, most political and social deviations in socio-political trends originate from absolutism about figures, and "personalism" in taking stances.

Imam Ali (a.s.) used to warn people that personalities, however great, noble, popular, or trustworthy, cannot be criteria for truth and falsehood. He tried to get the society to a stage of awareness, realization of stances and criteria and cultural consciousness so that people would assess personalities and their

stances with Truth, not vice versa; to see the Truth as a criterion for getting to know personalities rather than the other way round.

Four: Economical Policies

The people who stood up against 'Uthman's policies, proclaimed the reasons for their uprising including economical disorder, the caliph's open-handedness, undue largess, negligence of people's livelihood, and dishonesty in public treasury.

In such climate, Imam Ali (a.s.) on one hand stressed on production, and on the other gives priority to regulation of the market, and finally pays close attention to distribution of the public treasury, ruling out any kind of discrimination. Perhaps this had been the Imam's most difficult position. Principles of 'Alawi policies in economy can be enumerated as follows:

1. Promotion of Work Ethos

In 'Alawi doctrines, paying attention to striving and working enjoys a high status. From Ali (a.s.)'s point of view, economic poverty is caused by the traits of lassitude, inactivity, laziness, and inability. A community replete with cheerfulness and activity and dominated by work ethos will not be inflicted by poverty – which is the origin of many material, spiritual, individual, and social maladies. Thus, the Imam highly emphasized the necessity of work and striving, regarding work as worship, and striving for improvement of living condition as taking steps toward God.

2. Agricultural Development

Land is the source of "life". From the viewpoint of Imam Ali (a.s.) people who possess land and water and are at the same time poverty-stricken, will be far from Divine Mercy and deprived of God's favor. Ali (a.s.) emphasized on reviving the land and recommended the development of farming as a means of eliminating poverty from the community, and called people to engendering prosperity in the lands and exploiting them. Above all, he regarded attention to agriculture as a touchstone for evaluating the governments and their efficiency in rulership, viewing agricultural development as among the main duties of administrators, and troop commanders as defenders of farmers' rights.

3. Development of Crafts

The community in which Ali (a.s.) had set up his hukuma did not have the qualifications for "development of crafts", due to its climatic conditions. However, his holiness – according to the traditions quoted from him placed great importance on crafts, calling them and professions in general as "treasures". Imam Ali (a.s.) enjoined his administrators to seriously support the artisans and encouraged the latter to employ utmost producing well-made goods, and never sacrifice a product's "craftsmanship and quality" for the "speed" in production.

4. Development of Trade

In the early Islam as well as during Imam Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma, trade was most influential. Thus, on one hand he would encourage trade prosperity and on the other, would stress on supporting the merchants within governmental structure; and finally, he would explain how to practice trade, how the merchants were to deal in transactions, and in what manner trading had to be performed.

5. Direct Supervision of the Market

The market presents economic endeavors of a community. Transactions take place in the marketplace, and the marketeers are somehow associated with people. Well-being of the market would lead to well-being in transactions and people's sound exploitation of the process of economic struggles for sustenance. Doubtlessly, the prime loss due to abnormality in improper relations in market transactions would be sustained by the people.

Due to the importance of the market and its great impact on people's economical situation and livelihood, Imam Ali (a.s.) directly supervised the market and the quality of transactions there. His holiness would go to the markets of Kufa every morning and, allegedly, like "a children's teacher", instruct God-fearing as well as avoidance of selling short weight, lying, treachery and tyranny to the marketeers.

The texts reporting this direct supervision are very interesting and instructive to read. The Imam would shout among the Muslims enjoining them not to practice frauds and hoarding, to be fair and honest in offering goods as they really are, not to pretend genuineness, to treat the customers in a well-disposed manner, not to devalue the seller when they are buying goods, and not to overestimate their own goods when selling them.

All these admonitions, warnings, and instructions of the Imam given to the marketers are worth mentioning in practice of fairness, justice, human disposition, dignity, and magnanimity.

6. Fair Levy of Taxes

Government, in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view, is for the people and for the establishment of their rights. That is why a part of the government's financial needs must be met by people who benefit from the government and engage in producing and trading under its protection. It is with such intention that taxes are levied in all ruling systems, although by different methods of collection and inclusiveness in different systems. In 'Alawi politics, stressing on levying taxes and government's responsibility in inclusiveness of receiving them from people, as well as the kind of viewing taxes and the reason for and the quality of levying them from people are worth paying attention. Trust in people, emphasis on not creating problems for people, drawing people's attention to the status and the importance of taxes are also noteworthy.

In an instruction to one of his administrators, Imam Ali (a.s.) states, "Never use whippings in collecting taxes nor put people under pressure for that". And the administrator says, "In that case I will have to

return the same way I have gone; that is, the people will not give anything." The Imam replies, "Even if that happens [i.e., even if they give nothing.]" [18](#)

A glance at 'Alawi doctrines in this respect shows that the tax organization and its agents are bound to win people's trust and to observe Islamic morality and religious behavior, while being alert and take care of safeguarding public treasure and carefully learn about the problems of taxation.

7. Not Delaying in Distribution of Public Assets

Imam Ali (a.s.) did not approve of blocking public assets in the state's treasury. Rather, he would try to deliver them to the needy. The Imam's sira indicates that he would not tolerate even one night of delay in this regard. He contended that what belonged to people had to be delivered to them the soonest possible.

8. Necessity of People's Equal Enjoyment of Public Assets

Equal distribution of the public assets among all Muslims was one of the policies in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma. This was contradictory to what had been done to people in the previous years. Therefore, it cost very dear to the well-to-do and those benefiting from the government, and the so called "large grains" (i.e., the bigwigs).

In the Imam's outlook, the Muslim's skin color, tribes and ancestors, their social and clan relations did not make any difference in their portion in public assets. Arabs and non-Arabs, the Emigrants (muhajirun) and the Helpers (ansar), the black and the white, and even the freed slaves and their former masters, were equally treated in this respect and all enjoyed equally from the public incomes.

9. Provision of Basic Needs of life for all People

The general trend of Ali (a.s.)'s economic policy is to struggle with poverty and uprooting it from the face of Islamic community. His holiness' guidelines in this respect are very thought-provoking. He insists that hunger and indigence of a group is caused by unlimited exploitation by another group and open-handedness of the well-to-do:

Whenever a destitute person remains hungry, it is because some rich person has denied (him his share). [19](#)

The Islamic state is bound to prevent the undue accumulation of riches in the hands of the opulent, to eradicate the means of exploitative benefiting of the rich, and to assist with constant attempts and accurate planning the inferiors to meet their basic needs for living. He did lead Kufa, even in that short period of his rule and despite so much clashes, intrigues, and hindrances, to a condition that he proclaimed:

Now in Kufa, all people are enjoying ease and comfort, and the most inferior of them has bread and shelter from the sunshine and enjoys water from the Euphrates.[20](#)

Imam (a.s.)'s recommendations to his administrators for paying attention to the lower classes of society and the so-called "low-income stratum", are amazing. He does not tolerate the indigence of a Christian who once had been exploited by the opulent and at his old age had been abandoned,[21](#) and commands securing his needs through public treasury. He also commands his governors to search all corners of society to identify the poor and the needy and to disentangle them from the claws of poverty.

10. Prohibition of Bestowing Gifts out of Public Assets

Governors are people's trustees and what they have at their disposal is kept with them in trust. Government administrators are not allowed to give away gifts from the government's assets on various occasions and pretexts. Ali (a.s.) views such treatment of public treasury as tyrannical:

The administrators' open-handedness in public assets is tyranny and treachery.[22](#)

11. Never Granting Privileges to One's Kith and Kin

We said that in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view what is at the disposal of the governors and administrators is trusted to them, being allowed to use the assets at their disposals just in administering and rendering services. They do not have the privilege to allocate certain provisions to specific groups. The sons and close relatives of political and social dignitaries in Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma as well as his own sons and relatives did not enjoy any particular privileges. Above all, the Imam showed more sensitivity towards his friends and kin, and was harder and stricter on them in using the public assets in order to set an example for others.

12. Frugality in Public Assets

Given what was said, Imam's policy in consumption of public assets, how the administrators should use them, and how the public treasury should be spent is very interesting and instructive. In order to draw the administrators' attention to utmost frugality in [spending] public incomes and preventing them from extravagance, the Imam asked them through circulars to practice frugality even in writing letters to him:

Sharpen your pens and reduce the space between lines; eliminate the redundant for [writing to] me, and hold on to the meaning and beware of verbosity in writing, for the Muslim public treasury does not tolerate loss.[23](#)

Evidently, when an administrator hears about so much carefulness in writing letters, he would no longer give lavish banquets, or ride costly horses, or try to achieve more and more welfare for himself through public assets.

The Imam's personal frugality in spending the public treasury is very amazing, too. He would not even use the lantern belonging to the public treasury in order to respond to those people who came to him at night time for personal purposes. Also in this line is the thought-provoking and instructive story of Talha and Zubayr who went to Ali (a.s.) to discuss their personal problems while he was seeing into public treasury affairs and then he turned off the public light and had another lantern brought in, unwilling to use the light from a lantern belonging to the public treasury for personal purposes even for a few moments.²⁴

Five: Social Policies

In social issues too, Imam Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma is based on firmly founded and normative procedures and positions. The texts recounting the dimensions of his social policies are thought-provoking and noteworthy. According to such material, the Imam's principles of social policies can be recounted as follows:

1. Social Justice

Justice is the most pivotal, the firmest, the most fundamental, and the most comprehensive aspect of 'Alawi politics and rulership. The sacred name of Imam Ali (a.s.) is so intermingled with justice that Ali is associated with justice and justice is associated with Ali. Justice always prevailed the life of Ali (a.s.) who gave up his life as a martyr in the way of establishing justice and spreading equity.

Stressing on this issue is for ascertaining that only a government can claim to have followed the example of Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma and the sira of that noble Imam in a traditionalistic way, whose authorities gives more importance to justice than anything else and spare no efforts in spreading justice and development of equity, not merely in words and speech – which is the top motto of many claimants today – but in action, manners, and interaction with people from all walks of life. That justice is as rare as elixir. Only a government can claim to be spreading justice that do not sacrifice justice in favor of expedience by means of interpretation and justification.

In 'Alawi system [of hukuma], as well as in the doctrines of that "personified justice", there is no expedient higher than establishing justice. Only the ruling system can claim to be a follower of Ali (a.s.) that, through giving priority to justice over expedients and insisting on implementing it, and despite lobbying and rabble-rousing, aims at holding a permanent rule over the "hearts", rather than a transient rule over "bodies" by preferring baseless expedients.

2. Safeguarding People's Rights

Psychological factors in people's support of governments are as numerous as their intangible needs. One of the most important factors of popular support is the safeguarding of people's rights by governments.

One of the pivotal factors which contribute to the securing of the goodwill of the masses is the way a government views them, whether it regards them as its slaves or as its masters and guardians, whether it considers the people as possessing legitimate rights and itself only as their trustee, agent, and representative. In the first case, whatever service a government may render to people is not more than a kind of the master's care of his beast.

In the second case, every service performed is equivalent to discharging of duty by a right trustee. A state's acknowledgements of the authentic rights of the people and avoidance of any kind of action that implies negation of their right of sovereignty are the primary conditions of securing their confidence and goodwill.[25](#)

In a scholarly analysis, Ustad Shahid Muttahhari (ra) regards the risky and misleading idea that responsibility before God requires irresponsibility towards masses, that "the right of God" substitutes "the right of masses", and that the right of national sovereignty equals Godlessness, as among the major materialist tendencies in recent centuries:

At the dawn of the modern age there was a movement against religion in Europe, which also affected more or less other regions outside the Christendom.

This movement was inclined towards materialism. When we examine the causes and roots of this movement, we discover that one of them was the inadequacy of the teachings of the Church from the viewpoint of political rights. The Church authorities, and some European philosophers, developed an artificial relationship and association between belief in God on one hand and stripping the people of their political rights by despotic regimes on the other. Naturally, this led to the assumption of some necessary relation between democracy on one hand and atheism on the other. It came to be believed that either we should choose the belief in God and accept the right of sovereignty bestowed by Him upon certain individuals who have otherwise no superiority over others, or deny the existence of God so as to establish our right as masters of our own political destinies.

From the point of view of religious psychology, one of the causes of decline of the influence of religion was the contradiction between religion and a natural social need, contrived by religious authorities, especially at a time when that need expressed itself strongly at the level of public consciousness. Right at a time when despotism and repression had reached their peak in European political life and the people were thirstily cherishing the ideas of liberty and people's sovereignty, the Church and its supporters made an assertion that the people had only duties and responsibilities towards the state and had no rights. This was sufficient to turn the lovers of liberty and democracy against religion and God in general and the Church in particular.

This mode of thought, in the West as well as in the East, was deeply rooted from ancient times....[26](#)

Based on this hazardous mode of thought, people have no right over the Imam and leader; and wilayat and religious leadership equals taking away people's socio-political rights; and in short, the leaders are

masters and the people are the servants! Obviously, the government that is run on this basis lacks popular support, and the leader who has this conviction about people's rights would not enjoy people's consent and support.

The Mutual Rights of People and the leadership

From Imam Ali (a.s.)'s viewpoint not only the right of community's political leader has no contradiction with people's rights within this doctrine, but his right is dependent upon his securing their rights, and the people are bound to obey and protect the leader only if their rights are secured in the system under his rule.

In this respect, Imam Ali (a.s.) has said the following:

So now, Allah has, by placing me over your affairs, created my right over you, and you too have a right over me like mine over you. A right is very vast in description but very narrow in equitability of action. It does not accrue to any person unless it accrues against him also and right does not accrue against a person unless it also accrues in his favor.[27](#)

His holiness has stated the mutual rights of people and the leader in other words as follows:

It is incumbent upon the Imam to rule as per what God has ordained and fulfill what He has trusted with him. Once he does so, it is incumbent on people to accept his words and obey his commands, and respond to him when summoned by him.[28](#)

In this discourse, not only the leader's right is dependent on discharging people's rights, but the right of Imamate, wilayat, and leadership is also considered as a right to be trustworthy about.

Throughout the history, safeguarding people's rights has never passed beyond a mere slogan; rather, it has always been a means of violating people's rights and suppressing Truth-orientedness.

Throughout the history of Islam and after the Holy Prophet's era, Ali (a.s.)'s time was an exception in establishing social justice, expansion of equity, and discharge of people's rights, which was unfortunately deprived of people as a result of the disturbances and rabble rousing; and in effect, his rule was tyrannized. Ali (a.s.) said:

If in the past people complained of the rulers' injustice, today I complain of the injustice of my own people.[29](#)

It so happened that Ali (a.s.) hastened to meet the Beloved, with a heart burdened with sorrows. With his departure, justice also departed and once again there were the hukumas and the oppressed masses, and the violations of human rights!

Now it is up to us to take an example of what came to pass in those days in order to prepare the ground

for establishment of social justice.

3. Development of Legitimate and Constructive Freedoms

Freedom is the first step on the way of realization of justice and development of respect for other people's rights; this freedom, however, is to be constructive rather than destructive, i.e., freedom from internal and external bonds and as the Qur'an puts it, deliverance from "heavy burdens":

(He releases them from their heavy burdens and from yokes that are upon them). [30](#)

Messengers of God were heralds of freedom and its advocates. Ali (a.s.) considered the philosophy of prophetic mission (bi'that) as deliverance of human beings from their bonds and taking them to the highest peaks of glory and worship of God:

Allah, the Blessed and the Exalted, raised up Muhammad (S) to deliver His servants from slavery to other slaves, to draw them close to Him... and to direct them away from friendship (wilaya) to others toward friendship to Him. [31](#)

According to the doctrines of 'Alawi school all human beings are free and should never be entrapped into slavery to others and promotion of enslavement. It is evident that what forces them into slavery to superpowers and entraps them into servitude to others in their internal bondage to their own whims and carnal desires.

Those who are internally liberated and have cut off their bondage to whims, and those who have accepted servitude to God and have deemed their status too high to fall prey to obedience to others like themselves, would never give up their independence to embrace slavery. Only such people deserve to be emancipated. As Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

The one who fulfills the requirements of servitude [to God] deserves emancipation. [32](#)

Requirement of servitude includes submission to being a servant of God and acceptance of Divine law, which has no process than real independence, freedom and liberation and evasion from it is tantamount to "enslavement", and "slavery", however appearing as freedom on the surface.

4. Caring about People

To care about people, to value people and respect them in general is a sublime manifestation of social policies of 'Alawi rule. In Imam Ali (a.s.)'s outlook, treatment of people is to be with compassionate and kindness; and rulers must respect people, their perspectives, and their ideals. The ruling statesmen often try to satisfy the "nobles" and the affectedly powerful, and in other words, the elite in the politics arena, even though to the dissatisfaction of the common people.

Contrary to this policy, Imam Ali (a.s.) has stated:

Truly, the discontent of the common people invalidates the content of favorites, and the discontent of favorites is pardoned at (the achievement of) the content of masses.

Imam Ali (a.s.) recommended the administrators to be kind to people and hold direct contacts with them, have personal meetings with them, and be informed of their problems. The Imam would say: "People have mostly suffered hardships, taken pains, and been oppressed. So, if they ever find a chance to express their sufferings and pains, they may speak coarsely." He would, therefore, advise his administrators to put up with people's rough language, and occasional ill-temper, bitterness, and unseemly reactions; never to get angry at them; to treat them with a smiling face and nice words; and if they found out blunders committed secretly and away from public's eyes by them, not to make any enquiries about them.

Imam Ali (a.s.) tried to maintain people's relation to the state as candid, transparent, and unambiguous. Hence, he would enjoin administrators to try honestly to remove the grounds for people's suspicion toward the state, and if some rabble-rousers would by chantage accuse the administrators of violating people's rights, they should try to elucidate the reasons for their actions, with honesty, face-to-face encounters, and clear explanations, and never leave any doubts about the state's affairs in people's minds. This, in reality, is an indication of people's value and significance in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view.

5. Protection of the Oppressed

Imam Ali (a.s.) viewed taking vengeance on the oppressors on behalf of the oppressed as "Divine covenant". So, he stressed on helping the oppressed and insisted on fighting against the oppressors. Helping the oppressed and fighting the oppressors were among the last precepts bequeathed to Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.), and to all those who would hear the Imam's testament throughout the history.

Imam Ali (a.s.) took advantage of any chance to promote the culture of fighting against oppression and protecting the oppressed and sought help from people to carry out social reforms, and to make social relations and associations.

He would say:

O People! Support me despite your heart's desire. By Allah, I will take revenge for the oppressed from the oppressor and will put string in the nose of the oppressor.[33](#)

Stories of practical support of the oppressed by that paradigm of justice are very readable, and are very instructive for those who claim to be followers of that noble figure.

6. Setting up a Complaints Box (Bayt al-Qisas)

The leader of the fighters against oppression, who attempted to support the oppressed by any means

and to take vengeance on their behalf, certainly would spare no efforts in this way to see into the complaints of the oppressed.

How should the oppressed have their complaints heard by the rulers? Obviously, most often the subordinates are not able to get near the ruling system, let alone to bring up a case or raise a complaint. Many a time it has happened that when the complaint of an oppressed person been expressed it has been responded reversely, i.e., the one who should have been reprimanded, has been promoted and turned into a complainant against the person who had complained about him.

In order to remove such difficulties and solve the problem of directly expressing the complaints and pleading for justice as far as possible, Imam Ali (a.s.) set up a station called "bayt al-qisas" (complaints box) so that the people, the oppressed, and every one who had a problem and was unable to bring it up, could write his complaint and place it there to inform Ali (a.s.) about it. The Imam himself called out among the people that anyone who had a case to bring up and did not want any body else know about it in order to be immune from being identified, should write down his inquiry and drop it in the complaints box. This seems to be the first step in history toward connecting people to the ruling body.

7. Attempts in Creating Empathy and Solidarity in the Society

The leader is the link between current trends in the community; and the leadership, is the pivot of endeavors, movements, and cheerfulness. Existence of various ideas, tendencies, and trends in a society is natural and the concept of integrity in ideas and ideals in all strata and levels of society is totally erroneous and unreal. Thus, various trends, groups, and possessors of different ideas must seek for integrating ways to rescue the society from disunity; and while approving of multiplicity of ideas try to hold on to convergence in sublime ideals. The leadership plays the most significant role in this respect. Ali (a.s.) strongly emphasized the necessity of integration and empathy in society.

That noble figure considered solidarity as guaranteeing the survival of states, and differences as causing the fall of the states, thus strongly emphasized the former. Parts of the "Sermon of Disparagement" (Khutba al-Qasi'a) are regarded as among the instructive and awakening doctrines of 'Alawi hukuma. He would himself do his best in this direction to realize the roots of differences and how to achieve solidarity and empathy, and would overlook his inalienable rights so as the community would not burn in the fire of differences. He would say:

Remember that no person is more covetous than I for the unity of the followers of Muhammad (S) and their solidarity.[34](#)

The Imam stressed on the "unity of word", and regarded empathy and détente as necessary to the extent that he obliged his judiciary to avoid enforcing a ruling if it might disturb the solidarity of the community and thus prevent inciting disunity. The Imam had frequently warned that if the faithful disunited and gave up unity and solidarity, the falsehood would definitely dominate over them.

Six: Judiciary Policies

Judgment is the main pillar of ruling systems. Sound and lawful judgment play the greatest role in safeguarding a society's well-being and firmness of the community. Doctrines of Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma indicate that his holiness has been particularly attentive to the judiciary. Accounts given as to how Ali (a.s.) made judgments as well as his recommendations and emphasis in this respect are numerous and thought-provoking. What is brought up here in this volume can also be very enlightening for the judges and judiciary officials.

The principles of Imam Ali (a.s.)'s policies for judgment are enumerated as follows.

1. Appointment of the Best Judges for Juridical Posts

A judge is, undoubtedly, the main component of judgment and plays the most significant role in the judiciary establishment and in restoring people's rights and battle against oppressions and abnormalities. In judicial practice, the more steadfast, pure, and morally clean, and the stronger and the more unbending in action a judge is, the more efficient, organized, and well-founded his judgment will be.

Thus, Ali (a.s.) would enjoin Malik to select the best judges for judgment; the ones who would neither put the people under pressure nor to be obstinate in their judgment, nor easily fall into blunders; who are intelligent and deeply insightful and would not fall prey to misconceptions; who are patient, forbearing so as not to be affected by conflicting turmoil and chantage.

2. Providing for financial Needs of the Judges

Life events and needs can neither be forgotten nor passed by negligently. Even if some people are ascetic and abandon the world, it should be noted that if they take the responsibility of running a household, they will encounter some worldly demands in their lives. Natural needs of one's family are neither forgettable nor are to be neglected. It is in this respect that Imam Ali (a.s.) advises Malik al-Ashtar to select the best judges for practicing judgment, and to provide the best and the most suitable livelihood for them so that the judge never in his judgment look to other people for worldly gains and fulfillment of his needs by being seduced into corruption as a person who himself must safeguard the society against corruption.

3. Job security for the Judges

The judge passes a judgment and obviously offends some by his decisive judgment. There are very few people who would submit to a verdict against them and not to have commotion inside. Also, it is evident that the violators and lawbreakers are not always from among the lower class of society, nor do the clashes and conflicts always take place from among them; rather, it can be said that the upper class both commit most of law breaking and most conflicts do happen among them, as it is them who exert

influence and are involved in political arena and current trends. If the judge does not feel at ease while judging these people and does not see the judiciary and legal as supporting and backing him, he might falter while passing a judgment and back down in restoring rights.

In 'Alawi [ruling] system, the qualified judges enjoy a lofty status. In his distinguished instructions to Malik al-Ashtar after advising him to select the best judges for judgment, Imam Ali (a.s.) enjoins him to station the judges near himself in such high position that nobody, even his own close associates would not harbor any slanders against them in his presence. It is worth deliberating that then he draws attention to the evildoing of the ill-natured to show that the sensualists very often misuse their affinity to him [as a governor] against the judges to reap worldly gains and escape punishment.

4. Observance of Judgment Rules

The judge occupies a highly distinguished position and his duty is restoring rights and steadfast judgment. He does not stand on one side of a lawsuit and his words are clear proof for the disputes. He has to observe the rules of judgment with care. Imam Ali (a.s.)'s teaching in this respect is highly admonishing.

His holiness would warn the judges against discriminating among the clients, enjoining them not to be suspicious of either of the litigants, not to offend them with tough language and authoritarian speech, not to make decisions when angry, to lay aside avarice and not to speak out of whimsy, to maintain their dignity in the court sessions and not to underestimate the tribunal, to treat the clients kindly and equally, and not to behave in a way that the inferiors become disappointed of justly achieving their rights. His holiness discharged one of his companions from his judgment post, when asked for the reason, the Imam replied as follows:

I saw that your words were uttered louder than those of the claimant.[35](#)

5. Close Supervision over the Judges' Function

Judges are the upholders of the society's well-being and the judiciary is in charge of its security. The society's well-being is, more than anything else, dependent upon the judiciary's soundness. Thus, as the Wali al-'Amr of the Muslims, Ali (a.s.) regarded himself as responsible for the judiciary's function and did not content himself with admonishing and preaching for the judges and merely warning them; rather, he would personally supervise their function and sometimes even would see into the way they issued their verdicts.

Due to the great role of judiciary in the society's well-being and correction of social problems, he would take any possible chance – despite his heavy responsibilities and numerous tasks – to call on the "Dakkat al-Qada" (Platform of Judgment) in person and would practice judgment himself so as to present a right pattern for judgment to the people and the judges.

6. Integrated Judicial Procedures

Among the things that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) would emphasize was the consistency of judgments, or in other words, "integration of procedures" in judgments. If people notice that the judges make different judgments in similar cases, their prompt reaction would undoubtedly be mistrust in the judiciary and unbelief in the legitimacy of the judgments.

The Imam insisted that difference in judgments would disrupt the establishment of justice and create disunity in the society. He enjoins the judges to discuss and consult with each other concerning the things they disagree to achieve a consensus, or else take the issue to the leader and submit to his verdict. This means that it is in fact the responsibility of the leader to create integration of procedure in judgment.

7. Equality of all People before the Law

Imam Ali (a.s.) stressed on the equality of all people in execution of judgments. In 'Alawi system [of hukuma], all people are equal before the law and, the judiciary enjoys such high status and firm station that it can execute the law for all people who must submit to the verdicts of the judges and the judiciary irrespective of their social status.

In his doctrines, the Imam stressed on this equality and, despite his magnificence, majesty, and lofty status in knowledge and practice, he would humbly stand before his state judiciary and answer to the questions of his own appointed judges; hence indicating the importance of the judiciary and safeguarding the station of judgment as well as practically protecting people's rights so as to set an example both for the public and for the future [generations].

8. The Status of an Islamic State's Expedience in Issuing Verdicts

We said before that Imam Ali (a.s.) never sacrificed Truth for expedience, and did not take a position by relying on specific interests; but he was a leader, people's leader and a protector of a state at people's service. Hence, he placed the highest value and significance on the most superior expedience that was the protection of the state – which was for the people and at their service.

The Imam admits that in judgments the state's interests should be taken into consideration. In the 'Alawi hukuma in which nothing can hinder the execution of the genuine Islamic law in the judiciary, the state's interests have a special status in execution of ordinances. In one case due to certain social, cultural, and political circumstances, and people's specific impression from Divine law, the Imam identifies judgment based on genuinely set Islamic rules as disuniting and its execution as detrimental to the foundation of the hukuma, hence not permitting judgment to be made in order to prevent the society from falling prey to disunity. That's why he ordered Shurayh:

Make judgments as you did before, so that people's affairs are set to rights.

Seven: Security Policies

An insecure and anarchistic society is more like a lawless and chaotic jungle than a human community. In Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view, a society devoid of peace and security is the worst of lands. The Imam regards the restoration of peace and security to the society as among the most important reasons for his acceptance of hukuma. Therefore, that noble figure was highly concerned with security. His principles and procedures for security policies, and his attempts in maintaining security are listed as follows:

1. Establishing an Efficient Intelligence System

Although in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s sirā no reference is made to an establishment entitled "intelligence system", there are various and dispersed texts concerning intelligence missions, and the measures taken by his holiness in his ruling days on the basis of reports gathered secretly that all in all suggest that the Imam's government enjoyed an efficient and scrupulous establishment.

Secret investigation and collection of various reports in relation to internal security, military information, and the function of the administrators were the major responsibility of this establishment. Regretfully, there is nothing in hand of the details regarding the above-mentioned organizations; but through the outcomes of Imam's decisions and the way he made them, its existence can be approved. This establishment can be regarded as one or more intelligence systems.

2. Détente

Paying attention to the changes in thoughts and positions of the enemies was among valuable Alawi doctrines. The antagonism of many enemies was rooted in their unawareness of the stances and their being uniformed about the methods and the reasons of those stances. The Imam insisted that attempts had to be made on the correction of thoughts, hence the change of positions of the opponents; and in his holiness' own words *istislah al-'a'da'* and *istislah al-'addad* (finding good in the enemies and finding good in the opponents) must be carried out as a procedure in the policies of the government.

The Imam views as utmost deep-sightedness and far-sightedness the attraction of the enemies and rectifying and strengthening their positions, and stresses that it is much easier to transform the enemy's ideas and stances by means of good speech and nice treatment than by drawing the enemy to the battlefield, as the former approach will be effective in *istislah* and compelling the evil-doing enemies to do good. All this implies that the Imam had pursued the policy of *détente* towards transforming the enemy into a friend and deliberate compromise with the enemy, emphasizing on *détente* as an effective means of establishing internal security.

3. Vigilance and timeliness

Besides stressing on *détente* policy and moving toward a peaceful life and compromise with the enemy,

Imam Ali (a.s.) also emphasized on alertness and prudence in the face of the enemy. He insisted that the believers must not underestimate the enemy and be especially alert before those who do not openly express their enmity and do not fail to be prepared to encounter any unprecedented event at the right time, knowing that if they ever sink into oblivion the enemy will never remain ignorant.

4. Avoidance of Terrorization and Spread of Horror

In his government, Imam Ali (a.s.) never resorted to terrorization and spread of horror against the violators and opponents. His holiness would not employ the policy of terror, horror, and the illicit harsh actions against the violators of security, either. He never encountered people on the bases of suspicion and probability and never punished the accused or the suspects charged with actions against security.

5. Adherence to law in Dealing with Criminals

Imam Ali (a.s.)'s system of hukuma relied on law and in all aspects it was law rather than a person's will that ruled. Thus, he strongly emphasized on adherence to law and on law-centering in his doctrines. That was why not only the torture of the accused and the suspects of criminal actions was forbidden in his ruling system but also the criminals were never tortured or even offended; and if anyone was proved as guilty, they would be punished only according to the law.

If the executor of the law deliberately or unintentionally violated the law in enforcing a verdict, he would be punished as retaliation (qisas). So, when Ali (a.s.) found out that Qanbar had given three extra lashes when whipping a criminal, he gave him three lashes in return as qisas.^{[36](#)}

6. Tolerance towards Political Dissidents

The Imam never treated the political dissidents with harshness, either. Tolerance in 'Alawi diplomacy was an inviolable principle. This tolerance would go as far as prompting the opponent's plotting. Ali (a.s.) contended that tolerance with the opponents would cut down their vehemence and divert them from chantage and "stage managing".

That was why the Imam did not confront the Kharijites, tolerated their invectives, and didn't even cut off their stipend from the public treasury, until they committed murder and jeopardized the security of the society. His confrontation with the plotters against internal security was proportionate to the extent of their intrigue and their role in the plotting. Sometimes he would exile them, and at other times he would incarcerate them, and finally when other alternatives did not work, he would resolve the problem by military intervention.

Eight: Military Policies

Imam Ali (a.s.) was a gallant and dauntless warrior. His challenges in battlefields and his superiority in combats are historically well-known. Furthermore, he was a keen-sighted, sagacious, and prudent

warlord.

It is very regretful that Imam Ali (a.s.)'s rule, short-lived as it was, was thoroughly spent in internal battles against the intriguers. His sira in these battles, however, was replete with dignity in warfare and very instructive and enlightening. Imam Ali (a.s.)'s policies in warfare can be enumerated as follows:

1. Attempts in Martial Training and Arrangement of Troops

We said that Imam Ali (a.s.) was the most gallant warrior in the battlefield. Having spent a whole lifetime in the arenas of holy war (jihad), he doubtlessly possessed the most efficient and the greatest number of relevant experiences. Furthermore, he was matchless in his dauntlessness and gallantry, and young in the heart as well as in his knowledge of various tactics of warfare. The Imam trained his troops in person and prior to any battle he would reiterate the major points of his training while arranging the troops and arraying the combatants. When the ambushes by Mu'awiya mounted up and the opponents accused him of lacking knowledge in war tactics, the Imam said the following as complaining of some of his companions:

By disobedience and lassitude, you ruined my reputation to the extent that the Qurayshis say that the son of Abu Talib is brave but is lacking in war knowledge. May God reward their fathers! Which one of them has been in battlefields more than I have been, and experienced fighting and the battlegrounds more than I did? I was still in my teens when I stepped into the arena, and now I am over sixty; however, the one who is not obeyed, would not have command of the situation.[37](#)

In his military training of the troops, Ali (a.s.) was not negligent of even the smallest details such as: the troops should not part from their weapons; should make the most of the right chances to launch attacks on the enemy; should not stare into the enemy's eyes; the multitude of the enemy forces should not cast fear in your hearts; and instructed them what to do and how to withdraw tactically once defeated in war, etc.

2. Formation of Special Forces

The forces, however on a single battleground and with a common intention, may be varying in morale, the level of knowledge, and the extent of ability and self-sacrifice. The confrontation scenes are also varying, with each scene demanding appropriate and competent fighters and warriors. Accordingly, one of the most outstanding features in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s military policies is the formation of special troops which the Imam called Shurtat al-Khamis (the Special Forces).[38](#)

Imam Ali (a.s.)'s most efficient, self-sacrificed and most accomplished warriors were recruited for the Special Forces. This unit was astonishingly competent, and the Imam employed them for special purposes and in specific arenas. In a sermon, Imam Ali (a.s.) addressed them as follows:

You are the helpers of the Truth, my brothers in faith, shields against tribulations and hardships of the

time, and confidants apart from other people. With your help, I will beat the ones who turn their back, and I am hopeful of the obedience of the proponents. So, help me with benevolence devoid of fraud and free from suspicion, as I swear to God that I am fitter (worthier) for people than themselves.

The Special Forces, in modern terms, were the wise and proficient "fundamentalists" and "hizbullahis" (members of Allah's party) by the side of the Imam who both timely criticized and expressed their viewpoints about his policies, and remained loyal to him in the most distressing situations of his rule.

They seemed to be called "Shutat al-Khamis" because of their special insignia or due to their being in the Imam's presence through a special treaty.^{[39](#)}

Asbagh b. Nabata was asked: "O Asbagh! How were you named Shurtat al-Khamis? He replied: "We guaranteed our self-sacrifice for him, and he guaranteed victory for us."^{[40](#)}

3. Enhancement of the Troops' Morale

Spiritual forces and mental power undoubtedly play a decisive and astonishing role in movements and creation of valorous scenes. Therefore, the Imam greatly stressed the importance of the mental power, spiritual capability, and chivalrous spirit of his combat forces, trying through any possible way to strengthen the armed forces' morale in confrontation with the enemy, and to enhance their steadfastness before the enemy through uplifting their sense of chivalry. The Imam's speeches in this respect are highly thought-provoking and readable.

The Imam's fiery speeches, exciting words, inspiring sermons, and stimulating slogans, as well as his attractive descriptions of the end of life, explanation of the combatants' final station after life, all were intended to provide and spread such states of mind.

Once having organized the combat forces, the Imam would envisage with such eloquence and elegance the transience and undesirability of the worldly life in contrast to the excellence and everlastingness of the Hereafter, that sometimes the impact would be left on the troops for so long a time. That was why for many of them their lives were intermixed with enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, valor, bravery; and their actions were intermixed with their steadfastness, invincibility, and daring confrontation with the enemy.

Creation of a spirit of "martyrdom seeking" in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s companions was undoubtedly the outcome of his holiness' lofty sermons and doctrines.

Inculcation was among Imam Ali (a.s.)'s worthwhile tactics in battle that he would employ to strengthen the spiritual forces of his Mujahids (holy warriors). Concerning his own experience, the Imam said to his son, Muhammad b. Hanafiya:

I did not confront anyone [in war], except that I inculcated his killing in my mind; so, do inculcate victory over them with the succor from Allah.^{[41](#)}

On the other hand, the Imam demonstrates that inculcation of weakness, apprehension, and the enemies' power is among the causes of disarrangement of the battle array and being defeated by the enemy. Once the Imam was asked:

How did you win victory over the fighters?

He replied:

I did not meet [confront] anyone except that he helped me win victory over himself.[42](#)

Ali (a.s.)'s explicit delineation of the ominous worldly and other-worldly outcome of shunning the fight with the enemy and fleeing from the battlefield was another tactic by Imam Ali (a.s.) for strengthening the spiritual power of the mujahids.

Besides what was said, the Imam also insisted that the warlords never disclose whatever of the current situation lest it would leave a bad impact on the morale of the combatants. In the thick of the battle of Siffin and amid the direst states of war, the Imam outlined the perspective and outcome of the engagement for one of his warlords and explained how the upcoming confrontation would be strenuous and would inflict heavy losses on the forces, but at the same time stressing to keep this fact as a secret and not to let it reach the troops.

4. Employing Deceitful Tactics in Battles

For achieving victory, the Imam would try all the rational tactics. Never having appealed to "deceit and fraud" in his statesmanship diplomacy and never having used it in his managerial approaches, as mentioned before, he utilized it in his battles and emphasized in this respect:

In a battle, do rely on your deceits more than on your power.

And this is one difference between the 'Alawi and Umayyad diplomacy.

The Imam's teachings and the relevant objective examples indicate that "deception" in warfare policies is a rational option to achieve victory and as far as possible to avoid resorting to irrational actions. 'Ubayy b. Hatam is quoted as saying that amid the clashes of the battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (a.s.) said with such a loud voice for his companions to hear:

I swear by God that I will kill Mu'awiya and his companions.

Then he said with a low voice:

If God wills!

The narrator said, "I asked: O Amir al-Mu'minin! You swore and then made an exception, why is that?"

The Imam replied:

War is deception.

The Imam employed the same tactic when confronting 'Amr b. 'Abdawud and managed to kill him with the chance he got by means of this tactic.

Thus, the Imam's utilization of deception is in line with the human values and dignities and is, on the other hand, an efficient and accurate tactic in warfare.

5. Ethics of War

In 'Alawi culture, war is intended to defend the entity of the school and for the purpose of fending off tyranny, eliminating oppression, and removing the difficulties away from the way of rulership. "Wielding a sword for the sake of the Truth", he would not neglect the moral principles and human basics even amid the direst moments of war. Taking a glance at such warfare temperament and battleground moral codes in 'Alawi sira, would be instructive and enlightening. Some topics in this respect are as follows:

A. Never Initiating a War

The Imam never initiated a war; and would never draw his sword and also would enjoin his companions not to ever initiate a war unless the enemy stubbornly blocked the way for peaceful and face-to-face negotiation. As a matter of fact this policy of the Imam is a confirmation of pacifism of the 'Alawi approach to Islam, of human values, and of opposition to belligerency.

The Imam always practiced this policy emphatically. Jundub Azdi said:

Whenever in the company of Ali (a.s.) we encountered the enemy, he would order us: "Do not fight them until they start; because you are, thanks God, possessed of hujja (proof), and letting them initiate the battle is another proof of yours."⁴³

Thus, he would show that in his culture the principle is peace and quiet, rather than belligerence and warmongering.

That was why the Imam ordered his combat forces not to initiate the war and if it was launched by the enemy and then they won the war by the help of God, they must not kill the fugitive nor assault the wounded, and must not denude or dismember the corpses either, and so forth. This shows, in Ali's war profile, that warfare in his highness' policies is an exception and the rule is stressing on human values and their development.

B. Not Calling to War

Ali (a.s.) insisted on his troops' gallantry, steadfastness, dominance in the battlefield, enthusiasm, and being hard on the enemy, and prepared them by all means for the battle; he would enjoin them, however, never to challenge the enemy to fight, since it was a way of creating terror and panic. Actually,

this too was part of the policy of opposition to belligerency. The Imam only instructed that if the enemy took up the challenge and asked for a rival in fight, you proceed to fight in order to stop the enemy's obstinacy.

C. Diplomatic Immunity of the Enemy's Envoys

Islam is a global religion and its doctrines are universal and time-embracing, hence inclusive of international and world policies. In Islam, political envoys of foreign countries enjoy diplomatic immunity in military and political confrontations (even though in the thick of the war). Ali (a.s.) had instructed this noble doctrine to the troops and wanted them to take this policy seriously, and even if some people claimed to be carrying a message from the enemy, do not confront them without first verifying the matter through sufficient inquiries.

D. Raising an Argument before Starting the War

We said that war in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view is a means of removing the barriers to the development of truth and guidance of human beings. Thus he never failed to enlighten enemy and to take any possible chance to guide them. He would even attempt to guide the enemy amidst the battleground and in the thick of the war, frequently raising arguments to avert the war. Anyway, in 'Alawi sira, a war would not be waged unless when necessary.

E. Supplication at the Time of war

In 'Alawi sira, spiritual dimensions and development of spirituality in human beings and human society is precedent to anything else. The Imam did not forget to create and develop such a spirit even in the thick of the war. When troops were lined up and prepared to assault, he would start to speak; trying to put out the fire of war with his illuminating words; but of no avail, and obstinacy of the enemy would render the war inevitable.

At the time of war the Imam would engage in supplication and worship of God; would restore the remembrance of God in the hearts; with his mystical whispers he would make the atmosphere of his army fragrant; and would seek God's assistance. Thus, his jihad and fighting was a prelude to his love of God and a stepping stone to his approaching to God, as well as a step in the direction of actualizing Divine ideals and human values. The content of the Imam's supplications and the theme of his invocations clearly prove what was said and are very thought-provoking.

F. Starting the War in the Afternoon

The Imam would try by any arrangement and provision that the war might inflict the least damage and as far as possible the least human loss, if fighting would become inevitable. Thus, the Imam would try to get the war started in the afternoon so that by falling of the night the fighting would wind up and consequently there would be less bloodshed, the fighters would withdraw earlier, and the fugitives from

the battleground could run away.

G. Fair Treatment of the Enemy's Troops Left behind

When the battle would subside, Imam Ali (a.s.) would command that the defeated troops, the wounded, the captives, and the leftover of the enemy's army, particularly the women, be given the best of treatment. As we said before, the Imam would order not to chase the fugitives, not to kill the wounded, not to invade people's houses, not to take any of the spoils, never to molest the women even if they insulted the troops and their commanders.

Nine: International Policies

Whatever said so far was a glance at 'Alawi policies in various aspects of governing a state.

Now, we intend to recount some aspects of Imam Ali (a.s.)'s universal policies. We have selected guidelines from among the Imam's universal policies that would be fruitful and efficient for governing a state in every place and in any culture.

The guidelines listed below and the relevant material in the main part of the book include political, social, cultural, and governmental guidelines which human natural disposition (fitra) and common sense confirm their firmness and efficiency; and historical experience is a true witness to their soundness and merit. Anyone with any conviction can, by referring to the conscience and the history, simply perceive these facts and confirm their efficacy in governing a state. In chapter ten of the present book, these guidelines and principles are divided into three categories as follows:

1. Policies Perpetuating Governments

Imam Ali (a.s.) has regarded certain policies necessary for the survival of governments. We can find out, by taking a glance at 'Alawi doctrines and sira, that the Imam considers as necessary the spread of equity, social justice, development of righteousness and discretion in administering people's affairs, treating them fairly and respectfully, alertness to political trends and safeguarding them, independence, might, and whatever related to people's individual and social rights. He deems them necessary for steadfastness and perpetuity of government. The Imam's interpretation of justice is very interesting and thought-provoking.

Ali (a.s.) has identified justice with a citadel, a shield, a firmly set foundation, and a binding string, and considered the execution of justice as the best and the most efficient policy in ruling and defined it as "the adornment of politics", affirming that it is with justice that the ruler captures the hearts and attracts Divine Mercy. He is also quoted as saying that once the rules are based on the foundations of justice and rested on the pillars of wisdom, Allah would help its proponents and smash its opponents. In addition to promotion of justice, the Imam has regarded discreet administration as necessary for establishment and perpetuity of governments, benevolence as the beauty of power, and alertness and

wakefulness as indications of astuteness and decent governance.

2. Policies Causing Decline of Governments

Imam Ali (a.s.) has considered some policies as destructive and undermining. Such policies, even though effective for a short while and keeping up the government for a while longer, would eventually lead to fall and destruction. What has been deemed by Imam Ali (a.s.)'s doctrines as undermining and ruinous are: violation of people's rights; unjust bloodshed; mismanagement in handling current affairs; selfishness and appropriation; giving priority to governors, heads of government, and their cronies over others; heedlessness toward fundamental measures and tasks and dealing with trivial, fruitless, and unimportant affairs; assigning inefficient people to critical posts; and failing to employ competent individuals.

The Imam asserts that oppression and injustice, under any rubric and in any form, will cause decline [of the state]; and if injustice is allowed in a society, it will consequently lead to drawing swords and the state's authority and dignity will be marred. That is why he views oppression as the worst of policies and asserts that injustice and tyranny makes the steps unstable, the blessings transformed, and the communities and states ruined.

In his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar, Ali (a.s.) writes: Never practice bloodshed when dealing with the heterodox, as shedding unlawful blood causes blessing. Never will sovereignty set firm by bloodshed, rather, it will enfeeble and lower its authority.

He asserts that if a government is inflicted with mismanagement and does not enjoy wise and scrupulous policies, it will start to decline and will consequently topple. The state provides the best facilities for the ruler and his dominance, and instead of self-sacrifice (ithar), proceeds with selfishness and attraction of possibilities for the ruler and his cronies (isti'thar), will definitely be bound to decline. The Imam said: The rulers who deal with trivial, baseless, and transient issues instead of proceeding with fundamental tasks, basic policies, and principal planning, will slide down to decline. Those who put aside the high tasks and excellences, and deal with mean and petty work, will lead the government to decline. Pondering on such teaching of the Imam would be so necessary and helpful for the governors, officials, and heads of states.

3. Efficient International Policies

In addition to what was said, the Imam adopted certain policies and introduced ways of interaction for the governors to take into consideration when interacting with other states, nations, and countries. The following facts and policies can be extracted from among the Imam's highly valuable words and by pondering on his lifestyle (sira):

Respecting the rights of human beings regardless of their ideas and way of thinking, and maintaining human rights for them; practicing respect-orientedness in dealing with others, and avoiding any

disrespectful and belittling relation or association with governments and nations and never submitting to derogation; stressing on détente in encounters with governments, and moving toward development of genuine peace and peaceful life combined with esteem; prevention of arousing enmity; making attempts in correction of the enemy's ideas and conducts (istislah al-'aduww); remaining loyal to various treaties, and being trustworthy in fulfillment of people's rights; benefiting from other people's knowledge and expertise and exploiting human knowledge trends in the field of culture, yet stressing on the policy of cultural independence; warning against being absorbed in polytheistic and corrupt cultures; and finally, searching into cultures and pick out the best in them, etc.

Furthermore, there have been certain facts expressed in various sayings of Ali (a.s.) that are very illuminating in respect to international relationships. Such tenets have been presented in the "miscellaneous" section at the end of the present volume.

Summing up Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Policies

What we said so far consists of a brief glance at the content of the chapters compiled for explaining Imam Ali (a.s.)'s various policies. Deliberation on what was brought up would reveal that politics in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s view is an instrument for ruling on the basis of human rights and people's real needs, rather than for the dominance of the bullies and violators of people's rights.

From what we said, we can now respond, with a general outlook and accurate summing up, to the questions and criticisms made concerning Imam Ali (a.s.)'s policies, analyze the hows and whys of what is stated about his statesmanship, and discuss their consistency and inconsistency.

- [1.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, III, 157 (Causes for Uprising against 'Uthman).
- [2.](#) See 2/4, hadith 73.
- [3.](#) Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/71. Friendship in the Qur'an and hadith: 259.
- [4.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 198.
- [5.](#) Wilayat al-Faqih, pp. 192 – 3.
- [6.](#) See 3/3, hadith 89.
- [7.](#) See 3/5, hadith 102.
- [8.](#) See Nahj al-Balagha, letter 53.
- [9.](#) See Science and wisdom in the Qur'an and hadith, 1/30.
- [10.](#) Ibid. For more information of the texts denoting the precedence of cultural development over economic development, see chapter two of part one of the book.
- [11.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3590.
- [12.](#) Ibid: 3835.
- [13.](#) See Nahj al-Balagha, Sermons 182.
- [14.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 2.
- [15.](#) See 4/5, hadith 164.
- [16.](#) Ibid.
- [17.](#) See, Leadership in Islam, M. Muhammadi Rayshahri, pp. 391–418.
- [18.](#) See 5/8, hadith 208.
- [19.](#) See 5/11, hadith 247.

- [20.](#) See 5/11, hadith 249.
- [21.](#) See 5/14, hadith 262.
- [22.](#) See 5/14, hadith 262.
- [23.](#) See 5/16, hadith 282.
- [24.](#) 5/16, hadith 283.
- [25.](#) Shahid Murtadha Mutahhari, Sayri dar Nahjul Balagha, (Glimpses of Nahj al-Balagha), p. 118.
- [26.](#) Ibid. p. 119.
- [27.](#) See, 6/2, hadith 305.
- [28.](#) Kanz al-'Ummal: 5/764/14313.
- [29.](#) See, The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, IX, 474 – 75, ahadith 4748 & 4749.
- [30.](#) Al-Qur'an, 7:157.
- [31.](#) See 6/3 hadith 308.
- [32.](#) See 6/3, hadith 310.
- [33.](#) See 5/11, hadith 349.
- [34.](#) See 6/14, hadith 360.
- [35.](#) See 8/4, hadith 421.
- [36.](#) See 7/10, hadith 394.
- [37.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 27. Also, see The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VII, 21.
- [38.](#) See 9/2, (Forming Special Forces).
- [39.](#) Al-Nihaya, II, 460.
- [40.](#) Majama' al-Bahirayn, II, 942.
- [41.](#) See 9/4, hadith 499.
- [42.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Aphorism 318.
- [43.](#) See 9/6, hadith 511.

Overall Defense of Imam Ali's Statesmanship

Ali (a.s.) took over the caliphate due to the public demand and insistence, and with his martyrdom on Ramadan 21, 40 / January 28, 661 his caliphate came to an end. People had been accustomed to the rulership of the three caliphs for 25 years during which such policies had been carried out and such procedures in government had been taken that the Imam did not regard many of them as well-founded; for him changing people's disposition was as difficult as "returning upstream the water which has run down-stream", and in some cases even impossible.

Thus, he accepted the caliphate with extreme reservedness and prudence and only after frequently refusing it – so that nobody would even imagine that he coveted the rule. From the very beginning, however, he both explicitly stated his future plans and enumerated the hardships of the way.

Parts of Imam Ali (a.s.)'s policies and some of his political positions have since long been brought up in discussions and incited criticisms and critiques. Those who took politics as tools of power and aimed at dominance over people from a governmental position have not tolerated some of Imam's political stances. After all, it should be known that Ali (a.s.) had accepted the hukuma in order to administer

justice, and adopted politics as tools for government on the basis of human rights and fulfillment of rightful human needs.

Looking at his rule and authority from this angle and evaluating it by this criterion, we will see that what the Imam has done has been precisely in line with his lofty goals, well-founded, and scrupulously organized.

But those who do not look from this angle, do not accept the Imam's position in the electoral council of 'Umar for appointing the caliph and regard insistence on deposal of Mu'awiya at the beginning of his rule when the foundations of his sovereignty was not yet firmly set as far from diplomatic mannerism and say that Ali (a.s.) was a brave and fearless warrior but not a political ruler!

They say if Ali (a.s.) were a man of diplomacy, why, in the electoral council appointed by 'Umar to assign a caliph after him, he didn't accept the proposal of 'Abdul Rahman to swear allegiance to him on the condition that he acted according to the sira of Abu Bakr and 'Umar? It was diplomatic in case he would accept the condition but after establishment of his government, he would act in his own way and would follow his own path. Did 'Uthman, who accepted the condition, follow their steps?!

If the Imam acted diplomatically, he shouldn't have treated the opposition, especially Talha and Zubayr who were plausible figures and Mu'awiya who was influential in Sham (Syria), the way he did. He should have compromised for the moment and fulfilled their demands but after the establishment of his rule, he should have begun to extirpate them. But he didn't do so, and there were many similar occasions in his political life that Ali (a.s.) avoided diplomatic contrivances. The Imam's insistence on moral and Islamic values created problems in establishment of his authority and dominance, and made him encounter serious hardships. Before everything else, we refer now to the words of Ibn Abi al-Hadid in this respect:

Know that a group of those who do not realize Amir al-Mu'minin's superiority, regard 'Umar as more diplomatic than him, although they view him as more knowledgeable than 'Umar. [1](#)

Ibn Abi al-Hadid goes on to say:

In his Al-Shifa', Ibn Sina has confirmed this, and our master had a liking toward this (subject) and dealt with it in his Al-Ghurar. Also his enemies and opponents presume that Mu'awiya is more diplomatic and his management is more proper than Ali (a.s.)'s. [2](#)

What follows here for the sake of brevity, is a general response to all criticisms made about Imam Ali (a.s.)'s policies. However, detailed responses are presented in reply to individual questions in the following chapters.

The most important point in response to this issue is the emphasis on the way in which politics and government is looked upon. If politics is viewed as a means of ruling over hearts, or interpreted as ruling on the basis of people's rights and real needs of society, and if we look at Ali (a.s.)'s stances from such

perspective, then we will realize that Imam Ali (a.s.) is the greatest statesman in history second to the Holy Prophet (S. A. W.); but if we consider politics and statesmanship as a means to achieve power and domineering or interpret it as taking advantage of people and exploitative domination over them, then the Imam's stances are not defensible.

It is evident that the Imam was aware of these issues and knew how to employ them, but due to his commitment to Divine law, ethical values, and his stress on people's rights, he did not deem their use as permissible. The following hadith quoted from him clearly indicates the above fact:

If it were not the case that plotting and deception have their place in fire, I would have been the best of plotters.[3](#)

Alas! If it were not for piety, I would have been the shrewdest all Arabs.[4](#)

He also said:

I swear by God that Mu'awiya is not cleverer than me, but he practices deception and commits debauchery; and if it were not for the hideousness of deception, I would have been the shrewdest of all people, but any kind of deception is sinful, and any sin is a covering, and for any deceiver there would be a banner raised on the Resurrection Day by which to be identified.[5](#)

Accordingly, the Imam well knew how to suppress voices; how to bring down loud cries to silence; how to deceive people with tricks; how to cast fear in their hearts by domineering; how to rectify the unruly greedy misers by allurements; and how to uproot the violation of human rights, massacres, and internal oppositions and rebellions. But he is Ali, the truth-centered, God-conscious, and a believer in Resurrection, whose commitment to the truth and ethical values, and whose stressing on Divine teachings prevented him from perpetrating illegitimate policies. The Imam has frequently referred to these facts, such as the following.

Certainly, I know what can improve you and how your crookedness can be straightened. But I shall not improve you by marring myself.[6](#)

He clearly states that he knows how to discipline people and is familiar with the bullying policies for suppressing them in a short time, but he does not apply them since he views them as corrupting to the discipliner.

Surprisingly, such actions, in Ali (a.s.)'s view, above all leads the statesman to the dreadful domain of bullying, domination, and as he puts it, to corruption. That is why he calls out: "Never reformation at the cost of corrupting the reformer!"

The Imam's dignified words indicate that imaginary reformation inevitably leads to corruption.

By this, obviously, the Imam meant the illegitimate reformation, similar to undergoing economical

reformation at the cost of sacrificing social justice in modern world. The Imam does not tolerate such reforms. He well knew how to, on one hand, deceive the politically influential opponents and outlaws and keep them silent by promising to fulfill their avarices and little by little expunge them; and on the other hand to promise people to restore their rights and stress on developing Divine and human values, but as soon as he would have established the foundations of his rule, he would do whatever he wished and break all promises, as the statesmen have always done. If he did so, he would no longer be Ali ibn Abi Talib. Rather, he would have been a statesman like other statesmen.

So much passion and devotion of people in the history toward Ali (a.s.) is caused by his own Truth-centeredness. Now, we should carefully see where the power-centered hypocrites and imposters stand, and on the other hand, see what the reasons for durability of Ali (a.s.) in the history and over the span of time have been. Why have the hearts borne so much love for Ali (a.s.)? We iterate here that Ali (a.s.) regards politics as a means to establishing the truth and restoring people's rights, rather than a means to domination over them.

'Alawi reformations were solely intended to revitalize sira and sunna of the Prophet (S) and his method of government. Imam Ali (a.s.) could not have followed counter-value, antireligious and antihuman policies. That was why Ali (a.s.) was facing the same difficulties that the Holy Prophet (S) was involved in.⁷

Tolerating hardships and practicing patience before agonies and difficulties, Ali (a.s.) attempted to replicate once again the radiant vista of the Prophetic rule and the government policies of the Messenger of Allah in the history of Islam, and present an efficient, justice-spreading, and beautiful sira to the generations and the ages to come.

¹. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, X, 212.

². Ibid.

³. Al-Kafi, II, 336.

⁴. See 3/1, hadith 75.

⁵. See, 3/1, hadith 77.

⁶. Nahj al-Balagah, Sermon 69. Also see The encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VII.

⁷. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, 10/214 p 222.

Reasons for Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Loneliness

Now, toward the end of this brief analysis, we bring up the important question that if administration of a state on the basis of the aforementioned policies are applicable and such policies are proper and competent, why then did people distance in a short time from such truth-centered statesman as Imam Ali (a.s.) whom they had selected as their leader with their widespread support, and left him alone during

the last months his life?

Raising the Issue

Let us further delve into various aspects of this topic and raise the issue more explicitly. The foremost questions here are: What was the reason for people's distancing so widely from Ali (a.s.) in a not so long period? Why could not the Imam (a.s.) practically preserve people's widespread support of the government? Why was the bond of intimacy dissociated between the ruler and the people in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma, and people were disunited to the extent that the Imam could not create concordance among those who had directly sworn allegiance to him, and maintain "unity of word" among them?

Why did the Imam (a.s.) complain of the lack of people's support in the way of actualizing his lofty causes and implementing his reforms during the last days of his life, and would painfully say?

Far from it that I ever may remove, with your help, the darkness from the face of justice and straighten the crookedness (which has found its way) in the truth. [1](#)

Why did he consider them the heart-rending pain of his political life and say?

I want to cure (maladies) by you, but you are (yourselves) my pains. [2](#)

And he complained of disobediences and rebellions, saying:

I am entangled by people who do not obey. [3](#)

And he complained of their dispersed tendencies, and their fruitless crowded presence with their dissociated hearts, and said:

There is no richness in your multitude, with your hearts scarcely united. [4](#)

He yearned to have the few companions of the battle of Badr:

If I had companions similar in number as the people of Badr... [5](#)

And...?

Anyway! Where did so much regression originate after that wonderful turnout for swearing allegiance?

Did not that astonishing loneliness after such an unbelievable turnout for confirmation and companionship indicate that ruling on the basis of 'Alawi politics and with Ali (a.s.)'s procedure of hukuma was not practically applicable in the real world society, and that 'Alawi utopia was not but an image in the world of illusion?

We will, in this discourse, try as far as possible to respond to the above question on the basis of

historical texts and the realities of Islamic community of those days. But before that, it would be worthwhile to outline several points, however briefly:

Role of the Elite in Political and Social Transformations

The role of the elite and the elect in social transformations is fundamental and widespread. They have had the most influential impact on political and social developments during the history of this section of the society.⁶

In fact, they mostly make decisions for the masses, and the people often do not hesitate in following them. Surprisingly enough, in these role-creating and manipulations, they play their roles in such a way that people imagine that they have themselves made the decisions and are acting on their own!

In a time like the early period of Islam, chiefs of tribes enjoyed pivotal roles in political and social changes. In another time, intellectual elite and social leaders played such roles, and today, heads of parties and political establishments, managers of great cultural, educational, and information organizations, and chief executives of the press agencies and other mass media are the main manipulators, role-creators, and decision makers of societies.

Role of the Kufans in Ali's Hukuma

In the geography of early Islam, the territory of Iraq used to serve as a bridge connecting east and west of Islam and acted as a center for supplying military power to the central authority. In this territory, Kufa enjoyed a special status and a sensitive role.

Kufa was constructed in 17AH/638CE for stationing the troops, and its organizers founded this city with the intention to set up a great camp for the troops. Thus, it is clear that Kufa was a military center; i.e., a center for those who harbored nothing but battle, hence always thinking of conquering borders and attaining spoils of war.

People who had gathered in Kufa were far away from Madina, which hosted most of the (Prophet's) companions. Very few companions frequented Kufa, as 'Umar's policy was to have them remain in Madina.⁷

Therefore, the Kufans were at a low level of the required knowledge of religious law and doctrines.

'Umar had explicitly asked the companions who intended to travel to Kufa not to teach hadiths to the Kufans and not to distract them from intimacy with the Qur'an.⁸ The Kufan's intimacy and preoccupation with the Qur'an was restricted to mere recitation, and nothing more. This can be found in the words of the caliph, too. That was why those initially gathered in Kufa as "reciters" (Qurra'), later on formed the original kernel of the Khawarij.

What is here very emphatic to notice is the tribalistic context in Kufa and the prevalence of ethnocentrism and dominance of tribal culture and lifestyle in the Kufan's behavior and relations. In this culture, the chief of the tribe is the role-creator in the movements and attempts, and other people are simply involuntary subjects and blind followers.

Accordingly, it must be asserted that when we say the people left Ali (a.s.) alone, it means that the elect, the elite, and the chieftains of Islamic community left him alone. This agonizing fact was more evidently represented in people of Iraq, especially among Kufans.

Now, after what seemed to be like an introduction to this topic, we proceed to deal with the reasons for Ali (a.s.)'s being left alone, on the basis of his own words and sayings.

Ali's Loneliness in his own Words

We said earlier that history is a truthful witness to the claim that the short period of Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma has been the most beautiful manifestation of a rule based on human values. His ruling method was not only attractive to those committed to Islamic human values but those uncommitted to such values were attracted by it too, and sometimes even did not fail to admit its magnificence and attractiveness. Thus, the reasons for people's distancing from Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma is not to be sought in his inconsistency of method; rather, there are some other reasons and causes to be delved into in the following pages.

Ali (a.s.) has explicitly and adequately talked about people's turning their back on his hukuma and expressed in his sermons and responses to the queries, the whys and hows of their initial welcome as well as their eventual turning their back on him.

Now, we are going to review the backgrounds, reasons, and causes of people's withdrawal and Ali (a.s.)'s loneliness:

1. Contradictory Demands

The first reason for people's distancing themselves from Ali (a.s.) was the fundamental discrepancy between the two approaches to the government. In fact, these two approaches were in principle contradictory in their motivations and purposes.

The great majority of the participants in the uprising against 'Uthman (specially a number of manipulators of that movement, such as Talha and Zubayr), did not intend to bring the community back to the Prophetic sira and sunna. They did not wield their swords in order to maintain the sovereignty of genuine Islamic values. Party monopolism and tribal decision-making of the Umayyad in government, which was formed through the 'Uthman's rule, had wearied them. For them, overthrowing Uthman and pledge of allegiance to Ali (a.s.) was, in fact, aimed at undoing this knot and solving this problem, although in their slogans they stated otherwise.

After so much insistence by the people and his frequent refusals, Imam Ali (a.s.) took over the caliphate, perchance to restore a right, to lead the community back to the sira of the Prophet, to revive the forgotten genuine Islamic values in the society, and to spread reforms in all bureaucratic, cultural, economic, social, and judicial fields. In one of his earlier sermons he has stated, among other things, the perspective of these endeavors.

In other words, people were motivated by material and worldly drives and efforts; and Ali (a.s.) was motivated by truth- centism, God-seeking, and concerns about revival of religious values. Accordingly, the Imam (a.s.) said:

My concerns and yours are not the same. I want you for the sake of Allah and you want me for your own.[9](#)

In such time, when some people saw Ali (a.s.)'s persistence in his goals and realized their own incompatibility with these goals, they turned away from the company of Ali (a.s.)'s adherents and refused to support him. Thus, as time passed, religious concerns and Divine motives and Islamic-human orientation of 'Alawi rule were further manifested, and on the other hand, supporting was diminished, the distance became wider, and the support of those who were seeking other than the truth slackened.

2. Treason of the Elite and their being

In the days of Amir al-Mu'minin's hukuma, chiefs of tribes played the main role in making decisions for most of people. The Imam (a.s.) tried very hard to develop inclination toward criteria in people's mind and life, so that they would choose their path and measure people by Truth criterion rather than measuring Truth by criteria of eminent individuals and personalities...[10](#)

Unfortunately, Imam Ali (a.s.)'s efforts in this respect were of no avail. The prevalence of the aforementioned situation seriously hindered the basic reforms of Ali (a.s.)'s rule and this was extremely painful for the Imam as his decisions were occasionally left unfulfilled by the opposition from an individual who was backed by a massive following. The Imam described this sorrowful atmosphere as follows:

People are three groups: Divine scholars; the learners who are on the way of salvation; and the wandering mean ones who linger about every wind. They were neither lighted by the light of knowledge nor hastened toward a safe haven.[11](#)

In this valuable statement, Imam Ali (a.s.) has divided people into three groups in their choosing the way of life:

1. The achieved learned: "Divine Scholars";
2. The Seekers after Truth and the wayfarers on the path of deliverance from darkness and corruption:

“The learners on the path of salvation”;

3. People who neither know the right and firm path nor identify the course of movement; rather, they are prompted to move by blind following of the elect. The Imam has called them “hamajun ra'a”, i.e., the petty flies sitting on the faces of animals, and the foolish ignoble who are moved around by any blowing wind and drift along any flow without achieving any firm position.

By the Imam (a.s.)’s analysis, those who neither know the right way of life nor allow themselves any deliberation and knowledge, and blindly follow others, are like flies that have gathered around those more ignorant than themselves and cherish it. Such people neither possess a firm intellectual status nor are able to stand on a steady position.

Without knowing who their leader is and whether he speaks the truth or falsehood, they highly respect him with their mind and soul and follow him only because he has some reputation or is endowed with chairmanship and is bearing the title of chief of the tribe on his forehead or is entitled the head of a party, or for any other reasons, just like a swarm of flies which are blown to every direction that the wind is blowing without knowing why and where they are heading.

It was so agonizing for Ali (a.s.) to see that a great number of people of his time lay among the third group. Amir al-Mu'minin was faced with large masses who were neither "people of understanding" nor on the way of investigation.

More heart-rending and distressing than that was the lack of empathy for listening to these social problems and passions, and the lack of some intelligent ones with whom Ali (a.s.) would share all these. In other words, Ali (a.s.) could not unveil the pains and reveal whom he was accompanied by and what kind of people he was ruling; and when he intended to share what he was involved in, he shared it with one of his close companions (Kumayl). He would take his hand, lead him to the desert and assert the bitter and biting reality, with much sorrow and pity, that what he would tell him was not conveyable to everyone since many were not able to tolerate listening to it; and that every human who enjoyed a larger intellectual and spiritual capacity would be more valued and so forth.

Then the Imam revealed the secret of people’s not supporting him and introduced all the abnormalities and failure of his reformations and reformative planning as rooted in people’s ignorance and their blind following of the treacherous elite.

A Step beyond Delineation of the Roots

Once Ali (a.s.) spoke to a gathering of his relatives and a group of the elite concerning his problems, stating more openly than before the whys and hows of the disturbance (in Kufa), and elucidated its origins and revealed the reasons for disunity in the then Islamic community. He explained why people were not consistent with his reformative planning, did not tolerate the hukuma and sovereignty based on the prophetic sira and sunna and did not support his policies. The Imam began his awakening speech

with the following words of the Holy Prophet:

What I fear most about you are two things: following vain desires and extending of hopes. [12](#)

Then his holiness explicitly stated that the political disturbances causing disunity in the Muslim community and creating factions and fragmentation are rooted in moral corruptions, egotism and sensualism:

The bases of the occurrence of evil are those desires which are followed and the orders that are fabricated, in which the Book of Allah is disobeyed. People cooperate with each other about them [though it is against the Religion of Allah]. [13](#)

Thus, the Imam (a.s.) indicates that egoism, sensualism and self-centrism turn into baseless and counter religious innovations disguised as religion; and it is through this approach that blind factionalism is launched, moral disturbances grow into cultural commotions, and eventually wind up in political and social seditions; it is in such case that the perpetrators misuse truth in order to justify their goals and the possibility to develop seditions, and pretend rightfulness. Ali (a.s.) warns:

Let it be known that if right had been pure, there would exist no differences; and if wrong had been pure, it would not be hidden from the wise. What is, however, done is that something is taken from here and something from there. [14](#)

By these words, the Imam (a.s.) actually delineated the cultural features of his time and drew attention to the fact that in the past truth and falsehood had been intermixed and the falsehood promoting rabble-rousers pretended truthfulness to achieve their fabricated goals. Consequently, after the lapse of a generation, innovation happened to be regarded as tradition; and now that he intended to unveil the features of falsehood and to rightly clarify the aspects of truth, it would be extremely difficult to do so since people did not realize how tragic the situation was.

Imam Ali (a.s.) quoted a saying from the holy prophet (S) who had predicted and talked about such an atmosphere over time:

Verily, I heard from the Messenger of Allah (S) who said: "How would you be when the disturbances would encompass you; [disturbances] in which the children would turn to adults and the adults would turn to the elderly. People would welcome them and adopt them as tradition so that if anything diverts from it, they would cry out that the tradition is transformed!" [15](#)

Surprisingly enough, the prophetic doctrines had settled in people's minds, tongues, and beliefs so reversely that when such a person like Ali (a.s.), i.e., a tangible embodiment of truth and truth-orientedness intends to reconstruct and rectify people's minds and thoughts, they cried and clamor that "tradition is transformed!" And so forth.

Were radical reforms, basic changes, and restoration of the Muslim community back to the sunna of the

Prophet (S) possible in such atmosphere? That was why, by these words, the Imam (a.s.) drew up to the main issue after his introductory words and clearly talked about innovations and reported on part of the innovations imposed on the sunna, and painfully unveiled what the former statesmen and authorities had bequeathed to people, asserting that he could no longer do anything else; because if he would not hold on to this cultural transformation and carried on the campaign against cultural deviations, the troops would disperse and he would be left alone; totally alone. Here are the Imam's painful words:

If I force people to abandon their own Sunna and restore traditions to their original station and the way they were common in the Prophet's era, my troops will scatter and I will be left alone or with few followers.

Expressing Grievances, an Ultimatum to all People

What the Imam (a.s.) briefly stated to Kumayl b. Ziyad, i.e., the treason of the elite and their being followed by common people; and what he said in a private session – attended by a group of the elect and devoted followers – he stated again in details in a lengthy speech in the last months of his hukuma before all people, thus giving each and every one an ultimatum.

In this speech known as the Sermon of Disparagement (Khutba al-Qasi'a)¹⁶ which has been delivered after the battle of Nahrawan, the Imam has stated very important radical points as to how and why pre-Islamic religious revolutions ended in failure, and has precisely foreseen the future history of Islam:

With the Elite (al-Khawas)

In his lofty utterances, Imam Ali (a.s.) describes the destiny of Satan who had worshipped God for six thousand years, and with reference to his high status [before his rejection] admonishes the elite who enjoyed brilliant records in their services to Islam lest they end up in a destiny similar to that of Satan:

Therefore, you should fear lest Satan infects you with his disease, or leads you astray through his call.¹⁷

And then he explains that the way to get rid of that destiny is to give up groundless prejudices, factional tendencies, Paganistic vindictiveness, and seeking undeserved superiority:

You should, therefore, put off the fires of haughtiness and flames of intolerance that are hidden in your hearts. This vanity can exist in a Muslim only by the machinations of Satan, his haughtiness, mischief and whisperings. Make up your mind to have humility over your heads, to trample self-pride under your feet and to cast off vanity from your necks.¹⁸

Warning the Common People

When eminent figures of the community, the political and cultural manipulators, and those enjoying ethnic, scholastic, and ideological reputation get involved in prejudiced clashes, they would make instrumental use of means of enflaming disturbances, i.e., the people and the communities, and thus

lead the society into the fire of disunity.

Further on in his sermon, Imam Ali (a.s.) insistently enjoins people to refuse obeying their dignitaries and elite in case they would not give up seeking superiority and would persist on their haughtiness, arrogance, and sedition; and not to walk along their illegitimate objectives; and to be heedful of the fact that all seditions, corruptions, and abnormalities are rooted in their positions:

Beware, therefore, and fear obeying your leaders and elders who felt proud over their achievements and boasted over their lineage... certainly they are the main sources of obstinacy, and chief pillars of mischief.... They are the foundation of vice and linings of disobedience. Satan has made them carriers of misguidance and the soldiers with whom he attacks men. [19](#)

Then the Imam gave enlightening explanations concerning what was stated. Afterwards, he proceeded to make a very important political and ethical discussion about social interaction, and talked about difficult Divine trials for training human beings, stressing that life's various misfortunes and difficulties are in line with spiritual construction of man and purging him of moral vices, particularly his selfishness, arrogance and seeking superiority, as the Almighty God has ordained prayers, fasting, and alms tax for such purposes.

Then, the Imam enjoined people to delve into the history, to deliberate on the events, and to take lessons from the fates of the religious revolutions to find out how they had ended and to recognize the impact of disparity and disunity on the failures in religious calls, lest the haughtiness and egoism of the elite and the elect and people's unaware obedience would lead the Islamic hukuma to a destiny similar to that of the previous revolutions.

In this part of his speech, the Imam (a.s.) explicitly gives the warning and his ultimatum to the elite and the elect:

Beware! You have shaken off your hands from the string of disobedience and broken the divine fort around you by (resorting to) pre-Islamic rules.... You should know that you have again reverted to the position of the Bedouin Arabs after immigration (to Islam), and have become different parties after having been once united. You do not possess anything of Islam except its name, and know nothing of belief save its show. [20](#)

Risk of Abandoning Commanding Good and Forbidding Wrong

From Imam Ali (a.s.)'s viewpoint, "commanding good and forbidding wrong" is one of the major elements in continuation of Islamic Revolution. Establishment of all human and Islamic values is directly related to this injunction. If it is forsaken, values will be forsaken too; and once the Islamic community turns its back to the religious values and takes refuge in anything except Islam, it will lose Divine assistance and fail in its battle against alien enemies; the Muhammadan and 'Alawi hukuma will be defeated; the devils will dominate the Islamic Community; and the prayers of the pious will not be responded to.

Further on in the sermon of Qasi'a and concerning the above issue, the Imam (a.s.) said:

Be sure that if you incline towards anything other than Islam, the unbelievers will fight you. Then there will be neither Gabriel nor Michael, neither muhajirun nor ansar to help you, but only clashing of swords, till Allah settles the matter for you.

Certainly, there are examples before you of Allah's wrath, punishment, days of tribulations and happenings. Therefore, do not disregard His promises, ignoring His punishment, making light His wrath and not expecting His violence, because Allah, the Glorified, did not curse the past ages except because they had left off commanding others to do good and forbidding them from wrong. In fact, Allah cursed the foolish for committing sins and the wise because they gave up forbidding wrong.[21](#)

Before Imam Ali (a.s.), the Holy Prophet (S) had also warned people of this hazard in the following words:

O People! Verily Allah says to you: Command people to do good and forbid them from wrong before you pray and I do not respond to your prayer and ask from Me and I do not grant you and seek for My assistance and I do not assist you.[22](#)

The hazard of leaving off "commanding good and forbidding wrong" (al-amr bi'l ma'ruf wa'l nahy 'ani'l munkar) for the perpetuation of the Islamic revolution is so serious that Imam Ali (a.s.) warned people against it till the last moments of his life, and said in the last sentence of his testament:

Do not leave off "commanding good and forbidding wrong" so that the villains would not dominate you, and then when you pray, you would not be responded to.[23](#)

After drawing attention to the hazards of leaving off "commanding good and forbidding wrong" and turning away from [Islamic] values to the future of the umma, Imam Ali (a.s.) goes on to say in the sermon of Qasi'a that right now the Islamic community is facing this problem. Thus, if it is not remedied, people must be expecting the villains' dominance over them:

Beware! You have broken the shackles of Islam, have transgressed its limits, and have destroyed its commands.[24](#)

So then, leaving off obedience to the wise and truth-seeking leader; breaking through the stronghold of religion by paganistic tendencies and manners; putting aside inclination toward criteria, meritocracy, solidarity, harmony, and empathy; yielding to disunity and Satanic pomposity; contenting oneself with grandiose titles; towing behind merely titles of truth, faith, and Islam; leaving off implementing al-amr bi'l ma'ruf wa'l nahy 'ani'l munkar and carrying out Divine sanctions; and annihilating religious ordinances, etc., are all secrets of failure and defeat, falling into hardships, remaining in vicious circles, and thereupon, getting ruined and witnessing Satanic dominance of the enemy, etc.

3. Equity in Distribution

Human beings are frequently ensnared in material and worldly drives and attractions. If one gets accustomed to worldly indulgence and fills up one's life with worldly provisions and take to utilizing them in an indulging and hedonistic way, then parting with such a lifestyle would be extremely difficult.

After the Holy Prophet (S) and during the caliphate of the [first] three caliphs, allurements of the reputed figures and discrimination in providing for the related elect were among the flawed policies. This way many were lifted high in rank who did not deserve such lofty positions; and others were unrightfully degraded and tyrannized.

Now, the Imam (a.s.) intended to eliminate this terrible class discrimination and disorder in enjoyment of privileges, which he had explicitly stated in one of his early sermons.[25](#)

It was evident that this sermon would stimulate many people against the Imam (a.s.), and they – mainly consisting of the elect and the reputed figures – would in turn pull many of the common people behind themselves by various tricks to justify their opposition and to hide the secret of their parting from Ali (a.s.).

That was why Imam Ali (a.s.)'s advocates frequently suggested him to give up this policy, and forget about chieftains, influential political figures, and pompous persons enjoying special economic privileges for a time, and not to confront them and their indulgence. The Imam (a.s.), however, found the suggestions in conflict with the principles and fundamentals of 'Alawi hukuma, therefore rejected them. He seems to have regarded these suggestions as somehow abandoning the goals and ideals of an Islamic state, hence refusing them.

Now, let's take a look at some examples of such suggestion and the Imam's responses to them:

A) It is reported in Al-Ghari'at as follows: Ali (a.s.) was complaining to Malik al-Ashtar of people's flight toward Mu'awiya. Al-Ashtar said: O Amir al-Mu'minin! We fought against people of Jamal in the company of Basrans and Kufans who were all unanimous in their opinions, but then they disagreed, bred enmity, their intentions slackened, and justice failed. And you call them to justice, treat them righteously, and take back the rights of the weak from the well-to-do who have no superiority over the weak to you.

A group of them who were with you, when given to this suffering, began to lament, and became sad with this justice. As for Mu'awiya, his gifts were with the opulent, and people's soul yearned toward the worldly gains, and those who are not infatuated with the world are very few; but many of them are the ones who discard the truth, go along with falsehood, and prefer the worldly gains. If you are munificent toward them, they will be drawn toward you and become benevolent to you and their friendship will purely belong to you. May God settle your affair (O Amir al-Mu'minin!) and terminate your enemy, disperse their assembly, nullify their plots, and slacken their efforts, as He knows what He does.

In response to him, Ali (a.s.) thanked God and praised Him, and said: “As for what you said, my manner and character are based on justice. Verily God says: (***Whoever acts righteously, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is to its detriment, and your lord is not tyrannical to the servants***)[26](#); and I am more fearful that I may have been negligent in what you said.

As for what you said about those who view the truth as too heavy and for this reason turned away from us. God knows, then, that they did not turn away from us due to our tyranny, and when they did turn away, they were not called forth to justice; [rather] they sought nothing but the fleeting world as if they had been parted from it; and on the Resurrection Day, they will be called to account whether they sought worldly gains or acted for serving God.

As for being munificent to men and buying them off that you mentioned, actually we are not able to give away out of public assets to people beyond what they deserve, as God has rightfully said: (***How many a small party has overcome a large party by Allah's will!***)[27](#)

And he selected Muhammad (S) as a Prophet alone, and after a while He turned his few followers into multitudes and raised his party to power after being humiliated; and if God wishes to assign us to a task, He would smooth out the difficulties and would ease the hardships. And I approve whatever of your ideas in which there is the pleasure of God; you are the most trustworthy of my companions, and the most trusted, the most benevolent, and the most discerning of them to me.

B) In the same book, Rabi'a and 'Ammara are quoted as saying: A group of Ali (a.s.)'s companions went to him and said: O Amir al-Mu'minin give these riches away and [by means of that] give the noble and the dignitaries of Arab and Quraysh superiority over the non-Arab liberated ones, and also [give superiority] to the one of whose opposition you are very fearful.

[Rabi'a Said:] They said this because Mu'awiya treated those who went to him in this way. Ali (a.s.) said to them: “Are you ordering me to seek victory by means of tyranny? By God, I would not do that as long as the sun keeps rising, and a star is shining in the sky. By God, if these riches belonged to me, I would treat them equally, let alone that they belong to the public.”[28](#)

C) Sahl b. Hunayf, Ali (a.s.)'s governor in Madina, sent a letter to his holiness, reporting that a group of Madinans had joined Mu'awiya. The Imam wrote in reply: Now, I have come to know that certain persons from your side are stealthily going over to Mu'awiya. Do not feel sorry for their numbers so lost to you or for their help of which you are deprived. It suffices them to have gone into misguidance and you have been relieved of them.

They are running away from guidance and truth and advancing towards blindness and ignorance. They are seekers of this world and are proceeding to it and are leaping towards it. They have known justice, seen it, heard it and appreciated it. They have realized that here, to us, all men are equal in the matter of right. Therefore, they ran away to selfishness and partiality. Let them remain remote and far away. By Allah, surely they have not gone away from oppression and joined justice. In this matter, we only desire

Allah to resolve for us its hardships and to level for us its unevenness, if Allah wills; Wassalam![29](#)

4. Avoidance of Using Illegitimate Instruments in Enforcement of commands

Human society – as it must be – is a society replete with human values; it is a society in which law and justice create relations or breaks them, extinguish rebellions and rectify abnormalities. It is evident, however, that achieving such a stage in human society is so difficult. What kind of society is the one that Ali (a.s.) ruled over? What were people's tendencies at its public level? How were common people's drives and efforts basically determined?

In that period of time, other people had run the hukumas for 25 years; hukumas which had faced, particularly toward the final years, rebellions, criticisms, and confrontations, and then in return responded with violence, severe confrontations, punishments, and occasional imprisonments, tortures and atrocities.

The general public was not rightly familiar with law and its significance, and the rulers ruled over people in this milieu. The rulers, wherever encountered with people's wrongdoing, practiced force, violence and domineering which they regarded as the first resort rather than a final one.

In the Umayyad diplomacy, ends justify the means, and the politicians utilize any tools, even illegitimate ones, by any means for implementing their policies, plans, and orders. The leader of such politics speaks to some in a language of allurement and to others through threatening, and still to some others by means of imposture. Mu'awiya did rule over Sham (Syria) by means of such policies, and perhaps the maintenance of national interests (!) of Sham demanded doing so.

What was Imam Ali (a.s.) to do? In 'Alawi diplomacy, in which the use of illegitimate means to implement the policies is not permissible and people's leader speaks solely by means of explanation, elucidation, and instruction; he neither uses words of allurement nor acts deceptively, threateningly, or violently; then how should he bring the people who had been accustomed to this [latter] procedure back to the right way?

Surprisingly, the public masses of Sham indisputably obeyed Mu'awiya without receiving anything from him simply by means of the policy of imposture, allurement, and threat. The public masses of Kufa, however, did not obey the Imam, although they enjoyed material interests by his side, too. The Imam said accordingly:

It is not strange that Mu'awiya calls out to some rude low people and they follow him without any support or grant, but when I call you, although you are the successors of Islam and the (worthy) survivors of the people, with support and distributed grants you scatter away from me and oppose me?[30](#)

The Imam (a.s.) knew well that the society was not at a level of understanding to grasp his heart-rending and "suspicion-free" words. He knew that he could make many, including some of dignitaries,

obey him through violence and threat, and put things in order even though temporarily, but he refused to do so and said:

Let it be known that till yesterday I was giving order [I was Amir al-Mu'minin], but today I am being given orders, and till yesterday I was dissuading people (from wrong acts), but today I am being dissuaded. You have now shown liking to live in this world, and it is not for me to bring you to what you dislike.[31](#)

In 'Alawi diplomacy, achieving goals is rightful only when people think freely and accept reforming plans and submit to it. The Imam (a.s.) never deemed it right to make people accept what he viewed as truthful and firm by resorting to sword and violence and force them to obey him, since the people would finally choose a way which they are attached to.

In other words, if Imam Ali (a.s.) had been asked "why people had left him alone", the Imam would have answered: "I was not willing to force them to obedience by sword. And they were regretfully not in a position to appreciate this path [my rule] and submit to it for some cultural reasons and due to the social structure that has been imposed on them and they have been accustomed to it."

The Imam (a.s.) believed that problems of hukuma could be solved temporarily by violence, but that sovereignty and hukumas would no longer be 'Alawi. He has frequently stated this fact as follows:

O People of Kufa! You suppose I do not know what can rectify you? Yes, I do. But I do not like to rectify you by ruining myself.[32](#)

And then he said:

I know what rectifies you is a sword, but I do not seek to rectify you by ruining myself. After me, however, a tough authority will dominate over you.[33](#)

Imam Ali (a.s.) asserted that he knew how to confront people and subjugate people by means of violence and sword and was able to straighten their crookedness with a sword and to force the rebels to obedience, but he refused to do so. He said: "Correcting you by resorting to violence would cost a price, i.e., ruining the moral values, and I am not willing to pay such a price. This would neither be compatible with my disposition nor with my philosophy of hukuma. But you should know that after me a hard time will be awaiting you. With such manners and acts, you pave the way for the rule of those who would not have mercy on you, and would not talk to you except by the vocabulary of sword:

You will not be rectified (O people of Iraq!) except by the one who will humiliate you, and God will humiliate him, too.[34](#)

Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Predictions Coming True

Thus, with such poignant grieves, the Imam (a.s.) departed from among the people while complaining of them:

Before me the people used to complain of the oppression of their rulers but now I have to complain of the wrongful actions of my people.[35](#)

He had told people that wrongdoing of people toward the just leader would be as dangerous to the community as the function of an oppressive leader; and the community that does not observe the rights of a just leader and refuses obedience to and solidarity and empathy with him – who is most deservedly entitled to such rights – it will entangle in commotion and burn in the fire of decline:

And if the ruled gain sway over the ruler, or the ruler oppresses the ruled, then difference crops up in every word, signs of oppression appear, mischief enters religion and the ways of sunna are forsaken. Then desires are acted upon, the commands (of religion) are discarded, diseases of the spirit become numerous and there is no hesitation in disregarding even great rights, or in committing big wrongs. In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honored, and there are serious chastisements from Allah, the Glorified, onto the people.[36](#)

Thirty four years after the martyrdom of Imam Ali (a.s.), his prediction about the Kufans obviously came true. In the caliphate of 'Abdul Malik b. Marwan, a group of Khawarij called “Azariqa” in Ahwaz region, rose up against the central hukuma. The only place that was apt to dispatch troops to action was Kufa. But the people did not comply and refused to go to battle. In an inciting sermon, 'Abdul Malik sought a solution from his dignitaries and close companions, saying:

Who will volunteer against them with a cutting sword and a piercing spear?[37](#)

All kept silent. Hajjaj b. Yusuf who had newly suppressed 'Abdullah b. Zubayr in Makka, stood up and declared his readiness; but 'Abdul Malik did not accept. Referring to the difficulty of dispatching troops to the Ahwaz front, he asked them to choose volunteers from among their most powerful troops for the Emirate of Iraq and battle with Azariqa. Here again, the only one who volunteered was Hajjaj b. Yusuf.

Interestingly, 'Abdul Malik wonders how Hajjaj wants to have such rebellious and unsteady people to obey, asking:

Every commander has got tools and leashes. Where are your tools and leashes?[38](#)

And Hajjaj replied, “The vocabulary of sword and tools of violence!” He would talk to them with the vocabulary of sword and would raise whips of violence. He would spread the diplomacy of threat and allurement, and would uproot the opposition:

The one who struggles with me, I will break, and the one who approaches me, I will honor. The one who distances from me, I would seek, and the one who resists me, I would damage; the one who turns his back to me, I would chase? And when I find him I would kill him... These are indeed my tools: sow your friend with your dirhams (gold coins), and reap those who are hostile to you with your sword.[39](#)

'Abdul Malik approved this policy and in 74 AH/887 CE elected Hajjaj as the governor of Kufa and Basra,

and the latter said in a warning sermon to people in his first encounter with them:

Verily I see heads ripe enough to be plucked and I am undertaking this task, and it sounds as if I am looking at blood gushing out of turbans and beards...

Know that I will not promise anything unless I carry it out; I do not utter anything unless I fulfill it; I do not get near unless I find out, and do not go away unless I hear. What is happening to you, O people of Iraq? O you who are seeking separation? O partisans of hypocrisy and vulgar morality? Verily you are inhabitants of a town that [God said] **(*was secure and peaceful. Its provision came abundantly from every place. But it was ungrateful toward Allah's blessings; so Allah made it taste hunger and fear because of what they used to do*)**. [40](#)

Know that my sword will soon be satiated by your blood and will peel off your skin. Therefore, preserve your blood, every one of you who wishes so![41](#)

From the very outset, Hajjaj showed in his speech that death was flowing out of his eyes and blood from his sword. He talked to the Kufans with the harshest words and the most degrading epithets and illustrated the ending of rebellions, openly stating that he would quench his sword with the blood of those disobeying him and intending to be haughty. After this horrifying speech, characterized with blood dripping from every word, he issued a statement which was pronounced to the public in every quarter and neighborhood:

Be informed that I give the companions of Muhallab a respite of three days, whomever I catch after that, his punishment would be beheading of his head.[42](#)

In order to show that the statement would be implemented unquestionably, he ordered his disciplinary commander and chamberlain, Ziyad b. 'Urwa, to have a number of his troops patrol around town recruiting people to be dispatched to the war front, and kill those who hesitated or refused.

This way, all the troops who had left Muhallab b. Muqri'a – who was appointed by Hajjaj to command the battle against Azaraq – alone, returned to the battle front and not even a single person refused.[43](#)

Thus, 'Abdul Malik suppressed all the opponents on the central government by implementing the diplomacy of threat and allurements throughout the community, and then set out for Hajj pilgrimage with peace of mind in 75 AH/694 CE! Ya'qubi wrote:

When things were settled in favor of 'Abdul Malik and the cities calmed down, leaving no place that required being settled and taken care of, he left for Hajj pilgrimage in 75 AH.[44](#)

Reformation was actually taming and creating peace under the glittering of swords! That was the kind of reformation that Imam Ali (a.s.) viewed as to the cost of corrupting the reformer, and was not willing to approve such “reformation” of society. He could not yield to a policy that would solve the problems of the state to the cost of ruining the human values.

What need do such a society and such sort of problem-solvings and solutions have for messengers to be sent? What need do they have for Divine leaders and what need for Ali (a.s.)? In such politics 'Alawi hukuma is meaningless. Everyone who possesses power of arms and impudence in action; who puts compassion aside and discards human wisdom; who abandons moral dignities and appeals to whatever enforcing his dominance, can rule.

In Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma, however, values are genuine. He is by no means willing to sacrifice human and Islamic values. The hukuma, in which values are sacrificed and human standards and criteria are beheaded in the slaughterhouse of statesmanship, is a Satanic and Umayyid hukuma. These kinds of hukuma will not be 'Alawi, although towing the names Ali (a.s.) and Islam behind.

Now, it must be added that in today's world the diplomacy of sword, force, and violence is not efficient any longer. Military equipment is gradually losing its efficacy and the statesmen are basing hukuma on new foundations. Human values are now being sacrificed in alternative ways, among which is the policy of taking social justice to the slaughterhouse of economic reforms and crushing the subordinates under the pressure of economic development.

5. Peripheral Factors

What we enumerated so far are the major factors of people's lassitude and Ali (a.s.)'s loneliness in last days of his hukuma. Other factors can also be pronounced for people's withdrawal, which, although not as effective as the aforementioned factors, have had conspicuous role in making people weak and fatigued. Such factors which we have called "peripheral factors, are listed as follows:

Misconception of War against the People of Qibla

In its first days of establishment, Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma unfortunately plunged in war: Civil war and war against the people of Qibla. The wars before that were entirely against the unbelievers, and the battle against unbelievers was unambiguous and free of misconception. But the wars during Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma which were fought to suppress disturbances and improving the society and bringing it back to the sira and sunna of the Prophet (S) were wars against the people of Qibla; i.e., wars against those who were bearing the name of a Muslim and occasionally boasting of bright records in their socio-political dossiers.

That was how the Prophet (S) – who had seen these events in the mirror of time and had predicted the way they would happen – on one hand regarded these battles as warfare based on ta'wil (allegorical interpretation), and on the other, confirmed their difficulty.[45](#)

War against the people of Qibla would create trepidation in faith for the narrow-minded. They could not rightly make up their minds, so they refused to keep [his] company. This way the cunning statesmen who had problems with the Imam (a.s.) justified their refusal and raised doubts among the common people. Therefore, from the outset apparently justified figures such as Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Usama b.

Zayd and 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar refused to accompany Ali (a.s.). When the Imam (a.s.) asked the reason for their refusal, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas said:

I am reluctant to go on to this battle, lest I should kill a believer. If you give me a sword that distinguishes a believer from an unbeliever, I will fight along with you![46](#)

And Usama said:

You are the dearest person to me, but I have made a pledge to God not to fight against the people of [who have confessed] “la ilaha illa Allah” (There is no god but Allah).[47](#)

I do not know anything of this battle, and I ask you not to make me do what I do not know.

People's mental preparedness to accept the misconception of the battle against the people of Qibla as being impermissible on one hand, and the raising doubts by the opponents to the Imam (a.s.)'s reform plans, particularly by Mu'aiwiya's propaganda network, on the other, had made the recruiting and the mobilization of the forces extremely difficult. Therefore, the Imam often had to take on to explain to people the grounds, causes, and quality of his stance. At the outset of the emergence of disturbances and his being forced to fight against the perpetrators, the Imam said:

The door of war has been opened between you and the other Muslims (the people of Qibla). And this banner will be borne only by him who is a man of sight, of endurance and of knowledge of the position of rightfulness. Therefore, you should go ahead with what you are ordered and desist from what you are refrained.

Do not make haste in any matter till you have clarified it. For in the case of every matter which you dislike we have a right to change it.[48](#)

Although the Imam spared no effort in explaining to people the reason for his stances and the causes of the events, it was difficult for many to accept that Ali (a.s.) was absolutely rightful in his words, that he had a firmly set position, and that Talha, Zubayr, and 'Ayisha were thoroughly false and were on the false path.[49](#)

Warriors being Tired of a War with no Spoils

The peoples of those days, although Muslims and ready to set out for battle by the order of their Divine leaders, were not on such a high level of culture and predisposition so as to be God-seeking and practicing sincerity and devotion. Collecting spoils in wars was a strong motivation, especially for those who had for years been accustomed to this practice. Now they had to remain in the battlefield for days and months without being able to enjoy what they seized [as spoils of war].

They had gotten accustomed to gaining spoils in wars and exploiting those spoils in the reign of the rulers prior to Imam Ali (a.s.). Now, from the outset of the battle, the Imam wanted them to keep their

hand off people's property and to know that they had no right to appropriate what they seized in action. Approving a battle without enjoying any spoils was very difficult for people.

The ones who were accompanying Ali (a.s.) were mostly not favored with enough faith and insight to think only of God, "to wield their sword for the sake of Allah", and to have no desire except for God's pleasure, in their battle against rabble-rousers. In the war, most of them were thinking of their own interests, rather than of rightfulness and faith, or of putting an end to the disturbances. Historical records indicate that among the most frequent complaints – too many as they were – brought up in the battles of Nahrawan and Jamal was that why the women of the enemy were not taken as captives and their property was not divided [among the warriors]. Ibn Abi al-Hadid has related this historical event based on unanimous reports:

The narrators are unanimous that what Ali (a.s.) found from among the Jamal troops, including weapons, mounts, slaves, and other objects, he divided them among his companions. They demanded: "Divide the people of Basra among us as slaves." He said: "No." Then they said: "How come their blood is lawful to us but taking them as captives is not?"⁵⁰

When the fatigue of the troops having fought for two years without receiving any spoils and financial benefits is accompanied with the misconception of the illegitimacy of the war against people of Qibla (other Muslims) and considering other factors of the Imam (a.s.)'s loneliness (mentioned earlier), the result would obviously be nothing but disobedience. Thus, it happened that the Imam (a.s.) faced serious problems in mobilization of the troops toward the end of his hukuma.

Losing Eminent Companions

A director of a community and a leader of people are above all indebted to the concordant assistants and coordinating companions in his cadre enabling him to overcome problems and to resolve knotty social problems. The presence of self-sacrificing talented and endeavoring wise men, who out of sincerity accompany the leader and make sacrifices through challenging situations, is greatly effective in managing the society. Such person's role in removing ambiguities, delivering messages, explaining positions, and creating motivation in forces that indirectly actualize the leader's ideals in society, is very significant. Amid the battle of Siffin, the impact of the sermons and valorous speeches delivered by such persons as Malik al-Ashtar, Hashim Mirqal, and others is evident and attests to what said above.

Regretfully, Imam Ali (a.s.) did not enjoy the company of such persons toward the end of his hukuma. The most outstanding companions of the Imam (a.s.), who were articulate interpreters and advocates of his path, were no longer present. The absence of Malik al-Ashtar, 'Ammar, Hashim Mirqal, Muhammad b. Abi Bakr, 'Abd Allah b. Badil, Zayd b. Suhan, and others was sadly felt among the companions of Imam Ali (a.s.). No longer were those fervent, encouraging, and stimulating sermons heard among the troops. On the other hand, there were so many evil-minded, misleading, and ill-hearted elements who raised difficulties and spread lassitude.

It is due to such atmosphere of rabble-rousing, troublemaking, and denial of assistance that the Imam (a.s.) grievously remembers those vigilant, insightful "worshippers in the night and fighting lions in the day", the pioneers in the fields of action and warriors in battlefields and says [about them]:

Where are those who were invited to Islam and they accepted it? They read the Qur'an and decided according to it. They were exhorted to fight and they leapt (towards it) as she-camels leap towards their young. They drew their swords out of the sheaths and went out into the world in groups and rows. Some of them perished and some survived. The good news of survival did not please them nor did they condole about the dead. Their eyes turned white with weeping. Their bellies were emaciated because of fasting. Their lips were dry because of (constant) praying. Their color was pale because of wakefulness. Their faces bore the dust of God-fearing. These are my comrades who have departed. We should be justified if we feel eager for them and bite our hands in their separation.[51](#)

And in the end of his agonizing words uttered in the last days of his life, he said:

Where are my brothers who took the (right) path and departed [from the world] in rightness? Where is 'Ammar? Where is Ibn al-Tayyihan[52](#)? Where is Dhu al-Shahadatayn[53](#)? And where are others like them from among their comrades who had pledged themselves to death and whose (severed) heads were taken to the wicked enemy?[54](#)

It must be further added that a group of Imam Ali (a.s.)'s companions and troops consisted of the Khawarij who after the battle of Siffin stood up against him; some were killed in Nahrawan [battle] and some others went into retreat. Thus, Ali (a.s.) was left alone, absolutely alone, with no combatant comrades, articulate speakers, and highly minded, brave heroes of battlefields.

The Leader's Utmost Power in his Utter Loneliness

Now at the end of this briefly put analysis, it is worthwhile to deal with a very significant point in 'Alawi diplomacy and Amir al-Mu'minin's leadership approach. I have not heard anyone else finding out this feature or explicitly bringing it up in respect to Imam Ali (a.s.)'s leadership. And this thought-provoking and wondrous feature is indeed Imam Ali (a.s.)'s leadership authority, power of management, and steadfastness in Imamate in such era the dimensions of which have so far been explained.

Historical documents show that Ali (a.s.) has displayed the most sublime, the most powerful, and the most significant leadership in his days of loneliness. Therefore, when we say Ali (a.s.) was left alone, it must not be supposed that due to so much disobedience and in his lamenting and complaining, he went into retreat, or left the arena, or during the final months of his hukuma he openly lost the power of leadership and management of society, and until his martyrdom he contented himself only with lamenting and complaining the people's disobedience and lack of support, and the elite's lassitude. Far from it!

Historical texts and a multitude of documents reporting on 'Alawi sira show that the most hard-working

and diligent period of Ali (a.s.)'s hukuma was the time of his loneliness. Never did despair overwhelm the matchless hero of the battlefields and the most sagacious figure of resistance in the onslaught of hardships and difficulties. He made amendments alone; delivered lofty sermons, created legends, and went along the path he had delineated at the outset of his hukuma to the end of his life and never kept quiet or remained idle for even a moment.

In a community where a great part of the elect and the elite did not accompany Ali (a.s.) with empathy; where the common people following them turned to disobedience and lassitude in an atmosphere of misconception about battle against the people of Qibla and against renowned and sometimes sanctimonious figures; where the warriors were quite exhausted after going through three bloody battles without gaining any spoils; and when the Imam had lost the best of his companions and the frequent ambushes by ignorant and counter-merit troops of Mu'awiya and his plundering had wearied the people, the Imam stood bravely firm and persistently pursued the mobilization of people against Mu'awiya's iniquities and criminalities.

In such ambience fraught with disappointment, lassitude, and horror, he mobilized people – without resorting to violence – to make their appearance again in the battlefield of war against Mu'awiya. How much power in leadership, how much strength in management, and how much charisma in Imamate must have Ali (a.s.) been enjoying to be able to stand up in such ambience and to mobilize the troops to such extent?

Ali (a.s.)'s last fervent and heroic speech, delivered before re-dispatching troops to Siffin, attests to the above claim. Nawf Bikali has described the appearance of the Imam at the time of delivering his exciting sermon, as well as the way he arrayed the troops:

Amir al-Mu'minin delivered this sermon to us in Kufa, while standing on a rock set up by Ja'da, son of Hubayra al-Makhzumi. He was wearing a wool garment; his sword-belt was made of palm tree filaments, and so were the slippers he was wearing. The trace of prostration on his forehead was like the callus on the camel's knees.

Nawf goes on to say that in the end of his speech, the Imam (a.s.) shouted at the top of his voice:

Al-jihad, al-jihad (fighting, fighting), O' servants of Allah! By Allah, I am mobilizing the army today. He who desires to proceed towards Allah should come forward.

Then he reports the organizing of the troops as follows:

Then Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) put Husayn (a.s.) over (a force of) ten thousand; Qays b. Sa'd over ten thousand; Abu Ayyub al-Ansari over ten thousand; and others over different numbers, intending to return to Siffin, but it was before Friday when the accursed Ibn Muljam carried out his fatal strike. Consequently, the armies came back and we were left like sheep that had lost their shepherd while wolves were snatching them away from all sides.[55](#)

According to what was said, Imam Ali (a.s.)'s painful utterances and his frequent complaints of his companions were not due to his weakness and failure in leadership and managing people with the features delineated above; rather, instead of using the vocabulary of violence and sword for mobilizing people, he used it for motivating them.

Mobilization of great numbers of troops, as explained above, in less than a week (the same week before his martyrdom), indicates his superb capability in mobilizing masses on one hand, and the success of 'Alawi policies in statesmanship, on the other.

What was brought up here was a glimpse at the background, reasons, and causes of people's lassitude in such period of time, as well as a delineation of 'Alawi sira in administering a state.

In conclusion, we beseech Almighty Allah to succor us in benefiting from Ali (a.s.)'s radiating Divine knowledge and the ocean-like doctrines of the "people of Allah" [Ahl al-Bayt](a.s.).

[1.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VII, 38.

[2.](#) Ibid., VI, 265.

[3.](#) Ibid., VII, 33.

[4.](#) Ibid., VII, 36.

[5.](#) Ibid., VII, 41.

[6.](#) See, Mizan al-Hikma, X, 4614.

[7.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihayn, I/193/ 374.

[8.](#) Kanz al-'Ummal, 1/ 292/ 29479.

[9.](#) See 1/4, hadith 15.

[10.](#) See 4/6.

[11.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Aphorism 147.

[12.](#) See 2/4, hadith 74.

[13.](#) See 2/4, hadith 74.

[14.](#) Ibid.

[15.](#) Ibid.

[16.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 192.

[17.](#) Ibid.

[18.](#) Ibid.

[19.](#) Ibid.

[20.](#) Ibid.

[21.](#) Ibid.

[22.](#) Mizan al-Hikma: 8/3708/12727.

[23.](#) See The Encyclopedias of Amir al-Mu'minin: VII, 276 (h 2961).

[24.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 192.

[25.](#) See 2/1, hadith 62.

[26.](#) Al-Qur'an, 41:46. (All translations from the Qur'an are from The Qur'an with An English Paraphrase, translated by sayyid Ali Quli Qara'i, The center for Translation of the Holy Qur'an, 2003, Qum, Iran.)

[27.](#) Al-Qur'an, 2: 249.

[28.](#) See 5/10, hadith 229.

[29.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VII, 53 (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 70)

[30.](#) See 5/10, hadith 245 (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 180)

[31.](#) The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VI, 225 (hadith 2577).

- [32.](#) See 8/9, hadith 447.
- [33.](#) See 8/10, hadith 449.
- [34.](#) Rabi' al-Abrar, 4/250.
- [35.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, IX, 474, (ahadith 4747, 4748). (Nahj al-Balagha, Aphorism 261).
- [36.](#) See 6/2, hadith 305.
- [37.](#) Al-Futuh, VII, 8/3.
- [38.](#) Al-Futuh, VII, 8/3.
- [39.](#) Al-Futuh, VII, 8/4.
- [40.](#) Al-Qur'an, 16: 12.
- [41.](#) Al-Futuh, 7 & 8/10. Mas'udi has said:
Hajjaj died at the age of 54 in the region of Wasit, Iraq in 95 AH/713 CE. He ruled over people for twenty years, and the number of people who were killed [during his rule] in battles or due to torture amounted to 120 thousand. When he died, 50 thousand men and 30 thousand women, including 16 thousand girls, were kept in his prisons.
- He used to keep men and women in one place. His prisons were roofless, so the prisoners could not keep away from the heat of the sun in summer and rain and cold in winter. His other tortures are described in my [Mas'udi's] other book. It is reported that one day he mounted his horse to go to Friday prayer. He heard moans. He asked what that was.
- He was replied: the prisoners are moaning and complaining of their hardships. He went toward them and said: (Begone in it, and do not speak to Me!) (Al-Qur'an, 23:108) It is said that Hajjaj died the same Friday, never having mounted [a horse] after this mounting. (Maruj al-Zahab: 3/175).
- [42.](#) Al-Futuh, 7 & 8/10.
- [43.](#) Al-Futuh, 7 & 8/13.
- [44.](#) Tarikh al-Yaqubi: 2/273.
- [45.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: V, 25.
- [46.](#) See 1/9, hadith 44.
- [47.](#) Ibid.
- [48.](#) Nahj al-Balagah, Sermon 173.
- [49.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, V, 147.
- [50.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, V, 147.
- [51.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 121.
- [52.](#) Malik b. Tayyihan al-Ansari, one of the sahaba (companions) in the battle of Badr, who was martyred in the battle of Siffin.
- [53.](#) Khuzayma b. Thabit al-Ansari who attended in Badr and other battles, and martyred in Siffin. The Holy Prophet (S) considered his testimony as equal to that of two persons.
- [54.](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VII, 167. (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 182).
- [55.](#) Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 182. Also cf. The Encyclopedia Amir al-Mu'minin, VII, 167.

Chapter One: Allegiance of Light

1.1 The Date of Allegiance to the Imam

The historians and hagiographers differ in determining the accurate date of people's allegiance to Imam

Ali (a.s.). Some said the same day that 'Uthman was killed people swore allegiance to the Imam (a.s.).^{[1](#)} Others believe that allegiance to the Imam took place several days after the murder of 'Uthman. This interval, varying from one to five days, is matter of disagreement among the historians.^{[2](#)}

It is reported in some historical sources that the allegiance to Ali (a.s.) was sworn on Friday 25th of Dhil Hajja, which is supposed to be the same day that 'Uthman was killed.^{[3](#)}

And finally, according to what Tabari quoted from Abu Malih, and Ibn Abi al-Hadid quoted from Abu Ja'far Iskafi^{[4](#)}, and also according to what is reported in Tarikh-i Damishq, and Tadhkira al-Khawass^{[5](#)}, people swore allegiance to the Imam on Friday Dhil Hajja 18, 35AH/ June 12, 656CE.

In my opinion, the latter view is closer to reality; since besides being asserted by the above-mentioned sources, it is compatible with the view of those who identify the date of allegiance to the Imam with the date of the murder of 'Uthman; as 'Uthman, according to the soundest traditions, was murdered on the 18th of Dhil Hajja.^{[6](#)}

On the other hand, given the political circumstances of the then Islamic community and Imam Ali (a.s.)'s exclusive situation, the several days interval between 'Uthman's murder and appointment of the new leader is far from reality.

1.2 People's Freedom in Electing the Imam

1. Imam Ali (a.s.), in a letter to the Kufans at the time of departure from Madina for Basra: "People swore allegiance to me, not by force or compulsion, but obediently and out of free will".^{[7](#)}

2. Imam Ali (a.s.): The Messenger of God deceased, while I considered myself the most merited [to be chosen] as a ruler. But people agreed upon Abu Bakr for ruling. I surrendered too and obeyed.

Then, the time for Abu Bakr's death arrived. I presumed that the hukuma would be handed over to no one other than me; but he installed 'Umar as ruler. I surrendered too and obeyed. Then 'Umar fell sick. I supposed the hukuma would not pass me by [this time]; but 'Umar turned it over to six persons, of whom I was one. Consequently, the hukuma was left to 'Uthman. Again, I surrendered and obeyed. When 'Uthman was killed, people came to me and swore allegiance to me obediently rather than by compulsion.^{[8](#)}

3. Imam Ali (a.s.), in a letter to Talha and Zubayr: "Now, both of you know, although you conceal it, that I did not approach the people till they approached me, and I did not ask them to swear allegiance to me till they themselves swore allegiance to me, and both of you were among those who approached me and swore me allegiance. Certainly, the common people did not swear me allegiance under any force put on them or for any money given to them."^{[9](#)}

4. Al-Futuh: Ammar al-Yasir came to Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) and said: "O Commander of the faithful! Now

that people swore allegiance to you obediently and not by displeasure, send [an envoy] to Usama b. Zayd, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr, Muhammad b. Muslima, Hssan b. Thabit, and Ka'b b. Malik and call them to what the Muhajirun and Ansar have taken part in. Ali (a.s.) said: 'We have no need for the ones who are reluctant and unwilling toward us.'¹⁰

1.3 The Imam's Reluctance to Rulership

5. Imam Ali (a.s.) in his speech after allegiance: "All praise belong to Allah; verily I was not interested in ruling over the community of Muhammad (S) – God knows this in the Heavens and over the Throne – until you (people) agreed upon this (my ruling). Then I accepted."¹¹

6. Tarikh– al–Tabari – related from Abu Bashir 'Abidi: "I was in Madina when Uthman was killed. The Muhajirun and Ansar including Talha and Zubayr gathered and went to Imam Ali (a.s.) saying: 'O Abul Hasan! Let us swear allegiance to you'. The Imam said: 'I have no need of ruling over you. I will be with you; whomever you select, I will consent to that'. By God, they selected him and said they would not accept anyone but him."

[Abu Bashir went on to say:] "After 'Uthman was killed, they frequently went to see the Imam, the last time of which they said: people's affairs will not be settled except under your hukuma, and it is high time you accepted it.

Then he said to them: 'Verily, you came to me many times. [Now] I tell you something that if you accept, I will accept the hukuma, otherwise I do not need to rule.'

They said: 'whatever you say, we will accept if God wills.'

The Imam came up and ascended the minbar (pulpit). The people gathered around him. Then he said: 'Verily I was unwilling to rule over you; but you did not consent to any other rule than mine. You should know that nothing would be permissible to me without your approval. You should know that the key to your wealth is with me. You should know that I have no right to take a single dirham of that without your consent. Do you agree with this?' They said they did.

He said: 'O God! You bear witness to them.' After that, he accepted their allegiance accordingly."

7. Tarikh al–Tabari, related from Muhammad and Talha: "People gathered around Ali (a.s.) and said to him: 'We swear allegiance to you. You yourself are witnessing what has befallen Islam and what calamities have been inflicted upon us by our kin.'

Then Ali (a.s.) said: 'Leave me and seek out someone else. We are facing a matter which has several faces and colors, which neither the hearts can stand nor the intelligence can accept.'

The people said: 'We swear you by God. Do you not see what we see? Do you not see the [problems of]

Islam? Do you not see the disturbances and crises? Do you not fear God?'

He said, then: 'I replied to you on the basis of what I think. You should know that if I accept the hukuma, I will practice according to what I know; and if you leave me, I will be one like you, except that I will be the most submissive and obedient of you toward the one to whom you surrender as your ruler.'[12](#)

8. Imam Ali (a.s.) – Stated when, after 'Uthman was killed, people wanted to swear allegiance to him: "Leave me and seek someone else. We are facing a matter which has (several) faces and colors, which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky, faces are not discernable. You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse. If you leave me then I will be one like you. It is possible I would listen to and obey whomever you make in charge of your affairs. I am better for you as a counselor than a chief."[13](#)

9. Tarikh al-Tabari – related from Muhammad b. Hanifa: "I was with my father when 'Uthman was killed. He stood up and went home. Companions of God's Messenger came to him and said: 'This man is killed and the people have no choice but to have a leader. Today, we do not know anyone more rightful, more qualified [in Islam], and closer to the Messenger of God than you for this affair.

My father said: 'Do not do this; I am better for you as a counselor (vizier) than a chief.'

The people said: 'No, No by God, we won't do anything; unless we swear allegiance to you.'

He said: 'So let it be in the mosque, as my allegiance with you is not secrecy and would not take place except by Muslim's consent'."[14](#)

10. Imam Ali (a.s.) – stated in response to Talha and Zubayr: "By Allah, I had no liking for the caliphate nor any interest in government, but you yourselves invited me to it and prepared me for it. Then, when caliphate came to me, I kept the Book of Allah in my view and all that Allah had put therein for us, and all that according to which he has commanded us to take decisions; and I followed it, and also acted on whatever the Prophet (S) had laid down as his sunna."[15](#)

11. Imam Ali (a.s.) – stated when leaving for Dhi Qar: "You swore allegiance to me, while I was not happy [about it]. Allah the Glorious knew that I did not have any liking for ruling over the Umma of Muhammad (S); as I heard the messenger of Allah say: 'There is no ruler who would undertake an affair of my Umma, unless he would on the Resurrection Day be brought into the presence of people with his hands tied to his neck. Then his case would be brought up. If he had practiced justice, he would be delivered; if he had been a tyrant, would fall'."[16](#)

An Analysis of the Reasons for Imam Ali (a.s.)'s Discontent in Accepting the

Rulership

Uprising against 'Uthman had been rendered public due to his way of ruling. The spread of revolt against 'Uthman and people's attention towards an eminent figure had practically taken caliphate out of the clutches of political trends. Thereby, it was the people who were deciding on their political leader. In that wondrous occasion, almost all hearts were directed toward Imam Ali (a.s.) without the slightest doubt, as he was the most deserved successor to the Holy Prophet (S), who after 25 years of seclusion was now the talk of the town.

People's general tendency was so strong that nobody dared to oppose this public trend. Therefore, claimants who had assumed themselves as Ali (a.s.)'s counterparts and had been beside him in 'Umar's electoral council were feeling that diplomatic insight necessitated their swearing allegiance to the Imam.

People from every corner thronged the way toward Ali (a.s.)'s house for allegiance, which the Imam firmly resisted and refused to accept, enjoining them outright to go to someone else: "I am better for you as a councilor than a chief."

Surprisingly, the one who regarded himself as the immediate successor to the Messenger of Allah and in his long period of seclusion on every occasion and in any appropriate situation spoke of his oppressed state, talked about his merit and rightfulness for Caliphate, and poignantly and passionately cried out the usurpation of his right, is now pronouncing his unwillingness to accept the responsibility of caliphate and hukuma which was so strongly and whole-heartedly demanded and approved of by such great multitudes of followers in a direct and free choice.

Why was that so?! Did the Imam not like to accept the hukuma and tended toward another kind of rulership?! Or was he plying a diplomatic maneuver by taking such a stance in order to attract more popular support?! Or did these divergent approaches in his life have one or more other reasons?

Even a slight familiarity with Ali (a.s.)'s manners and character leaves no doubt that he was aloof from diplomatic maneuver and had an aversion to the very hukuma itself. Ali (a.s.) was neither seeking hukuma nor intending to domineer people. He considers hukuma as an instrument for establishing rightfulness, spreading justice, and implementing equity. Were the political, social, and cultural circumstances of those days prepared for achieving such goals of hukuma? Now after 25 years of political, social, and intellectual transformations and other spiritual and mental changes, the companions (Sahaba) and other comrades have also undergone changes with alternative ideas, and other criteria for their lives, etc.

The present generation that is leading the political arena and engaged in the current challenges is also in a situation that is not familiar with the religion's firm criteria and standards, nor with the conditions of the revelation era, nor with the sira of the Prophet (S); and not even rightly aware of Ali (a.s.), his lofty status in religion, and his great dignity. What befell the religion in a quarter of a century is the

interpretation and ta'wil of religious texts and the distortions made in the ordinances.

All this had created an image of religion in minds and tongues that made it extremely difficult to act according to the Book and the sunna (free from lip services and flattery). Imam Ali (a.s.) knew that trying to reverse the situation would be tantamount to prompting disturbances and implementing truthfulness would urge the falsehood-oriented truth-antagonists to rise up! Therefore, he persistently refused to submit so as it would be an argument in future against the rebellions. That was why he said in a sermon:

Leave me and seek someone else. We are facing a matter which has (several) faces and colors, which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky, and faces are not discernable. You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse. If you leave me then I am the same as you are. It is possible I would listen to and obey whomever you make in charge of your affairs. I am better for you as a councilor than as a chief. [17](#)

Mawla Ali (a.s.)'s words are so clear-cut, illuminating and profound, "What we are facing has several aspects and layers: the torrents ahead of us; storms that will begin; the justice that I will insist on; the shouts that will ensue," etc.

The Imam wanted the ground prepared for sharing with people the criteria and standards of interaction; for restating the principal lines of hukuma and clarifying the future, so that the people would make conscious decisions and take wisely stances.

The Imam's words, after all the refusals and rejections made in the above-mentioned sermon and in other cases, included:

1. Asserting that he is not enamored or fascinated by leadership. If he has talked of himself, if he has complained of deviations after the demise of the Messenger of God, if he has stressed on his Imamate and leadership, it has all been for the sake of clarifying the realities and emphasizing the expedients.

Now that he is taking the helm and accepting the caliphate, it is for implementing truthfulness and laying the foundation for a government such as he approves and cares for, so that no one would in future lay any claims or intend to impose his demands on him.

2. Asserting that certain transformations have taken place in religious doctrines. After the demise of the Prophet (S), Divine Doctrine underwent transformations. Now, if he takes over the government, he will fight against the distortions and will make attempts toward revealing the genuine aspects of the religion from under the dust of distortions; and this will inevitably lead to much political and social tension.

3. An indication of the Imam (a.s.)'s scrupulous sociology, psychology, and timelines, bearing witness to the fact that he was not enamored by people's welcoming his allegiance in that particular political ambience. He clearly saw the future of his hukuma, and knew that the ground was not prepared for

'Alawi reforms and bringing the Umma of Islam back to the sira and sunna of the Messenger of Allah. Also, he was well-aware that people's uprising against 'Uthman was not due to the return of the community to Islamic values. Rather, some exploiting challengers like 'Aisha, Talha, and Zubayr engaged in this uprising with specific political and economical motivations.

Thus, their motivation for allegiance was not compatible with the Imam (a.s.)'s governmental goals and whenever they came to the conclusion that Ali (a.s.) would not accompany them and would refuse to grant them unlawful and unfair privileges, they would stand up against his reforms and lead the community to disunity and confusion.

4. Allegiance to him is indeed allegiance to 'Alawi causes. Now, the one who joins hands with Ali (a.s.) and swears allegiance to him has to be ready to keep his company in removal of distortions, spiritual reconstruction of the society, reinforcement of real jurisdiction of religion, retrieval of what has left people's memories, and clarification of facts that have suffered transformation, etc.

This way, the Imam (a.s.) gave the ultimatum to the massive multitudes who clamorously enjoined him to take over the caliphate that by accepting caliphate he intended to spread justice; to implement rightfulness; and to restore Divine Doctrine, and that there was no other way than this.

1.4 The Imam's Motives in Accepting the Rulership

12. Imam Ali (a.s.): Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the learned to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope of caliphate on its own shoulders, and would have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat. [18](#)

14. Imam Ali (a.s.) – stating causes of his acceptance of hukuma: O (people) of differing minds and divided hearts, whose bodies are present but wits are absent. I am leading you (amicably) towards truthfulness, but you run away from it like goats and sheep running away from the howling of a lion. How hard it is for me to uncover for you the secrets of justice, or to straighten the curve of truthfulness.

O my Allah! You know that what we did was neither to seek power nor to acquire anything from the vanities of the world. We rather wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to usher prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among Your creatures might be safe and Your forsaken commands might be established. [19](#)

14. Imam Ali (a.s.) – an aphorism attributed to him: O my Allah! You know that I was not seeking rulership and superiority and chairmanship; rather I was just seeking to establish Divine sanctions; to implement the Shari'a (Divine law); to put things in their right order; to restore rights to the rightful; to

move on the path off Your Prophet; and to guide the misled toward the light of guidance.[20](#)

15. Imam Ali (a.s.): Your allegiance to me was not without thinking, nor is my and your position the same. I seek you for Allah's sake but you seek me for your own benefits. O' People! Support me despite your heart's desires. By Allah, I will take revenge for the oppressed from the oppressor and will put a string in the nose of the oppressor and drag him to the spring of truthfulness even though he may grudge it.[21](#)

16. Imam Ali (a.s.): People revolted against 'Uthman and murdered him – while I was in seclusion. Then, despite my reluctance, they selected me for the hukuma. If it were not for the fear for religion, I would not consent to them.[22](#)

17. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in a letter to the Kufans: Allah knows that I had no choice but to accept the hukuma, and if I could find someone more deserving than myself, I would not step forward in this affair.[23](#)

18. Imam Ali (a.s.): By Allah, I did not take over the caliphate, unless for fearing that a he-goat[24](#) from the Umayyad would seize it and toy with the Book of Allah.

1.5 The First Person to Swear Allegiance

19. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: When 'Uthman was murdered, the companions of the Messenger of Allah from among the Muhajirun and Ansar including Talha and Zubayr got together and went to Ali (a.s.) and said to him: "People are compelled to have a leader." Ali (a.s.) said: "I do not need ruling over you. Whomever you choose, I will consent to". They said: "We will not choose anyone but you."

They frequently went to him, the last time of which they said: "Actually we do not know anyone more deserving of hukuma than you, one who is more pioneering [in Islam] and closer to the Prophet than you."

Then the Imam said: "Do not seek that! I had better be a councilor than a commander."

"By God, we would do nothing unless swearing allegiance to you." They replied.

The Imam said: "So, [it should be] in the mosque, as my allegiance would not be in secret, and would not be accomplished except in the mosque."

At this time, the Imam was at home and is said to have been in Bani 'Amr b. Mabdhu's garden.

Then his holiness set out to go toward the mosque, while he was wearing a robe over a long shirt, a fur turban on his head, holding his shoes in his hand, and leaning on a bow. The people, then, swore allegiance to him.

The first person who swore allegiance was Talha b. 'Abid Allah. Habib b. Dhu'ayb looked at him and

said: "Good Heavens! The first hand held out for allegiance was an infirm and feeble one. This will not settle down!" Then Zubayr swore allegiance.

Ali (a.s.) said to these two: "If you like, swear allegiance to me, or if you wish, I would swear allegiance to you?"

They said: "We swear allegiance to you."[25](#)

20. Al-Jamal – quoted from Zayd b. Aslam: Talha and Zubayr, came to Ali (a.s.) who had retreated to the gardens [on the outskirts] of Madina. They approached him and said: "Give us your hand to swear allegiance to you, since people consent only to you [as a caliph]." The Imam said to them: "I have no need for this. I had better be your counselor than your commander. Whoever of you, who wishes, hold out his hand to me to swear allegiance to him.

The two said: "The people will not choose other than you, nor will they turn away from you. Hold out your hand to us to swear allegiance to you as the first persons."

The Imam said: "My allegiance would not be in secret. Give me a respite to come to the mosque."

They said: "We will swear allegiance to you here and then we will swear allegiance to you again in the mosque." Then they swore allegiance to him as the first person to do so. After that, the people swore allegiance to him on the minbar, the first of whom was Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah who had an infirm hand. He went up the minbar and shook hands with Ali (a.s.).

A man of Bani Asad who would take everything as bad omens was standing and watching. When he noticed that the first person to swear allegiance was an infirm person, he said: **(Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return)**[26](#)! The first hand swearing allegiance to the Commander of the faithful was infirm. This is not likely to settle down."

Then, Talha and Zubayr came down [from the minbar and the other people swore allegiance to him.

21. Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa – in an account on Imam Ali (a.s.)'s allegiance: The first one to climb up the minbar was Talha. He swore allegiance to the Imam, shaking his hand by his infirm hand. Ali (a.s.) took it as bad omen and said: "How befitting it is for this allegiance to be broken!" Then Zubayr, Sa'd, and all other companions of the Prophet (S) swore allegiance.[27](#)

22. Al-'Aqd al-Farid: When 'Uthman b. Affan was killed, the people rushed toward Ali b. Ali Talib (a.s.) and they gathered around him in crowds to swear allegiance. Then Ali (a.s.) said: "This is not in your hand; rather, it is the right of the fighters of Badr to swear allegiance." Then he asked: "Where are Talha and Zubayr and Sa'd?" Then they came and gave allegiance, and then the Muhajirun and Ansar and others swore allegiance. This took place on Friday, Dhil Hajja 13, 35 AH / June 12, 656 CE.

The first person who swore allegiance was Talha. His fingers were infirm. Ali (a.s.) took it as a bad omen

and said: "How befitting is for this allegiance to be broken!"[28](#)

23. Al-Manaqib – quoted from Sa'id b. Musayyib: Ali (a.s.) left for home. People rushed toward him, and the companions of the Prophet were chanting the motto: "Ali is the Commander of the faithful", until they entered his house and said: "We swear allegiance to you. Hold out your hand. There is no option but to have a ruler."

At this moment Ali (a.s.) said: "This is not up to you. It is the right of the fighters of Badr. Whomever the companions of Badr agree upon, will be appointed as the caliph." All and everyone of the people of Badr turned to Ali (a.s.) and said: "We do not know anyone better-deserved for hukuma. Hold out your hand to us to swear allegiance to you."

Then Ali (a.s.) said: "Where are Talha and Zubayr?" The first one who swore allegiance was Talha who did so through hand shaking. Talha's fingers were infirm. Ali (a.s.) took it as a bad omen, saying: "How befitting is for this allegiance to be broken!" After that, Zubayr, Sa'd, and the companions of the Prophet (S) swore their allegiance to him.[29](#)

Attributing "Auguring Evil" to the Imam

As mentioned before, Talha was the first to give his pledge of allegiance to Ali (a.s.). Talha's hand was infirm. Thus it was taken as a bad omen that the allegiance would not last long. There is no unanimity in the sources as to who gave utterance to the evil augury. Some have attributed it to someone called Habib b. Dhu'ayb and some have stated that a man from among the Bani Asad made an evil augury, saying:

The first person who initiated the allegiance was a defective hand. [So] This will not settle down.

However, some traditions have attributed this evil augury to Imam Ali (a.s.) and reported that at the time of allegiance that noble Imam had said:

How befitting it is [that this allegiance] to be broken!

But such attribution sounds to be baseless, as it can be refuted by intellect and tradition.

Undoubtedly, no intellect would allow any evil augury in such an occasion that people have gathered in multitudes to pledge an allegiance, and thus no man of wisdom would attempt to do so. How would Ali (a.s.), that matchless wise man, proclaim the breaking of allegiance of one of the most eminent political figures in public and on the first day of allegiance, and that doing it by resorting to augury and considering something as a bad omen?!

Such utterances, on one hand, would fuel to the rumors weakening the foundations of religion, and on the other, would encourage the breaking of allegiance, hence undoubtedly a calumny upon the Imam.

Moreover, evil augury (tatayyur) has been regarded in many traditions as indecent and people have been prohibited from it; and it is asserted that the Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.) do not augur evil, etc.[30](#)

Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that the Imam might have uttered such words or acted in such indecent way.

1.6 People Welcoming Allegiance

24. Imam Ali (a.s.) – describing his allegiance: You advanced toward me shouting “allegiance, allegiance” like she-camels having delivered newly born young ones leaping towards their young. I held back my hand but you pulled it towards you. I drew back my hand but you dragged it.[31](#)

25. Imam Ali (a.s.) – describing people at the time of allegiance: Nothing took me by surprise, but the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced towards me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Hasan and Husayn were getting crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They gathered around me like the herd of sheep and goats.[32](#)

26. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on the swear of allegiance: They leapt upon me as the camels leap upon each other on their arrival for drinking water, having been let loose after unfastening of their four legs till I thought they would either kill me or kill one another in front of me.[33](#)

27. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on breaking allegiance by Talha and Zubayr: You came to me and told me to pledge allegiance to you; I said I won't. You said: Yes [you will]. I said no, and held back my hand, but you pulled it towards you. I drew back my hand but you dragged it. You leapt upon me as the camels leap upon each other on their arrival for drinking water till I thought you would either kill me or kill one another. Then I held out my hand and you swore allegiance to me willingly, and at the beginning, Talha and Zubayr swore allegiance to me obediently rather than by compulsion.[34](#)

28. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on his swearing of allegiance: You drew out my hand towards you for allegiance but I held it back and you stretched it but I contracted it. Then you crowded over me as the thirsty camels crowd on the watering cisterns on their being taken there, so much so that shoes were torn, shoulder-cloths fell away and the weak got trampled, and the happiness of people on their allegiance to me was so manifested that small children felt Joyful, the old staggered (up to me) for it, the sick also reached for it helter skelter and young girls ran for it without veils.[35](#)

29. The Event of Siffin – quoted from Khafaf b. 'Abd Allah: People gathered around Ali (a.s.) like moths for the swear of allegiance, to the extent that shoes got lost, shoulder cloths fell away, and the old men got trampled.[36](#)

1.7 Allegiance of General Public

30. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by Ibn Abbas: When Ali (a.s.) entered the mosque and the people came forward to swear allegiance to him, I had the fear that some of Ali's enemies whose father or brother or relatives had been killed by him in the time of the Prophet (S) might say something that would cause Ali to turn his face away from hukuma and abandon it. I was constantly watching for this to happen and apprehensive in this respect; [however] nobody said anything until all people swore allegiance obediently rather than by compulsion.^{[37](#)}

31. Al-Futuh: Ansar said to people: "You are aware of Ali b. Abi Talib's superiority, achievements, kinship and his status with the Prophet (S), and [you know] his knowledge about halal and haram, and you are aware of your need for him from among the companions; and he is the one who has never failed his benevolence toward you. If we ever found someone superior and more deserving than him for hukuma, we wouldn't hesitate to call you to him.

The people said unanimously: "We consent to him obediently rather than by compulsion."

Then Ali (a.s.) told them: "Tell me whether your saying 'We swore allegiance to him obediently rather than by compulsion', is a right incumbent upon you by God or it is your own opinion."

They replied: "This is God's right incumbent upon us."^{[38](#)}

32. Al-Jamal – quoted from 'Abd al-Hamid b. 'Abd al-Rahman on the authority of Ibn Abzay: Shall I describe to you what I saw by my own eyes and heard by my own ears? When people gathered near public treasury, Ali (a.s.) said to Talha: "Hold out your hand to swear allegiance to you." Then Talha said: You are more deserving in that than me, as people's vote is more in your favor than in mine.

Ali (a.s.) said: "We are not afraid of other than you."

Talha said: "Have no fear. By God, there will be no harm to you from my side."

After that, Ammar Yasir, Abu al-Haytham b. Tayyahan, Rifa'a b. Rafi', and Abu Ayyub Khalid b. Zayd stood up and addressed Ali (a.s.): "The [Islamic] state is corrupted, and you yourself saw 'Uthman's actions and what he did contrary to the Book and the sunna. Hold out your hand so that we pledge allegiance to you so as you improve what has been ruined of the affairs of the Umma."

Ali (a.s.) turned it down and said: "You saw how I was treated and noticed people's vote. I have no need of them."

They [the above group] went to the Ansar and said: O Group of Ansar! You are the companions of Allah and His Messenger. Allah graced you because of His Messenger. Truly, you know the superiority of Ali (a.s.) and his achievements and [are informed of] his relation to and status with the Prophet (S). If he

takes charge of the hukuma, he will bring happiness and well-being to you.

Then the Ansar said: "We are more inclined toward him than all other people and do not seek any alternative for him."

After that they gathered around him, staying with him until they all swore allegiance to him.[39](#)

33. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in a letter to Mu'awiya: Verily, those who swore allegiance to Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman have sworn allegiance to me on the same basis on which they swore allegiance to them. On this basis, he who was present has no choice to consider, and he who was absent has no right to reject; and consultation is confined to the Muhajirun and the Ansar. If they agree on an individual and take him to be caliph it will be deemed to mean Allah's pleasure. If any one keeps away by way of objection or innovation they will return him to the position from where he kept away. If he refuses they will fight him for following a course other than that of the believers, and Allah will put him back from where he had run away.[40](#)

34. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in response to Mu'awiya's letter: As for your separation from Talha and Zubayr, and separating the Shamis from Basrans; by my life, all are equal in the matter of hukuma, since there was widespread allegiance in which the elite were not excluded and there is no room for revision in it.[41](#)

35. Al-Futuh: All the Kufans swore allegiance to Ali (a.s.)... Then, people of Hijaz and the Iraqis swore allegiance to Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.).[42](#)

36. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: When 'Uthman was killed on Dhil Hajja 18, 35 AH / June 17, 656 CE, and the following day allegiance was sworn to Ali (a.s.) in Median, Talha, Zubayr, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Sa'id b. Zayd, 'Ammar Yasir, 'Usama bin Zayd, Sahl b. Hanif, Abu Ansari, Muhammad b. Muslima, Zayd b. Thabit, Khuzayma b. Thabit, and anyone else in Madina from among the companions of the Prophet and non-companions swore allegiance.[43](#)

1.8 Words of a Group of Imam Ali's Companions after Swearing Allegiance

37. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi – after people's allegiance to Ali (a.s.): A group of the Ansar stood up and spoke. The first one to speak was Thabit b. Qays Ansari. A speaker and orator to the Ansar, he said: "By God, O Amir al-Mu'minin, if they preceded you in hukuma (and wilaya), they were far behind you in faith. If they took precedence over you yesterday, you did catch up with them today and your status is not unknown to anyone and your standing is well-known to all. They needed you in what they knew not; but you did not need anyone in your knowledge."

Then Khuzayma b. Thabit Ansari – also known as Dhu'l Shahadatayn[44](#) – stood up and said: "O Amir al-Mu'minin! We did not find anyone but you for hukuma, and the state of affairs would not settle except by

you; if we are truthful among ourselves [we would realize that] you are the highest in faith, the most knowledgeable about God, and the closest to the Messenger of Allah of all other believers. What they possess, you possess too, but what you are endowed with they lack."

After him, Sa'sa'a b. Suhan rose up and said: "By God, O Amir al-Mu'minin! You ornamented the caliphate, and the caliphate did not ornament you. You sublimated the hukuma, and the hukuma did not sublimates you. Truly, hukuma and caliphate do need you more than you need them."

Then Malik b. al-Harith al-Ashtar stood up and said: "O People! This is the successor to the successors of the prophets and the inheritor of their knowledge; one who suffered afflictions, and underwent immense forbearance, to whose faith the Book of Allah and to whose [belongingness to the] Garden of Divine pleasure the Prophet testified. He is the one who perfected virtues, and no one of the past and the future would doubt his achievements, knowledge, and superiority."

Finally, 'Aqaba b. 'Amr rose and said: "Who is the one that has the [honor of] 'Aqaba and Ridwan pledges; who is a guiding leader with no fear of his tyranny; and a learned one with no apprehension of his ignorance?"⁴⁵ See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VIII, 309 (Khuzayma b. Thabit Ansari); 313 (Hudhayfa b. Yaman); and 412 (Ahmad b. Hanbal).

1.9 Turning away from Swearing Allegiance to the Imam

Allegiance to Ali (a.s.) was widespread. In this magnificent pledge all the muhajirun and Ansar⁴⁶ and all those who were in Madinah participated and swore allegiance voluntarily and freely. After that, people of Makka, Kufa, and Hijaz swore allegiance, too⁴⁷.

The Imam (a.s.) has explicitly considered his allegiance as public and widespread⁴⁸, as many of the historical sources have asserted the gathering of the Muhajirun and Ansar for pledging allegiance to the Imam⁴⁹. In some historical sources, there are accounts that show such persons as 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Muhammad b. Muslima, Usama b. Zayd, Hassan b. Thabit, Ka'b b. Malik, 'Abd Allah b. Sallam, Marwan b. Hakam, sa'id b. 'As, and Walid b. 'Aqaba refused to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.)⁵⁰.

There are two views concerning their refusal of allegiance to the Imam: the first view is that they really opposed to the allegiance to the Imam and did not pledge. The second is that they did not disagree with the allegiance per se, and what is brought up in historical text regarding their refusal of allegiance to the Imam is interpreted as their deserting Ali (a.s.) in civil wars.

After giving an account of people's allegiance to the Imam, the governor of Neyshabur says:

The words of those who suspect that 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Abu Mas'ud Ansari, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Abu Musa Ash'ari, Muhammad b. Muslima, and Usama b. Zayd refused to swear allegiance to the Imam are in fact words of those who turn a blind eye to reality.

He goes on to explain that they did pledge allegiance to the Imam, but for some reasons they refused to keep his company in war, and their refusal to participate in war led some people to presume that they have disagreed with this allegiance⁵¹.

The Mu'tazilite Ibn Abi al-Hadid accepts the same view and has attributed it to the Mu'tazilites, in his *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*⁵².

Deliberation on this issue would clarify that the majority of those who are allegedly known as opponents to allegiance to the Imam had indeed sworn allegiance. However, the allegiance of some of them, like Abd Allah b. 'Umar and Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, does not mean that they were faithful to the Imam's leadership; since they openly announced that they would not accompany him in wars. The allegiance of another group, such as Marwan, Sa'id b. 'As, and Walid was politically motivated⁵³.

In a sense, this group may thus be considered as deviators from allegiance to the Imam, since their allegiance was not a real and perfect, and they can be ranked among those who pledged allegiance to the Imam, as they performed the formal rite of pledging allegiance, hence the possibility of combining the two views.

Another contingency is that they refused to participate in the widespread allegiance which was being sworn in the mosque, and made excuses for justifying their refusal; however, after the rite of allegiance was over and the caliphate of Ali (a.s.) was established, they expressed their willingness to the allegiance.

This claim is confirmed by the account given about the visit of Marwan, Walid, and Sa'id b. 'As with the Imam at the end of the public allegiance, who swore allegiance to the Imam after some discussions, as well as another account which denotes the confessions made by Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Usama and Sa'd of their allegiance to Ali (a.s.).

38. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.)—part of his speech when 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Muhammad b. Muslima, Hassan b. Thabit, and Usama refused to pledge allegiance: O people! You swore allegiance to me as rulers before me have been sworn to. Verily, people have authority over their option before they swear allegiance; but after swearing allegiance they have no option. In truth, the Imam is to practice steadfastness and righteousness, and the people are to be obedient and compatible.

This is a public allegiance. Whoever turns away from it is turning away from Islam and is following a path other than that of the Muslims'. Your allegiance to me was not without thinking, nor is my and your position the same. I seek you for Allah's sake but you seek me for your own benefits. By Allah, I will be benevolent to the adversaries and equitable to the oppressed.

I have received words about Sa'd, Ibn Muslima, Usama, 'Abd Allah, and Hassan b. Thabit that I do not like. Allah is [the judge] between them and me.⁵⁴

39. Muruj al-Dhahab: Sa'd, Usama b. Zayd, Abd Allah b. 'Umar, and Muhammad b. Muslima were among those who refused to swear allegiance to Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). These and another group were among the rejecters [of allegiance], who argued that this [allegiance] was disturbance.

Another group told Ali (a.s.): give us swords to accompany you in the battles that if we strike them upon believers they would not hurt them but if we strike them upon unbelievers, they pierce their bodies!

Ali (a.s.) turned his face away from them and vacated the verse: ***(Had Allah known any good in them? Surely He would have made them hear, and wear He to make them hear, surely would turn away, being disregarded.)***⁵⁵

40. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: People, except for three from the Qurayshis, swore allegiance: Marwan b. Hakam, Sa'id b. 'As, and Walid b. 'Aqaba who was the spokesman. The latter said: O man! You killed our near of kin. As for me, you killed my father as a captive in the battle of Badr; as for Sa'id, you killed his father in the battle of Badr, whereas he was one of the eminent figures of the Quraysh; and as for Marwan, you reproached his father and criticized 'Uthman when he drew his father near himself... [Thereby] We pledged ourselves that [we swear allegiance to you on the condition that] you forgive us [the punishment] for what we have done, grant us what is in our possession, and kill the murderers of our friend ('Uthman).

Ali (a.s.) got infuriated and said: "Concerning your saying that I killed your near of kin, [you should know that] Allah (Haqq) killed them. As for forgiving what you have done, I do not have the right to abandon Allah's right. In respect to granting you what is in your possession, justice will take hold of you for what belongs to Allah and the Muslims."

"As for killing the murderers of 'Uthman, If it is mandatory on me today to kill them, it will also be mandatory on me to fight against them. But it is to your benefit that I force you to accept the Book of Allah and Sunna of his Messenger. The one, on whom rightfulness is annoying, falsehood will be more annoying; and if you wish you may join your pioneers."

Then Marwan said: 'We swear allegiance to you and stay with you until you see and we see [what will happen]'.⁵⁶

41. Tarikh al-Tabari – related by 'Abd Allah b. Hasan: When 'Uthman was killed, the Ansar swore allegiance to Ali (a.s.), except for a few such as: Hassan b. Thabit, Ka'b b. Malik, Muslima b. Mukhallad, Abu Sa'id Khudri, Muhammad b. Muslima, Nu'man b. Bashir, Zayd b. Thabit, Rafi' b. Khadij, Fadala b. 'Ubayd, and Ka'b b. 'Ujra. These were 'Uthmani (i.e., followers of 'Uthman).

Then a man said to 'Abd Allah b. Hasan: Why did they refuse to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.), whereas they wear 'Uthmani?

He replied: As far as Hassan is concerned, he is a poet and indifferent to what he does; as for Zayd b.

Thabit, 'Uthman had appointed him as the head of the state council and public treasury. When 'Uthman was besieged, he said: O group of Ansar! Be helpers to Allah. He repeated this two times. Abu Ayyub said in his response: You would not help him unless for the reason that he left countless palm trees at your disposal. And as for Ka'b b. Malik, 'Uthman had him gather the alms tax (zakat) of Muzayna region and granted to him as gift what he had collected from people of that region.[57](#)

42. Waq'atu Siffin – related by 'Amr b. Sa'd: 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, and Mughayra b. Shu'ba, with a group accompanying them who had all turned away from Ali (a.s.), went to him and asked him for their share (these were the ones who had refused to take part in the battles of Siffin and Jamal). Ali (a.s.) said to them: "What made you withdraw from me?"

They said: 'Uthman was killed and we do not know whether his blood was shed rightfully or not. He gave rise to some events and you had him repent and he did so. Then at the time of his killing, you contributed to it. We do not know whether you acted rightfully or went wrong, despite that, O Amir al-Mu'minin, we are aware of your superiority, achievements [in Islam], and hijra (migration).

Then Ali (a.s.) said: "Do you not know that Allah (S.W.T) commanded you to enjoin the good and to prohibit the evil and said: ***(If two groups of the faithful fight one another, make peace between them. But if one party of them aggresses against the other, fight the one which aggresses until it returns to Allah's ordinance)***?[58](#)

Sa'd said: O Ali! Give me a sword that distinguishes the unbeliever from the believer. I fear that I may kill a believer and fall into the fire [of Hell].

Ali (a.s.) told them: "Do you not know that 'Uthman was a leader to whom you swore allegiance obediently? If he were righteous, why did you not help him? And if he were evildoer, why did you not fight against him? If he were righteous, you did wrong since you did not help your leader, and if he were an evildoer, still you did wrong, as you did not help the one who asked people to do good acts and refrained them from bad acts; and you did wrong in that you did not rise up against our enemy who was standing between you and us as you were commanded by Allah who enjoined you to: ***(fight the one [party] which aggresses until it returns to Allah ordinances)***.[59](#)

43. Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin – after pointing out some narratives concerning the allegiance of people to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.): As for the words of those who suspected that Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari, Sa'd b. Abi waqqas, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Muhammad b. Muslima al-Ansari, and Usama b. Zayd withdrew from allegiance. In fact these are the words of those who cover the reality of the events.... [He went on with this report to explain the reasons for their withdrawal, and then said:] It was for these and other reasons that some refused to fight along Ali (a.s.) against his enemies.[60](#)

44. Al-Jamal – quoting from Abu Mikhnaf: Amir al-Mu'minin was informed at the time of his departure toward Basra that Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Ibn Muslima, Usama b. Zayd, and Ibn 'Umar have stopped moving on. He sent [a courier] for them and when they returned to him, he said: "I have heard

unpleasant news about you that I do not like. I do not force you to go to Basra; but are you not holding on to your allegiance to me?”

They replied: Yes.

He said: “So why do you refuse to accompany me?”

Sa’d said: I do not like going to this war, lest a believer may be killed. If you give me a sword that distinguishes a believer from an unbeliever, I will fight alongside you!

Usama said: You are the noblest of Allah’s servants to me; but I have pledged Allah not to fight against the faithful....

And ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar said: I do not know anything about this war and I want you not to force me to do something I have no knowledge about.

Then Amir al-Mu’minin said to them: “Never would the one who is entangled in sedition be reproached. Are you holding on to your allegiance to me?”

They said: Yes.

He said: “Go back. Hopefully, Allah will make you free from needing me.”[61](#)

45. Tarikh al-Tabari – quoting from Abu Malih reporting some of the events that took place at the time of allegiance to the Imam: Ali (a.s.) went to the mosque and ascended the minbar, while wearing a long robe and garment, a turban made of fur and bolding his shoes in his hand. People swore allegiance to him while he was leaning on a bow. Sa’d was brought in.

Ali (a.s.) said to him: “Swear allegiance.”

He said: I would not swear allegiance until the people swear their allegiance. By Allah, there will be no harm to you from me.

Ali (a.s.) said: “Let him go.”

Ibn ‘Umar was brought in. He said: “Swear allegiance!”

Ibn ‘Umar replied: I would not swear allegiance until the people swear their allegiance.

He said: “Bring a guarantor.”

He replied: “I do not see a guarantor.”

[Malik] Ashtar said: Let me cut off his head.

Ali (a.s.) said: "Let him go. I will be his guarantor myself. As far as I know, you were indeed bad-tempered in your childhood and adulthood."[62](#)

46. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: Abu Mikhnaf says in his Al-Jamal that the Muhajirun and the Ansar gathered in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah to decide whom to choose as a leader. The mosque was packed with the people.

‘Ammar, Abu Haytham, Rafa‘a b. Rafi‘, Malik b. Ajlan, and Abu Ayyub Khalid b. Zayd agreed to persuade Amir al-Mu‘minin to accept caliphate, among whom ‘Ammar insisted more than other. He addressed the people saying: "O group of Ansar! You saw how ‘Uthman treated you yesterday, and now you are about to see it repeated if you do not assist yourselves. In truth, Ali (a.s.) is the most deserving for leadership because of his superiority and achievements."

The people said: "Now we consent to him."

Then they [The confederate] faced other people, both Muhajirun and Ansar, and said: "O people! By our souls, we spare no efforts in doing good to you. Verily, Ali is the one whom you know and we do not know anyone more capable and competent for caliphate than him."

Then all the people said: "We consent. He is to us as you described him, even better than that."

They all stood up, went to Ali (a.s.)'s house, called him out, and asked him to hold out his hand for pledge of allegiance. Ali (a.s.) held his hand back. Then the people crowded around him like thirsty camels flocking around a watering cistern, to the extent that some were about to kill some others. When he saw this, he asked the allegiance to be pledged among the people in the mosque, and said: "Even if a single person does not consent, I wouldn't get involved in this matter."

People accompanied him into the mosque. The first person who swore allegiance was Talha. Qabisa b. Dhu'ayb Asadi said: "I fear that his work may not settle down, since the first hand that pledged allegiance to him was infirm."

After Talha, Zubayr swore allegiance and so did all the Muslims of Madinah except Muhammad b. Muslima, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, Usama b. Zayd, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Ka'b b. Malik, Hassan b. Thabit and ‘Abd Allah b. Sallam.

Ali (a.s.) commanded ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar to be brought to him. He told him to swear allegiance. He said: "I won't unless all people swear allegiance." Then Ali (a.s.) said: "Bring a guarantor [to secure] that you won't disobey. He said: "I won't bring a guarantor."

[Malik] Ashtar said: "O Amir al-Mu‘minin! He sees himself secure of your whip and sword. Let me cut off his head."

Ali (a.s.) said: "I do not want his reluctant allegiance. Let him go."

When ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar went away, the Commander of the faithful said: “When he was a child he was bad-tempered, and now he is worse.

The Sa’d b. Abi waqqas was brought in. He told him to swear allegiance.

He said: “O Abu’l Hasan! Let me free! When there was no one left but me, I will swear allegiance. By Allah, there will come no harm to you from my side.”

Ali (a.s.) said: “He is telling the truth. Let him go.”

Then he sent for Muhammad b. Muslima. When they brought him in, the Imam said: “Swear allegiance!”

He replied: “Indeed, Messenger of Allah commanded me that whenever people disagree and turn like this (entangling his fingers suggesting whenever they fall into conflict with each other), I should leave [the town] with my sword and strike it across the mount Uhud until it breaks into pieces, then go back home and do not leave until a wrong-doing hand or death would come to [get] me.

Ali (a.s.) said to him: “So, go back and do as you were commanded.”

Then he sent for Usama b. Zayd. When he arrived, he told him to swear allegiance.

He said: “I am your servant and there will be no opposition from me to you. Once the people calm down, I will swear allegiance to you.”

He commanded him to go back and sent for no one any longer.

They asked him: “Would you not sent for Hassan b. Thabit, ka’b b. Malik, and ‘Abd Allah b. Sallam?

He said: “We do not need the ones who do not need us.”

[Ibn Abi al-Hadid says:] Our co-religionists (Mu‘tazilites) have pointed out in their books that this group gave excuses when they were called for battle against the Jamal troopers in the company of that holy Imam. They did not refuse to swear allegiance; rather, they refused to war.

Our master Abu’l Husayn has narrated in his Al-Ghurar that when this group expressed their excuses, Ali (a.s.) told them: “No one who is entangled in sedition would be reproached. Are you suspicious of [your] allegiance to me?

They said: “No”

He said: “If you have sworn allegiance, [it is as if] you are present in war”. And he exempted him from war. [63](#)

1.10 The Biography of a Group of those who Rejected Allegiance

a) ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar b. Khattab

‘Abd Allah was born two years after Bi‘tha⁶⁴. He converted to Islam together with his father in Makka in his childhood⁶⁵, and emigrated to Madina prior to his father⁶⁶ or along with him⁶⁷. He did not participate in the battles of Badr and Uhud⁶⁸ due to minority⁶⁹, but from the battle of Khandaq onward he accompanied the troops of Islam⁷⁰. Many hadiths have been related by him in the Sunni books of traditions⁷¹.

When ‘Umar was on his deathbed, he was consulted with for the membership of his son in the electoral council. ‘Umar objected to the proposal saying: “He does not deserve caliphate. He is not even able to divorce his wife⁷².”

It is pointed out in some accounts that by the order of ‘Umar, ‘Abd Allah became a member of the council on the condition that he would not have the right to be elected [as a caliph]⁷³.

During the hukuma of ‘Uthman, he kept away from political issues and did not partake in political events. Also, in the caliphate of Al-Imam Ali (a.s.), he isolated himself and withdrew from political and social issues.

In the battles during the hukuma of Ali (a.s.), ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar based his social diplomacy on withdrawal, too.

Obviously, such attitude of ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar’s was not out of deliberation and constant tendency throughout his life. He did not act this way in the time of the previous caliphs, nor did he do so in the time of rulers after Ali (a.s.). He swore allegiance to Mu‘awiya⁷⁴ and Yazid⁷⁵ (whom a great number of eminent figures among the umma and Sahaba, including Husayn b. Ali (a.s.) refused to pledge allegiance to). He swore allegiance to ‘Abd al-Malik, too.⁷⁶

When Muhammad b. Hanifa refused to swear allegiance to ‘Abd al-Malik saying that he would swear allegiance only on condition that all people do the same⁷⁷, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar pledged allegiance to ‘Abd al-Malik and encouraged Muhammad to do so, too. Surprisingly, ‘Abd Allah went to Hajjaj b. Yusuf at night-time to lay his hand in his for allegiance to ‘Abd al-Malik lest he might not remain without allegiance even for a single night, since he had heard the Messenger of Allah has been quoted as saying: “If one dies while having no Imam, he dies as in jahiliya”. Hajjaj, the despotic, arrogant and tyrannical ruler who knew this was all out of his fear, meanness, and helplessness, humiliated him by stretching his foot out of the bed [on which he was sleeping] for ‘Abd Allah to swear his allegiance to!⁷⁸

In the time of Ali (a.s.)’s hukuma, he did not accompany him in the battles⁷⁹. Of course, he did not join the enemy forces, either; and as the Imam said, he was one of those who:

Abandoned right but did not support wrong.[80](#)

Some historical documents indicate that toward the end of his life, ‘Abd Allah deeply regretted his negligence and failing to help Ali (a.s.), saying:

I do not regret anything except that I did not fight along with Ali (a.s.) against the group of rebels.[81](#)

Of course, some sources have interpreted الفئه الباقييه (the group of rebels) as the Kharijis[82](#) or Hajjaj[83](#) or Ibn Zubayr[84](#) which, given the phrase مع علي (along with Ali) as mentioned in the above text, leaves no room for other possibilities.

He would say: whoever calls me to prayer, I would follow him whosoever he might be, and I do not follow the one who calls me to war.[85](#)

Similarly, in sovereignty and obeying the ruler, he believed in “the law of dominance” and would say: hukuma is the right of the person who dominates over people.[86](#) That was why when Ali (a.s.) stressed on people’s free will for pledge of allegiance, saying, “I do not compel anyone to obey me”, ‘Abd Allah refused to obey him; but did not do so in his swearing allegiance to Yazid b. Mu‘awiya.

He called the uprising of Madinans after the exposure of Yazid’s sins and iniquities and debauchery (following murder of Imam Husayn – a.s.) as perfidy (ghadr) and prevented his family from it.[87](#)

Although many narration’s have been related by ‘Abd Allah and, more importantly, he is considered as among great Sunni traditionalists, he was indeed a weak-willed, miserly, and sanctimonious person, who was unable of a sound analysis of the political and social events, and his weak-willed materialistic nature contributed to his vile and anomalous position. ‘Abd Allah died in 74 AH/ 703 CE at the age of 84.[88](#)

47. Tarikh al-Tabari: Ali (a.s.) sent Kumayl al-Nakha‘i after ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar to bring him to him. [When he was brought in,] Ali (a.s.) said to him: “rise up with me”. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar said: “I am with the people of Madina, as I am one of them”. When they pledged allegiance to you, I did so too; and I will not separate from them. If they rise up for battle, I will rise up too, and if they sit, I will sit too.

Ali (a.s.) said: “present someone to vouch for you not to rise [against me]”. He said: “I would not present anyone to vouch for me”.

Ali (a.s.) said: “if I did not know of your ill temper in your childhood and adulthood, I would not accept [it from you]. Let him go. I myself vouch for him”.[89](#)

48. Tarikh al-Tabari – related by Muhammad and Talha: Zubayr and Talha went out to visit ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, and discouraged him [in accompanying Ali (a.s.)]. ‘Abd Allah said: I am one of the people of Madina. If you rise up, I will rise up too, and if you sit, I will also sit. They left him alone and returned. [90](#)

49. Al Tabaqat al-kubra – related by Abu Hasin–: Mu ‘awiya said: who is more deserving than us for hukuma? ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar says: I wanted to say that more deserving than you is the one who fought you and your father over hukuma. Then I remembered what I was concealing. So, I feared sedition might have ensued [from my reply].[91](#)

50. Al-Isti‘ab: Nafi‘ was told: “Why did ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar swear allegiance to Mu‘awiya but not to Ali (a.s.)?”

Nafi‘ replied: “Ibn ‘Umar would not stretch a hand for separation, nor he restrained it from the community, either. He refrained from swearing allegiance to Mu‘awiya, except when others pledged allegiance to him.”[92](#)

51. Musnad of Ibn Hanbal – related by Nafi‘–: When people of Madina rose up with Ibn Zubayr and dethroned Mu‘awiya, Ibn ‘Umar called his children and said: We swore allegiance to this man on the basis of allegiance to Allah and His Messenger. Truly, I heard the Messenger of Allah say, “For the perfidious there will rise a banner on the Resurrection Day and it will be declared that ‘this is the perfidy of so-and-so’, and the greatest trick (second to polytheism) is that one may pledge allegiance on the basis of allegiance to Allah and His Messenger and then abandon it.” Thus, let it not be that any one of you dethrone Yazid and go beyond due bounds in the issue of hukuma, or else a sword will lie between me and you![93](#)

52. Fath al-Bari: During the hukuma of ‘Abd Allah b. Zubayr, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar refused to swear allegiance to him or to ‘Abd al-Malik, as he did in relation to Ali (a.s.) or Mu‘awiya. But later on, he swore allegiance to Mu‘awiya, when the latter made peace with Hasan b. Ali (a.s.), and so the people agreed on him [‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar]. Similarly, after the death of Mu‘awiya, he swore allegiance to his son, Yazid, since people had agreed on him. After that, during the time of disagreements, he did not swear allegiance to anyone until Ibn Zubayr was killed and the hukuma was entirely handed over to ‘Abd al-Malik. Then he swore allegiance to him. [94](#)

53. Sahih al-Bukhari – related by ‘Abd Allah b. Dinar: When people swore allegiance to Abd al-Malik, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar wrote a letter as follows to him:

“To the servant of Allah, ‘Abd al-Malik the commander of the faithful: Truly, I admit my obedience and heedfulness of the servant of Allah, ‘Abd al-Malik, according to the traditions of Allah and His Messenger as far as possible, and so do my children.” [95](#)

54. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar refused to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.) but knocked the door of Hajjaj’s house at night-time to swear allegiance to ‘Abd al-Malik, lest he would be left without an Imam till the next morning. This idea came to him as he had quoted the Messenger of Allah as saying: “If one dies while having no Imam, he dies as in Jahiliyyah”. The situation got so humiliating as Hajjaj took his foot out of his bed and disdainfully told him to touch it with his hand [for allegiance].[96](#)

55. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra – related by Nafi': In the time of Ibn Zubayr, the Khawarij and Khashabiya⁹⁷ told Ibn 'Umar: You perform prayers with all these (people), although some of them kill the others? Ibn 'Umar answered, "Whoever utters 'make haste to the prayer' (Hayya 'ala' s- salah), I would obey him, and whoever says 'make haste to the killing of your Muslim brother and seizing his property!' I would say "no".⁹⁸

56. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra – related by Sayf al-Mazini-: Ibn 'Umar would say: "I would not fight in sedition but would say prayer behind whoever is victorious."⁹⁹

57. Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin – related by 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar-: "I do not regret for anything except that I did not fight alongside Ali (a.s.) against the rebels."¹⁰⁰

58. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra – related by Habib b. Abi Thabit: I heard Ibn 'Umar tell me on his deathbed, "I do not regret over anything in the world, except that I did not fight against the group of rebels."¹⁰¹ See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, V, 332 ('Abd Allah b. 'Umar).

b) Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas

He converted to Islam at nineteen ¹⁰² and fought in battles alongside the prophet (S). ¹⁰³ The Sunnis count him as one of "the ten annunciated to paradise" ('ushratun mubashshira). ¹⁰⁴ He was chosen as the commander of the Qadisiya Troops in the Caliphate of 'Umar¹⁰⁵, thereby enjoying high reputation in the history of Islam. Then he became the governor of Kufa¹⁰⁶ and when the Kufans complained about him, 'Umar discharged him. ¹⁰⁷

Sa'd was a member of the electoral council¹⁰⁸ who left the council in favor of 'Abd al- Rahman b. 'Awf. ¹⁰⁹ In the caliphate of 'Uthman he once again took office as the governor of Kufa for a while. ¹¹⁰ After some time, 'Uthman dismissed him and designated Walid b. 'Aqaba in his place. ¹¹¹

After the caliphate of Imam Ali (a.s.), Sa'd did not swear allegiance to him¹¹² and in the battles led by Ali (a.s.) secluded himself and did not help him. ¹¹³

He admired Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) and enumerated his excellence in the reign of Mu'awiya and in his presence. ¹¹⁴ Mu'awiya took umbrage at this; he cursed him and told him, "If you admit to all this, why didn't you help him?"¹¹⁵ [Later on] He admitted his own failure to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.) and to accompany him. ¹¹⁶

Sa'd died in 55 AH/ 674 CE. ¹¹⁷ His son, 'Umar b. Sa'd, was the commander of the 'Umayyad troops in the tragedy of Karbala. ¹¹⁸

59. Al-Mustadrak Ala al-Sahihin – related by Khaythama b. Abd al-Rahman: I heard someone say to Sa'd b. Malik: Truly, Ali (a.s.) reprimands you. Why did you shun allegiance to him? Sa'd replied: By Allah, that was what I concluded and [I admit that] I made a mistake. Truly, Ali (a.s.) possesses three

features that if one of them belonged to me, it was more favorable to me than the whole world and what it contains. [119](#)

60. Muruj al-Dhahab – related by ‘A’isha et al: After Sa’d admired Ali (a.s.), reminded some of his features, wishing for possessing one of them, Mu’awiya told him, “Be seated and listen to the reply to your words. You have never been more reproachable to me than now. [if you mean what you say] Why didn’t you help him? Why did you refuse swearing allegiance to him? In truth, if what I heard from you about Ali (a.s.) I had heard from the Prophet (S), I would have been a servant to him as long as I lived.”

Sa’d said, “By Allah, I deserve this position [serving Ali (a.s.)] more than you.” Then Mu’awiya went on to say, “The offspring of Bani ‘Udhra tribe would not accept this from you (Sa’d is said to belong to Bani ‘Udhra tribe). [120](#) See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin, VIII, 313 (Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas).

c) Muhammad b. Muslima

He was one the companions of the Messenger of Allah who was present in all his battles [121](#) except in the Battle of Tabuk. [122](#) After [the demise of] the Prophet (S), he accompanied ‘Umar–when they entered hadrat Fatima (a.s.)’ house–and he is the one who is said to have broken Zubayr’s sword [123](#) and was an accomplice in killing Sa’d b. ‘Ubada. [124](#)

He was in charge of inspecting state administrators during the hukuma of ‘Umar. Whenever a complaint was brought against one of the administrators, ‘Umar would dispatch him to see into the matter. [125](#)

Muhammad refused to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.) after ‘Uthman was murdered and regarded it as “sedition”. Therefore he secluded himself and took up a wooden sword. [126](#)

He was killed by a man from Jordan due to his not obeying Ali (a.s.) and Mu’awiya. [127](#)

d) Usama b. Zayd

Usama was an ally of the Prophet (S) [128](#). His mother, Umm Ayman was one of the Prophet’s wet nurses. [129](#)

In the last days of his life, the Holy Prophet (S) appointed him as the commander of Islamic Army [130](#), while he was only 18 years old and people like Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abu ‘Ubayda were also present [in the army].

In the time of caliphs he was highly respected and honored. ‘Umar allocated a salary of five thousand dinars, for him, whereas his own son received only two thousand dinars. [131](#)

He refused to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.) and gave excuses [132](#); in some historical accounts it is pointed out that Ali (a.s.) accepted his excuse. [133](#)

Imam Baqir (a.s.) is quoted as saying that, “He had repented his way of acting, so talk but good about him.”^{[134](#)}

When Usama died, Imam Hasan (a.s.) shrouded him in red striped cloth of Yaman.^{[135](#)}

e) Hassan b. Thabit

Hassan was a companion and a poet^{[136](#)} of the Holy Prophet who said about him: “O Hassan! May you always be assisted by the Holy Ghost as long as you give assistance to us by your tongue”. He was a poet from among the Ansars who satirized the Qurayshi polytheists and the one who versified the event of Qadir al- Khum.^{[137](#)}

Hassan was such a timid person who did not attend in any of the battles of the Holy Prophet (S).^{[138](#)} He was an advocate of ‘Uthman and disinclined toward Al-Imam Ali (a.s.).^{[139](#)} He did not participate in pledge of allegiance to Ali (a.s.) and did not attend any of the battles fought by that Holy Imam. Nor did he write any poems in honor of Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) after his caliphate.

Hassan lived for sixty years in jahiliya and sixty years after the advent of Islam.^{[140](#)}

61. Al-Mustadrak ‘Ala al-Sahihin – related by ‘Urwa on the authority of Safiya, daughter of ‘Abd al-Muttalib, “I was the first woman who killed a man. I was in the shelter of Hassan b. Thabit. He was staying with children and women while the Prophet (S) was digging the ditch.”

Safiya said, “A Jewish man passed nearby and lingered around our shelter. I said to Hassan, ‘This Jewish man is approaching the shelter and I wonder if he would find out our secret. The Prophet (S) and his companions are unaware of us. Go and kill him.’”

Hassan said, “May Allah bless you daughter of ‘Abd al-Muttalib! I swear by Allah that you know I am not for this.”

Safiya said, “When Hassan said so and I found that he was not doing anything, I fastened a belt around my waist, and beat the Jewish man up until he was killed. Then I returned to the shelter and said, ‘O Hassan! Get out and take his clothes off; I would have done it myself were I not a woman.’”

Hassan said, “I do not need his clothes.”^{[141](#)}

^{1.} Al-Isti'ab: III/ 217/ 1875, Muruj al-Zahab: II/ 358, Tarikh al-Tabari: IV/ 436, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: II/ 305.

It is narrated in the above volumes that, “people presumed that allegiance to the Imam took place the day 'Uthman was killed.” Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihayn: III/ 123/ 4594. It is reported in this volume that, “Allegedly, the allegiance to Imam took place after 'Uthman was killed”.

^{2.} It is reported in some sources that the allegiance took place one day after 'Uthman was killed. Cf., Ansab al-Ashraf: 713. Other sources state that the allegiance was sworn three days later. Cf. Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihayn: III/ 123/ 4594, Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal: 140. Some sources report that the allegiance took place four or five days later. Cf., Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihayn: III/123/4594.

- [3.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: IV/ 436, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: II/ 305.
- [4.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: VII/36.
- [5.](#) Tarakh al-Damishq: 42/ 437, Tadhkira al-khawas: 56.
- [6.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 1, Al-Jamal: 244, Al-Amali, al-Tusi: 718/1518.
- [7.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 1, Al-Jamal: 244, Al-Amali, al-Tusi: 718/ 1518.
- [8.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/ 439, Usd al-Ghaba: 4/ 106/ 3789.
- [9.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: letter 54, Kash al-Ghumma: 1/ 239, al-Futuh: 2/ 465, Al-Imama wa'l-Siyasa: 1/90.
- [10.](#) Al-Futuh: 2/441.
- [11.](#) Al-Amali, Tusi: 728/ 1530, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/ 26/ 9.
- [12.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/ 427, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/ 304, Al-Kafi'a: 12/7.
- [13.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 92, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/110.
- [14.](#) Tarikh al-T abari: 4/ 427, Ansab la-Ashraf: 3/11.
- [15.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 205.
- [16.](#) Al-Jamal: 267, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/ 63, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 1/ 09.
- [17.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: sermon 92, Manaqib al-Al al-Abi Talib: II, 110.
- [18.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 3, 'Ilal al-Shara'i': 12/ 151, Ma'ani al-Akhbar: 1/ 362, Al-Irshad: 1/ 289.
- [19.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 131, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 239, Al-Mi'yar wa al-Muwazina: 277.
- [20.](#) Shah Nahj al-Balagha: 20/ 299/ 414, Al-Darajat al-Rafi'a: 38.
- [21.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 136, Al-Irshad: 1/ 243.
- [22.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/ 491, Fath al-Bari: 13/ 57.
- [23.](#) Al-Jamal: 259.
- [24.](#) A parable illustrating the fact that a goat leads the flock here and there.
- [25.](#) Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/ 302, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/ 428, Nihaya al-Arab: 20/ 10.
- [26.](#) Al-Qur'an, 2: 156.
- [27.](#) Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa: 1/ 66.
- [28.](#) Al 'Aqd al-Farid: 3/ 311.
- [29.](#) Al-Manaqib: 49/ 11, Usd al-Ghaba: 4/ 107/ 3789, Kashf al-Ghumma: 1/ 78.
- [30.](#) See Bihar al-Anwar: 58/ 312, Kanz al-Ummal: 10/ 111.
- [31.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 137, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/ 78/ 51.
- [32.](#) Nahj al-Balahga: Sermon 3, Ma'ani al-Akhbar: 361/ 1, 'Ilal al-Shara'i': 151/ 12, Al-Irshad: 1/ 289.
- [33.](#) Nahj al-Balahga: Sermon 54.
- [34.](#) Al-Irshad: 1/ 244, Al-Ihtijaj: 1/ 375/ 68, Al-jamal: 267, Al-'Aqd al-Farid: 3/ 123.
- [35.](#) Nahj al-Balahga: Sermon 229, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/ 51/ 35.
- [36.](#) Waqa'atu Siffin: 65, Sharh Nahj al-Balahga: 3/ 111, Al-Imama wa al- Siyasa: 1/ 105.
- [37.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balahga: 4/ 10. This report is unreliable as 'Abd Allah b. Abbas was 'Uthman's administrator in Hajj and when he arrived Medina, the allegiance to Ali had been accomplished. See Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/439. The reporter may have been 'Abd Allah or Qutham – sons of Abbas.
- [38.](#) Al-Futuh : 2/ 435.
- [39.](#) Al-Jamal: 128. cf. Al-Kafi'a: 12/ 8, Al-Futuh: 2/ 434-435.
- [40.](#) Nahj al-Balahga: letter 6, Waq'atu Sffin: 29, Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa: 1/ 113, Al-'Aqd al-Farid: 3/ 329.
- [41.](#) Al-Kamil: 1/ 428, Waq'atu Siffin: 58. cf. Nahj al-Balahga: Letter 7.
- [42.](#) Al-Futuh : 2/ 439.
- [43.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kuba: 3/ 31.
- [44.](#) This name was given to him by the Prophet (S) when he took side with the Messenger of Allah in a conflict with a Bedouin Arab, reasoning that, "We confirm you in your revelation of Divine Message, why shouldn't we confirm you against a Bedouin? (Mu'jam al-Rijal al-hadith: 8/ 52)
- [45.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/179.
- [46.](#) Tarikh al-Damishq: 42/437.

- [47.](#) Al-Futuh: 2/439.
- [48.](#) Al-Kamil: 1/428, Waq'atu Siffin: 58, Al-Irshad: 1/243.
- [49.](#) Al-'Aql al-Farid: 3/311, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/527, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/302.
- [50.](#) Al-Irshad: 1/243, Tarikh al-Damishq: 42/437, Sharh al-Nhaj al-Balagha: 4/9.
- [51.](#) Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/124/127.
- [52.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 4/9-10.
- [53.](#) After being defeated in the battle of Jamal, Marwan proposed to swear allegiance to Al-Imam Ali (a.s.). The Imam said upon rejecting his allegiance: "Did he not swear allegiance after the killing of 'Uthman? I do not need his allegiance, because his is the hand of a Jew." Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 73, Al-khara'ij wa'l jara'ih: 1/197/35.
- [54.](#) Al-Irshad: 1/243, Al-Mi'yar wa'l Muwazina: 105, Al-Akhbar al-Tawal, 140. Also cf. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 136.
- [55.](#) Al-Qur'an, 8:23 (Muruj al-Dhahab: 3/24).
- [56.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/178, Al-Futuh: 2/442-443.
- [57.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/429, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/303.
- [58.](#) Al-Qur'an, 49:9.
- [59.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 551.
- [60.](#) Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/124/4596, Ibid, 127/4605.
- [61.](#) Al-Jamal: 95.
- [62.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 4:428.
- [63.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 4/8.
- [64.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/143, Tahdhib al-Kamal: 15/340/3441, Tarikh al-Baghdad: 1/172/130.
- [65.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/142, Tahdhib al-Kamal: 15/333/3441, Tarikh Baghdad: 1/171/13.
- [66.](#) Al-Isti'ab: 3/81/1630, Usd al-Ghaba: 3/337/3082.
- [67.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/142, Tahdhib al-Kamal: 15/340/3441, Tarikh al-Baghdad: 1/172/130.
- [68.](#) Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/644/6362, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/142.
- [69.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/143, Tahdhib al-Kamal: 15/333/3441, Tarikh Baghdad: 1/171/13.
- [70.](#) Tahdhib al-Kamal: 15/340/3441, Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/644/6362.
- [71.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 3/204/45, Tarikh al-Islam: 5/455/199.
- [72.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/160, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/228, Al-Kamil Fial-Tarikh: 2/219.
- [73.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 4/229, Al-Kamil Fial-Tarikh: 2/220, Tarikh Damishq: 31/179.
- [74.](#) Al-Isti'ab: 3/472/2464.
- [75.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/182, Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/361.
- [76.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari: 6/2634/6777 & 6779, Al-Muwatta: 2/983/3.
- [77.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 5/111, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 4/128/36.
- [78.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 13/242, Al-Fusul al-Mukhtara: 245, Al-Sifah: 73.
- [79.](#) Al-Isti'ab: 3/83/1630, Usd al-Ghaba: 3/339/3082.
- [80.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 17, Al-Isti'ab: 2/173/968.
- [81.](#) Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/644/6362, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/143.
- [82.](#) Fath al-Bari: 12/286.
- [83.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/185 & 187, Tarikh Damishq: 31/197, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 3/232/45.
- [84.](#) Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 8/298/16706, Tarikh Damishq: 31/193, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 3/229/45.
- [85.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/169, Tarikh Damishq: 31/193, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 31/191.
- [86.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/149, Al-Isti'ab: 3/472/2464.
- [87.](#) Musnad of Ibn Hanbal: 2/412/5713, Ibid. 304/5088, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/183.
- [88.](#) Al-Mustadrik 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/642/6355 & 6358, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/187.
- [89.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/446, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/312.
- [90.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/460, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/314.
- [91.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/182, Tarikh Damishq: 31/183, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 3/225/45.
- [92.](#) Al-Isti'ab: 3/472/2464.

- [93.](#) Musnad of Ibn Hanbal: 2/412/5713 & 304/5088, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/183.
- [94.](#) Fath al-Bari: 13/195.
- [95.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari: 6/2634/6779 & 6777 & pp. 2654,6844, A-Muwatta: 2/983/3.
- [96.](#) In al-Fusul al-Mukhtara, this hadith goes on as follows: Hajjaj told him, "Yesterday you refused to swear allegiance to Ali (a.s.) although you yourself narrated this hadith [of being left without Imam] and now you have come to me to accept your allegiance to 'Abd al-Malik? My hand is busy; here is my foot swear your allegiance to it!" (Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 13/242. Also cf. Al-Fusul al-Mukhtara: 245.
- [97.](#) A branch of Jahmaiya, that believed in predestination and viewed man as inanimate.
- [98.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/169, Hiliya al-Awliya: 1/309, Tarikh Damishq: 31/191.
- [99.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/149.
- [100.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/643/6360, Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/404.
- [101.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 4/187, Usd al-Ghaba: 3/339/3082.
- [102.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/567/6103, Tahdhib al-Kamal: 10/311/2229.
- [103.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/569/6111, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/142.
- [104.](#) Tarikh Baghdad: 1/144/4, Tahdhib al-Kamal: 10/310/2229. Tarikh Damishq: 20/280.
- [105.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 12/6, Tarikh Baghdad: 1/144/4, Ibn Qutayba, Al-Ma'arif: 241.
- [106.](#) Al-Isti'ab: 2/172/968, Al-Tarikh al-Saghir: 1/134, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/12.
- [107.](#) Ibn Qutayba, Al-Ma'arif: 242, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 1/117/5, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib: 2/288/2654.
- [108.](#) Tarikh Baghdad: 1/144/4, Hiliya al-Awliya: 1/94, Ibn Qutayba, Al-Ma'arif: 241.
- [109.](#) Al-Sahih al-Bukhari: 3/1356/3497.
- [110.](#) Al-Tarikh al-Saghir: 1/134, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 6/12, Ibn Qutayba, Al-Ma'arif: 242.
- [111.](#) Al-Tarikh al-Saghir: 1/134, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 6/12, Ibn Qutayba, Al-Ma'arif: 242.
- [112.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 3/9, Tarikh al-Tabari, 4/431, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/303.
- [113.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 1/122/5.
- [114.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/117/4575, Muruj al-Dhahab: 3/23.
- [115.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab: 3/24.
- [116.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/126/4601, Manaqib Al al-Amir al-Mu'minin: 2/401/878.
- [117.](#) Al-Tarikh al-Saghir: 1/126, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/149, Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir: 1/1239/301.
- [118.](#) Al-Ma'arif, Ibn Qutayba: 243.
- [119.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 3/126/4601, Manaqib Al al-Amir al-Mu'minin: 2/401/878.
- [120.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab: 3/24.
- [121.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/443, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/369/77, Usd al-Ghaba: 5/107/4768.
- [122.](#) Usd al-Ghaba: 5/107/4768, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/443, Al-Isaba: 6/28/7822.
- [123.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 6/48, Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 8/263/16587, Qamus al-Rijal: 8/388.
- [124.](#) Al-Ihtijaj: 1/180/36.
- [125.](#) Usd al-Ghaba: 5/107/4768, Al-Isaba: 6/29/7822.
- [126.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/445, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/369/77, Usd al-Ghaba: 5/107/4768.
- [127.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/373/77, Al-Isaba: 6/29/7822.
- [128.](#) Rijal al-Tusi: 21/1, Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/497/10 Usd al-Ghaba: 1/195/84.
- [129.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/497/10 Usd al-Ghaba: 1/195/84.
- [130.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/500/104, Usd al-Ghaba: 1/195/84, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 2/190.
- [131.](#) Usd al-Ghaba: 1/195 & 196/84.
- [132.](#) Usd al-Ghaba: 1/196/84.
- [133.](#) Rijal al-Kashshi: 1/197/82.
- [134.](#) Ibid., 195/81.
- [135.](#) Al-Kafi: 3/149/9, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 1/296/868, Rijal al-Kashshi: 1/193/80.
- [136.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/512/106.
- [137.](#) Al-Irshad: 1/177, Khassa'is al-A'imma: 42, l'lam al-Wara: 1/262 & 263.

[138.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/513–521/106, Usd al-Ghaba: 2/6–9/1153.

[139.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/356, Ansab al-Ashraf: 3/164, Al-Gharat: 1/221.

[140.](#) Siayru A'alam al-Nubala: 2/512/106, Usd al-Ghaba: 2/9/1153.

[141.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 4/56/6867, Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 6/502/12772.

Chapter Two: 'Alawi Reformation

2.1 Cry of Justice and its Reverberation

62. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by Abu Ja'far Iskafi: On the second day of his allegiance, which was on Monday 19th of Dhil Hajja, he [Imam Ali (a.s.)] ascended the minbar, praised and glorified Allah Almighty, and sent blessing to Muhammad (S). Then, he enumerated Allah's favors to the Muslims. After that, he talked about the world and called people to unwillingness toward it, and pointed out the Hereafter, encouraging people toward it. Then he said:

“Now then, in truth when the Prophet (S) died, people elected Abu Bakr as their caliph. After that, Abu Bakr appointed 'Umar as the caliph [after himself], who followed the way of Abu Bakr. Then he relegated caliphate to the electoral council, which led to the election of 'Uthman who committed things that were unseemly to you and you knew it. Then he was besieged and murdered. After that you came to me willingly and asked me to accept your leadership.

For sure, I am one of you whose benefit and loss are one and the same; and Allah has opened up a door between you and the people of qibla. Evils have assailed like the pieces of a dark night; and the weight of hukuma cannot be borne except by a man of forbearance, insightful, and aware of the ins and outs of ruling. I will carry you on the path of your Prophet and will implement among you what I am assigned to if you persevere by my side – and Allah has to be besought for succor.”

“Let it be known that my position in relation to the Messenger of Allah after his demise is the same as my position in his lifetime. So, be committed to what you are commanded to, and beware of what you are prohibited from. Do not make haste in anything until I clarify it for you. In truth, I have an excuse for whatever that is not to your liking.”

“Let be known that Allah from on high and on His Throne knows that I did not to rule over the umma of Muhammad (S), until you all agreed upon this unanimously; on the grounds that I heard the Holy Prophet say, ‘Any ruler that takes over the hukuma after me, will be held up on the sirat. The angels will open his dossier; if he were a just ruler, Allah would salvage him because of his justice; and if he were a tyrant, the sirat would shake him so violently that his joints would break up. Then he will be cast headlong into the (Hell) fire, and his face scorched.’ But now that you have agreed upon my rule, there is

no time for withdrawal.”

Then he turned his face to his right and left and said:

“Let it be known that never should some men among you who have given themselves to worldly pleasures, appropriated gardens, caused rivers to gush out; who are riding on light-footed horses, and own good looking handmaids – which caused shame and disgrace on them – find fault with and feel aversion to me when I ban them from what they are indulged in and take them back to their recognized rights, and complain that the son of Abi Talib has deprived them of their rights.”

“Let anyone of the Muhajirun and Ansar among the companions of the Messenger of Allah, who on the grounds of their companionship with the Messenger of Allah have come to believe in their own excellence and superiority, know that the real excellence and superiority would be with Allah on the morrow, and his reward would be by Allah. Anyone, who responds to the call of Allah and His Messenger, confirms our doctrine, enters our religion and face toward our qibla, will enjoy Islamic rights and restrictions.”

“You are servants of Allah, and wealth belongs to Allah and will be equally divided among you. Nobody has superiority over others, and Allah will reward the virtuous on the morrow with the best of rewards and blessings. Allah has not allotted worldly gains as rewards for the pious; what is with Allah is the best for them.”

“By Allah’s will, come to us tomorrow morning so as I divide among you the wealth that is with us. No free Muslim is to fail to show up, be it an Arab or non-Arab, rich or poor. This was what I had to say. I ask Allah’s forgiveness for myself and you.”

Then he dismounted the minbar.

[Ibn Abi al-Hadid says:] Our master Abi Ja’far says, “This was the first speech that some did not like; they harbored a grudge against him and did not like the equal division of wealth.

The next day, Ali (a.s.) came and the people gathered to receive their portion. He then said to his secretary, ‘Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi’, “Start with the Muhajirun; call them and give three dinars each. Then call the Ansar, and give them the same amount. After that, call all the people present, both Arabs and non-Arabs, and give them their portion.”

Suhayl b. Hunayf said, “O Amir al Mu’minin! This man was my servant yesterday and I freed him.” Ali said, “We will give him the same portion as you.” And he gave everyone three dinars and did not give anyone superiority over another. Talha, Zubayr, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar, Sa’d b. ‘As, Marwan b. Hakam, and some men from the Quraysh and other tribes refused [to accept] such division.

Abu Ja’far says, “‘Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi’ heard from ‘Abd Allah b. Zubayr saying to his father and Talha and Marwan and Sa’id, ‘What Ali meant by his words yesterday did not remain covered to us’.

Sa'id b. 'As faced toward Zayd b. Thabit, and said, "He was talking to the wall so that the door would hear!" ¹ Then 'Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi' said to Sa'id and 'Abd Allah b. Zubayr, 'Allah says in His Book: ***(But most of you were averse to the truth.)***' ²

Then 'Ubayd Allah b. Abi Rafi' reported the event to Ali (a.s.). He said, "By Allah, if I remain safe and sound, I will take them to the bright path. May Allah kill the son of 'As! He found out from the words I said yesterday that I was talking about him and his companions; the ones who are among the perished."

He [Abu Ja'far] said, "While people were gathered in the mosque after dawn, Talha and Zubayr entered and sat in a corner away from Ali (a.s.). Then Marwan, Sa'id and Ibn Zubayr arrived and sat next to the two. Later on, a group of Quraysh joined them. They whispered together for a while.

After that, Walid b. 'Aqaba stood up, went near Ali (a.s.) and said, "O Abu al-Hasan! You killed our near of kin. As for me; you killed my father in the battle of Badr in captivity and let down my brother in the event of Yawm al-Dar. As for Sa'id; you killed his father in the battle of Badr, although he was the champion of the Quraysh. As for Marwan; you humiliated his father before 'Uthman when 'Uthman called him to join his gathering, even though we are your brothers and peers from among the children of 'Abd Manaf. Today, we swear allegiance to you on the condition that you let us keep the possessions left to us from the time of 'Uthman and kill the murderers of 'Uthman. In truth, if we are fearful of you, we will abandon you and join the Shamis."

Then Ali (a.s.) said, "As for your saying that I have killed your near of kin, the Truth did so to you; as for letting you keep your possessions, it is not permissible for me to dispense you and others with the rights of Allah; as for killing the murderers of 'Uthman, if it were incumbent on me to do it today, I would have done it yesterday. And now you have the right on me that if you are afraid of me, I would give you quarter; and if I am fearful of you, I would send you into exile."

Walid returned to his companions and talked to them. Then they scattered around with the intention to express their hostility and to spread opposition. Once their hostility became evident, 'Ammar Yasir said to his comrades, "Make a move to go to these few brothers of yours; as we heard their opposition and sarcasm toward their leader. Verily the tyrants have penetrated among them and Zubayr, and the left-handed rebel, i.e., Talha."

Abu Haytham, 'Ammar, Abu Ayyub, Sahl b. Hanif and another group stood up and went to Ali (a.s.) and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! See into your affair and reprimand this group of the Quraysh, since they have broken up their allegiance and promise to you, and secretly called us to abandon you – may Allah make you successful on your path. The reason is that they do not like the leader. When you treated the Arabs and the non-Arabs equally, they turned their back on you, maintained a liaison with your enemy and revered him, bringing up the vengeance for the murder of 'Uthman in order to create disunity among the Muslims and coalition among the misguided. Whatever you say!"

Ali (a.s.) came out of his house and went up the minbar, while he was wearing a colorless shirt, clad in a

Qatari coverlet, had a sword fastened on his waist, and leaning on a bow. He said then, “We praise Allah; the One who is our Lord, our Allah, our Protector, and our Benefactor; the One who granted us open and secret blessings, as His favor to us, without our power and ability, in order to test us [to see] whether we are grateful or ungrateful; the one who is grateful will receive more [blessings], and the one who ungrateful will be punished.

[Thus] The best of people in the sight of Allah in status and the closest of them to Him by [their] means are the most submissive to His commands, the most committed to obeying Him, the most obedient to the sunna of His Messenger, and the most passionate in reviving the Qur’an. Nobody is superior to us except by obedience to Allah and His Messenger. Here is the Book of Allah among us, and the covenant and the sira of the Messenger of Allah before us. No one is unaware of this fact but the ignorant defiant and denier of Truth. Allah almighty says, ***(O mankind! Indeed we created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify with one another. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you.)***^{[3](#)}

Then called out loudly, ***(Obey Allah and the Apostle, but if they turn away, indeed Allah does not like the faithless.)***^{[4](#)}

Then he said, ***(They [Muhajirun and Ansar] count it as a favor to you that they have embraced Islam. Say, ‘Do not count it as a favor to me your embracing of Islam. Rather it is Allah who has done you a favor in that He has guided you to faith, should you be truthful.)***^{[5](#)}

After that he said, “I am Abu al-Hasan!” (He would utter this statement when in a fury.) Then he said, “Let it be known that this world that you aspire, yearn for it, pleases you, and infuriates you is not your home and the station for which you have been created. So, let it not deceive you; and I have warned you against it. Seek the completion of Allah’s favor on you by exercising endurance in His obedience and humility before His commands, glorified be His praise.”

“In these assets, there is no superiority of someone over another. These are the assets of the Allah who concluded dividing them; and you are the servants of Allah bowing to Him (in Islam); and this is the Book of Allah that we admitted and surrendered to It which is the covenant of our Prophet among us. Whoever is not content with It, let him head for wherever he wishes. In truth, there is no fear for the one who practices obedience to Allah and who judges according to Allah’s commands.”

Then he descended from the minbar and said two rak’ats of prayers. He then sent ‘Ammar Yasir and ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Hishl Qurshi for Talha and Zubayr who were sitting in a corner of the mosque. They went to Talha and Zubayr and called them to Ali (a.s.). They rose, went to Ali (a.s.) and sat next to him.

Ali (a.s.) told them, “I swear you by Allah, did you not come to me obediently for allegiance and asked me for allegiance, whereas I was reluctant about it?”

They said, “Yes”.

He said, "Wasn't it that you swore your allegiance to me and entrusted your covenant to me without force and compulsion?"

They said, "Yes".

He said, "So what has made you do such things?"

They said, "We swore allegiance to you on the condition that you do not do anything without our view, consult with us in all affairs and do not rule over us arbitrarily. Our superiority over others is evident to you. [Then why do] You divide properties, make decisions and do all these without consulting with us and informing us?"

Ali (a.s.) said, "You found some faults but left out many other things. Seek Allah's forgiveness. Allah will forgive you. Tell me whether I prevented you from a right incumbent on you and oppressed you thereby?"

They said, "God forbid!"

He said, "Did I choose anything for myself from these assets?"

They said, "God forbid!"

He said, "Has anything happened concerning the rights of any of the Muslims or a precept [of the Faith] that I am unaware of or failed in?"

They said, "God forbid!"

He said, "So what work of mine do you dislike that made you decide to oppose me?"

They said, "You divided the properties in a different way from that of 'Umar b. Khattab; you allotted the same portion to us as others, treating us and those who are not like us as equals in the spoils that Allah granted to us under the aegis of our swords and our lances and we laid our hand on them, on foot and on horseback, and took them back by force and compulsion from those who do not surrender except by force.

Ali (a.s.) said, "As regards what you said about consulting with you, I swear by Allah that I was not inclined to rule. You called me to it and appointed me therein. I feared that if I would refuse your proposal, disunity would arise among the umma. So, when hukuma came to me, I looked through the Book of Allah and the sunna of his Messenger and did what they guided me to do; I followed that [guidance] and I did not need for your and others' opinions. [Yes] If something happens that is not stated in the Book of Allah and whose proof is not present in the sunna, requiring consultation, I will consult with you."

"As for dividing [properties] and following [not in the way of the caliphs], verily, it is not something I have

initially passed a ruling about; but you and I saw that the Messenger of Allah did so and the Book of Allah, to which falsehood has no access from neither front nor back and is sent by Allah the Most Wise and the Most Praised, is saying so.”

“As for my dividing the spoils gained by swords and lances among you and others equally, in the past there were also a group who were precedent over others in Islam who contributed to it by their swords and lances, but the Messenger of Allah did not give them priority in dividing the spoils and did not grant them any advantages for their precedence in faith. Of course, Allah Almighty will reward the pioneers and mujahids (crusaders) on the Day of Resurrection. By Allah, you and others do not have anything beyond this with me. May Allah guide our hearts and yours toward the Truth and inspire patience and forbearance in you and us!”

Then he said, “May Allah have mercy on the person who sees the truth and supports it, when he sees the wrong, rejects it, and who helps the truth against him who is on the wrong.”

[Ibn Abi al-Hadid says,] Our master, Abu Ja’far, says, “It is reported that Talha and Zubayr have said at the time of allegiance, ‘We swear allegiance to you on the condition that we participate the hukuma with you.’ But Ali (a.s.) has replied to them, ‘No, but you will share the spoils with me. I do not prefer anyone to you or to a black branded slave for a dirham or less than that. Neither will I nor these two children of mine will do that. If you insist on “participation”, you would be my companions at the time of [my] weakness and need, rather than the time of strength and resistance.’”

Abu Ja’far says, “They set out conditions that were not legitimate in the ‘agreement of Imamate’ (‘aqd al-imama)⁶, and he set conditions, which are obligatory in faith and law. It is reported that Zubayr shouted from among the crowd, ‘This is our reward from Ali! In the event of ‘Uthman, we rose up in his favor so far as ‘Uthman was killed. When he attained his goal with our help, he placed our inferiors above us.’

“And Talha said, ‘We deserve reproach. We were in a council of three people; one of us, Sa’d, disagreed and we two swore allegiance to him. What we had left at his disposal, and he withheld from us what he had in his possession. Today, we see yesterday’s hopes gone with the wind and hold out no hope of tomorrow because of today’s faults.”

[Ibn Abi al-Hadid goes on to say,] “If you say, ‘Abu Bakr also made divisions equally and nobody found fault with him as they did in the time of Amir al-Mu’minin, [so] what is the difference between these two eras?’ I would answer, ‘Abi Bakr divided the assets equally by following the Messenger of Allah as his example, and then when ‘Umar became a caliph and preferred one group to another, this turned into a habit and previous manners were forgotten and ‘Umar’s hukuma lasted too long; avarice and excessive largesse overwhelmed people’s hearts; the oppressed began to practice frugality and they got used to it.

There was no assumption for any of the two classes that this situation would change. And when ‘Uthma took over the caliphate, he followed the footsteps of ‘Umar in his running the state. Thus, people’s habit to this way of ruling was set firmer and firmer, and the one who gets accustomed to a practice, quitting it

as a habit would be difficult for him.

So, when Amir al-Mu'minin took up the hukuma, he was determined to shift the way of government back to the way it was in the time of the Messenger of Allah and Abu Bakr, a way which had remained forgotten and unpracticed for 22 years. Therefore, this shift in government was intolerable for people. They repudiated it and regarded it as too much, to the extent that breaking of allegiance and disobedience followed; and to Allah belong fates that He will carry out.[7](#)

63. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his first sermon after people's allegiance to him and the murder of 'Uthman: "Sow now, [let it be known that] nobody cares about anyone except himself; the person before whose eyes lies the Hell is distracted from Paradise [by thinking of the Hell]. There are three groups [of people]: the hard-working struggler, the hopeful seeker, and the neglectful who is in the Fire. There are two other groups too: the angels who fly by two wings and the prophets whom Allah is holding by their arms. There is no sixth group."

"Ruined is the one who lays a claim and tumbles who rushes. Right and left are misleading and middle way is the [right] Path; this is the bright Path on which there are the Qur'an, the sunna and the traces of the prophecy."

"Allah has cured [the pains of] this umma by two medicines: the whip and the sword; the Imam is to have no leniency and tolerance[8](#); hide in your houses and improve yourselves. Repentance is behind you. The one who rises to battle against the truth will be destroyed."

"Some things happened that are not excused in my view. If I wanted to state them, I would. May Allah forgive what came to pass! Those two were gone; the third one rose up, like a raven whose concern is its belly. Woe on him! It would be better for him if his wings were clipped and his head cut off."

"Look! If you do not realize, disclaim; and if you realize, take action. There is right and wrong and there are followers for each. If wrong dominates, it has (always) in the past been so, and if truth goes down, that too has often occurred. It seldom happens that a thing that lags behind comes forward. If you return to yourselves, you will become fortunate. I fear that you remain in laxity; it has been incumbent upon me but to be diligent."

"Let it be known that the benevolent of my family and the pure ones of them are the most tolerant in childhood, and the most knowledgeable in the adulthood. Let it be known that we are the household that have acquired our knowledge from the Divine Knowledge, we rule by Divine Command and we are committed to truthful speech. If you follow us, you will find your way by our insight; otherwise Allah will destroy you with our hands. The banner of Truth is with us. Those who follow it, will reach [us], and those who turn their back on it, will perish."

"Let it be known that because of us the failings of the faithful will be made up for and because of us the loop of lowliness will be removed from your necks. It [Guidance] begins by us, rather than by you; and it

ends by us, rather than by you.”[9](#)

64. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – delivered in Madina when he was sworn allegiance to: “The responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it. He to whom experiences have clearly shown the past exemplary punishments (given by Allah to people) is prevented by piety from falling into doubts.”

“You should know that the same troubles have returned to you which existed when the Prophet was first sent. By Allah who sent the Prophet with faith and truth you will be severely subverted, bitterly shaken as sieving and fully mixed as by spooning in a cooking pot till your low persons become high and high ones become low, those who were behind would become backward.”

“By Allah, I have not concealed a single word or spoken any lie and I had been informed of this event and of this time. Beware that sins are like unruly horses on whom their riders have been placed and their rein have been let loose so that they would jump with them in Hell. Beware that piety is like trained horses on whom the riders have been placed with the reins in their hands, so that they would take the riders to the Heaven.”

“There is right and wrong and there are followers for each. If wrong dominates, it has (always) in the past been so, and if truth goes down that too has often occurred. It seldom happens that a thing lags behind comes forward.”[10](#)

65. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – after swearing allegiance to Amir al-Mu'minin, some people from among the companions of the Prophet (S) said to him, “You should punish the people who assaulted ‘Uthman.” Whereupon Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) said, “O My brothers! I am not ignorant of what you know, but how do I have the power for it while those who assaulted him are in the height of their power. They have superiority over us, not we over them.

They are now in the position that even your slaves have risen with them and Bedouin Arabs too have joined them. They are now among you and harming you as they like. Do you see any way to be able to do what you aim at? This demand is certainly that of the pre-Islamic period (al-jahiliyya). When the matter is taken up, people will have different views about it.

One group will think as you do, but another will not think as you think, and there will be still another group who will be neither this way nor that way. Be patient till people quieten down and hearts settle in their places so that rights can be achieved for people easily. Be assured from me, and see what is given to you by me. Do not do anything, which shatters your power, weakens your strength and engenders feebleness and disgrace. I shall control this affair as far as possible, but if I find it necessary the last treatment will, of course, be branding with a hot iron (through fighting).[11](#)

2.2 Dismissing ‘Uthman’s Administrators

66. Tarikh al-Ya’qubi: Ali (a.s.) dismissed ‘Uthman’s administrators from the cities, except Abu Musa ‘Ash’ari whom Malik al-Ashtar talked about (recommended) and he kept him (in office). [12](#)

67. Al-Ikhtisas: People gathered around Ali (a.s.) and said to him, “Appoint your opponents as governors and then dismiss them.” Ali (a.s.) said, “Double-dealing, deception and treachery are in Fire.” [13](#)

68. Al-Amali – related by Sahim: When allegiance was sworn to Amir al-Mu’minin Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), he was informed that Mu’awiya had refused to pledge allegiance and said, “If he reinstalls me as governor of Sham and give me back the responsibilities that ‘Uthman had assigned to me, I will swear allegiance to him.”

After this, al-Mughayra came to Amir al-Mu’minin and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! You know Mu’awiya very well and that the ruler before you appointed him as the governor of Sham. You appoint him to the same post too, so as to prevent the situation from setting apart. Then if you happen to change your mind, dismiss him.”

Amir al-Mu’minin said, “O Mughayra! Do you guarantee my life in the interval between his appointment and dismissal?”

He said, “NO.”

Then Ali (a.s.) said, “Would not Allah Almighty ever ask me how I installed him over two Muslims in a dark night?” (...***Nor do I take those who mislead as assistants.***) [14](#) However I would send for him and call him to what is with me from the Truth. If he complies, he is (considered as) a Muslim who has rights and duties like those of others; and if he refuses, I will complain to Allah.”

Mughayra returned while saying, “Now complain of him [to Allah]”, and sang:

“I advised Ali about the son of war,

He rejected the advice, and the chance did not return to him the second time.

He did not accept my benevolence,

Although this advice was sufficient for him.

Others expressed to him perfect and earnest benevolence,

And I said, “This benevolence will demand too high a price.” [15](#)

69. Tarikh al-Tabari – related by Ibn Abbas: “‘Uthman summoned me and appointed me as the head of

pilgrimage [affairs]. I left for Makka, directed the Hajj pilgrimage for people and read 'Uthman's letter to them. Then I returned to Madina, while Ali (a.s.) had been sworn to. I went to his house. I found Mughayra b. Shu'ba was meeting him privately. I was kept at the door until Mughayra came out. Then I asked him, 'What was Mughayra saying?'

"He said, 'He came to me once before and told me to send letters to 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir, Mu'awiya, and the 'Uthman's administrators and reinstall them to their previous posts so that he would be able to have people swear allegiance to me, since they can calm down the people in towns.' That day I rejected his proposal and said, 'By Allah, if there is only one hour left of my life, I would make attempt to maintain my notions and not to assign these and their like to the government'." [16](#)

"Then he [Ali (a.s.)] said, 'Mughayra left me and I knew that he believed that I was in the wrong. Until he came to me again this time and said, 'I did benevolence to you the previous time and you rejected it. Now I have come up with another view, and that is you do as per your own opinion and dismiss them and seek the help of your trusted figures. The Help from Allah will suffice you. They have become weaker than ever before'."

Ibn 'Abbas said, "I told Ali (a.s.) that at the first time he [Mughayra] did benevolence and at the second time he betrayed."

Ali (a.s.) said to Ibn 'Abbas, "How did he do benevolence?"

Ibn 'Abbas said, "You know that Mu'awiya and his companions are worldly-minded. If you reinstall them, they do not care who is running the hukuma. And if you dismiss them, they will say, 'He has taken the hukuma without consultation and has killed our chief.' So they will stir up people against you. Then the Shamis and the Iraqis will rise up against you, although I am not sure that Talha and Zubayr would also attack you."

Ali (a.s.) said, "As for your saying to reinstall them: by Allah, I have no doubt that this will be helpful for improvement of the transient worldly life. But in regard to what is incumbent on me by the Truth and according to my knowledge of the 'Uthman's administrators, I swear by Allah that I would never appoint any one of them to the government. If they submit to this [situation], it would be better for them; and if they turned their back, I will draw sword against them."

Ibn 'Abbas said, "Accept my words and sit in your house, go to your properties in Yanbu' [17](#), and close the door behind you; since the Arabs make a move and then disperse, then you will find no one but yourself. By Allah, if you rise up with them today, they will impose on you the vengeance for the murder of 'Uthman."

Ali (a.s.) refused and said to Ibn 'Abbas, "Leave for Sham! I appointed you as the governor of that region."

Ibn ‘Abbas said, “This is wrong. Mu’awiya belongs to the Umayyad and is ‘Uthman’s cousin and his administrator in Sham region; I will not be safe as he may behead me for the vengeance for the murder of ‘Uthman, or at the least, he may imprison me or treat me in whatever way he wishes.”

Ali (a.s.) asked him, “Why?”

Ibn ‘Abbas said, “Because of the kinship between you and me. Whatever is done to you will be done to me, too. Send a letter to Mu’awiya, do him some favor, and make promises to him.”

Ali (a.s.) said, “By Allah, this will never happen.”¹⁸

70. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by al-Mada’ini reporting on the meeting in which Ibn ‘Abbas and Mu’awiya were present: “Al-Mughayra b. Shu’ba said, ‘Yet, by Allah, I gave advice to Ali (a.s.) and he preferred his own view and went on with his excessiveness. Thus it ended up to his loss, rather than to his benefit; and I suppose his people will follow his manner’.”

Ibn ‘Abbas said, “By Allah, Amir al-Mu’minin was too informed of various opinions, seats of prudence, and handling of situations to accept your council in what Allah has forbidden and disapproved of, (***You will not find a people believing in Allah and the Last Day endearing those who oppose Allah and His Apostle...***)¹⁹, and he informed you of a clear mentioning and a an oft-recited verse, i.e., the words of Allah Almighty, (***...Nor do I take those who mislead as assistants***).”²⁰

Was it permissible for him to assign people who were not trustworthy and confidential to him to the public treasury and life of the Muslims? Far from it! Far from it! He is too aware of Divine obligations and the traditions of the Messenger of Allah to harbor in his heart contrary to what he expresses, unless for the sake of precautionary dissimulation (taqiyya).

But with evident truthfulness, stability of the hearts and multitude of comrades there is no need for taqiyya. He moves on like an unsheathed sword toward implementation of Allah’s commands, preferring obedience to the Lord and being God-fearing over the views of the worldly-minded.²¹

2.3 Refunding Public Assets

71. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – delivered when taking back the land grants made by ‘Uthman: “By Allah, even if I had found that by such money women have been married or slave-maids have been purchased I would have taken it back because there is wide scope in dispensation of justice, and he who finds it hard to act justly should find it harder to deal with injustice.”²²

72. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – al-Kalbi has attributed this sermon in the form of a marfu’a tradition²³ to Abi Salih who has quoted it from Ibn ‘Abbas: “On the second day of his allegiance, Ali (a.s.) gave a lecture in Madina, saying:

“Truly, any land that ‘Uthman has granted and any wealth from Allah’s property that he has given as gift will be taken back to the treasury; as nothing would nullify old rights and if I find these properties, I will restore them to their rightful place even if they are given as marriage portion to women or distributed among cities because there is wide scope in dispensation of justice, and he who finds it hard to act justly should find it harder to deal with injustice.”

This saying is interpreted as follows: if management of the affairs on the basis of justice is hard for an administrator, it would be harder on the basis of injustice, since the unjust is supposed to be prevented and averted from his injustice.

Al-Kalbi says, “Then he [Ali (a.s.)] ordered all the weapons stored in ‘Uthman’s house and used against Muslims to be taken hold of and the camels collected there as alms tax to be seized. He also ordered that his sword and shield to be confiscated, and instructed that no one should intrude upon the weapons which are not used to fight against Muslims and also avoid taking hold of his properties whether in his house or in other places. Also, he ordered that the assets given away by ‘Uthman, wherever and with whomever they are, to taken back.”

The news of this treatment reached ‘Amr b. ‘As, who was at the moment in Ayla, in Sham region, where he had fled to when people assaulted ‘Uthman. He sent a letter [from there] to Muawiya saying, “Do whatever you wish. Son of Abu Talib separated you from your wealth, just like the bark cut off from a walking stick.”^{[24](#)}

2.4 Difficulty of Certain Reforms

73. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “If my steps acquire firmness out of these slippery places, I would alter several things.”^{[25](#)}

74. Al-Kafi – related by Sulaym b. Qays: “Amir al-Mu’minin gave a lecture. He praised and glorified Allah and pronounced benediction upon the Prophet (S). Then he said:

“There are two features that I am most apprehensive of about you, i.e., clinging to carnal desires and [having] high aspirations. The former bars one from the Truth, and the latter makes one oblivious of the Hereafter. Indeed, the world is turning its back and migrating [departing] and the Hereafter is upcoming and migrating, each one having its own children. You be the children of the Hereafter not the children of this world, since today is the day of action not of reckoning, and tomorrow is the day of reckoning not of action. Yet, the origins of the disturbances and crises are the carnal desires that we pursue and the ordinances that are fabricated, in which Allah is being opposed to and by which some men advocate some others.”

“Verily, if truth had not been intermingled with falsehood, there would have existed no disparities; and if falsehood had not been intermingled with the truth, it would not have been concealed from the people of

wisdom. However, some from each have been taken and intermixed. Thereby, the Satan dominates over its followers, and only those Allah has already promised benevolently will be delivered.”

“Verily, I heard the Messenger of Allah say, ‘How would you be when a sedition befalls you in which the child turns old and the old turns decrepit? People would move on according to this sedition and take it as sunna, and if a part of it is altered they would cry out that sunna is altered, and the people commit enormities! Then, adversities will mount, children will be taken captive, iniquities will overtake them like when fire overtakes dry woods and millstone rubs away the bed stone. They would acquire [religious] knowledge for the sake other than Allah, and seek worldly gains by means of otherworldly acts.’

Then, while a group of his near of kin, close companions and followers were gathered around him, he said:

“The previous governors acted in such away that they purposely opposed to the Messenger of Allah and broke their allegiance to him and altered his sunna. If I prompted people to give it up and turned it back to its original position as it was in the time of the Messenger of Allah, the troops would stay away from me, and I would be left alone or with a small group of my followers who believe in my superiority and leadership on the basis of the Book of Allah Almighty and the sunna of the Prophet (S).”

“Look! If I order the Station of Abraham to be taken back to its original place where the Messenger of Allah had laid it, to return Fadak to the inheritors of Fatima, to return the Prophet’s measure (sa‘)²⁶ to its original scale, to implement the land grants that the Prophet bestowed on some but they were not handed over to them, to return Ja’far’s house to his inheritors and separate it from the Mosque, to nullify the unjust judgments, to separate the women who have been unrightfully married to men and return them back to their husbands, to carry out Allah’s ordinances about these women, to take Taghlab’s children captive²⁷, to take back the lands divided out in Khaybar, to close down “grants bureaus” and to provide grants equally like the time of the Messenger of Allah and prevent circulation of assets among the rich, to cancel taxes levied on lands and to promote equality in marriages, to implement the khums of the Prophet as Allah has ordained and made obligatory, to reshape the Mosque of the Prophet back to its original form, to close the opened up doors and to open the doors closed, to forbid rubbing (mash) of the shoes [instead of the feet], to administer punishment (hadd) for drinking wine, to allow the two mut‘as [mut‘atu’l Hajj and mut‘atu’l nisa], to order the [number of] takbirs [saying Allahu akbar] in funeral ceremony [prayer for the dead] to be five, to have people to recite bi-smi ’llahi ’r-Rahmani ’r-Rahim loudly in prayers, to expel from the mosque those whom the Messenger of Allah had expelled and now are lain in the mosque next to him and to let in the ones who are now expelled and the Messenger of Allah had let them in, and force people to obey Allah’s commands and divorce on the basis of the sunna, to collect all religious taxes (sadaqats) in their various types and measures, to take (the rules of) minor ablution (wudu), major ablution (ghusl) and prayer (salat) back to their original time and status and rules, to return people of Najran back to their homes, and change the way of treating captives of Persian and of other origins back to the way commanded by the Book of Allah and the sunna of the Messenger of

Allah, then the people will disperse from around me.”

“By Allah, I ordered people not to perform prayers in the month of Ramadan in congregation except for the obligatory prayers, and instructed them that congregation in supererogatory prayers is an innovation (bid‘a). All of a sudden, some troopers who were in my company shouted, ‘O People of Islam! The sunna of ‘Umar is transformed. He is preventing us from performing supererogatory prayers in Ramadan.’ I was afraid that [if I had not cancelled this order] the deviators from the right path and the leaders to the fire [of Hell] would have aroused disunity among some of my troops.

“More important than that is the share of the relatives [of the Prophet (S)] about whom Allah Almighty says, ***(Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth of it is for Allah and the Apostle, for the relatives and the orphans, for the needy and the traveler, If you have faith in Allah and what we sent down to Our servant on the Day of Separation, the day when the two hosts met;[and Allah has power over all things)***[28](#).

By Allah, what is meant here by ‘the relatives’ is us, whom Allah has mentioned in association with Himself and His Messenger, saying, ***(The spoils that Allah gave to His Apostle from the people of the townships, are for Allah and the Apostle, the relatives and the orphans, the needy and the traveler...)***[29](#); and has said about us, ***(...so that they do not circulate among the rich among you. Take whatever the Apostle gives you, and relinquish whatever he forbids you, and be wary of Allah)***[30](#).

He has [further] said about the injustice to the relatives of the Prophet, ***(Indeed Allah is severe in retribution)***[31](#) concerning those who do injustice to them. This is graciousness from Allah to us and richness by which He has made us free from want, and has recommended His Messenger in that respect.”

“Allah did not entitle us to share in the alms, since He deemed His Messenger and his Ahl–Bayt too honorable to provide their livelihood through people’s unclean property. They denied Allah and His Messenger, repudiated the Book of Allah that talks about our rights and refused to pay us our due that Allah has allotted to us. No prophet’s family has endured so much suffering and hardship from that prophet’s umma as we have suffered after [the demise of] our Prophet. Allah supports us against those who do injustice to us, and there is no power and no strength save in Allah, the All–exalted, the All–supreme.[32](#)

[1](#). I.e., he was indirectly addressing us.

[2](#). Al–Qur’an, 43:78.

[3](#). Al–Qur’an, 49:13.

[4](#). Cf., Al–Qur’an, 3:32.

[5](#). Al–Qur’an, 49:17.

[6](#). The original text (Sharh Nahj al–Balagha) has it as amana; however, the right word is imama which is more pertinent as per its context.

[7](#). Sharh Nahj al–Balagha: 7/36, Bihar al–Anwar: 32/16/7. Also cf. Nahj al–Balagha: Sermon 205.

8. Evidently, the holy Imam (a.s.) means special situations, as his other words in confrontation with people as well as his practical way of life prove it right. (the author)

9. Al-Irshad: 1/239, Nathr al-Durr: 1/270, Al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin: 2/50, Al-'Aqd al-Farid: 3/119.

10. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 16, Al-Kafi: 8/67/23. Ali b. Ri'ab and Y'qub Sarraj have in Al-Kafi quoted this sermon from Imam al-Sadiq on the authority of Ali (a.s.); however, this book contains the additional statement as follows: "Doors of paradise opened up to them who scented It's fragrance. It was said to them, 'Enter you here in peace and security! Let it be known that he whom I did not make a partner surpassed me in this affair; and I did not bestow (the hukuma) on him and he did not have a position in that, unless a prophet would be deputed – and Lo! There will be no prophet after Muhammad (S) – [for that reason] he was placed on the brink of a collapsing bank, which collapses with him into the fire of hell.

Sayyid al-Sharif al-Radi says, "In this small speech there is more beauty than can be appreciated, and the quantity of amazement aroused by it is more than the appreciation accorded to it. Despite what we have stated it has so many aspects of eloquence that cannot be expressed nor can anyone reach its depth, and no one can understand what I am saying unless one has attained this art and known its details." ¶...but no one grasps them except those who have knowledge.¶ (Al-Qur'an, 29:43).

11. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 168, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/437, Ma'alim al-Fitan: 1/499.

12. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/179.

13. Al-Ikhtisas: 150, Bihar al-Anwar: 40/105.

14. Al-Qur'an, 18: 51.

15. Al-Tusi, Al-Amali: 87/133, Bishara al-Mustafa: 263, Manaqib al-Abi Talib: 3/195.

16. It is stated in Al-Kitab fi al-Tarikh as follows: I rejected his proposal and said, "I would not compromise in my faith and would not submit to disgrace in my work."

17. A small town near Madina with springs and orchards.

18. Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/439. Also cf. Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/364, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/306.

19. Al-Qur'an, 58: 22.

20. Al-Qur'an, 18: 51.

21. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 6/301, Bihar al-Anwar: 42/170.

22. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 15, Manaqib 'Al al-Abi Talib: 2/110, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/396.

23. A hadith interrupted in its chain of transmission.

24. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 1/269.

25. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 272, Ghurar al-Hikam: 7570, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 415/7060.

26. It is a measure common among Muslims weighing four mudds (about 1.6 kg.); however, according to some hadiths, the Prophet's measure weighed five mudds. (Sharh Mulla Salih, XI, 373.)

27. They were not people of Dhimma, thus taking them captive was permissible. In the time of 'Umar, he compromised with them by exempting them from paying poll tax and pay zakat twice as much instead. (Mir'at al-'Uqul, XXV, 134.)

28. Al-Qur'an, 8: 41.

29. Al-Qur'an, 59: 07.

30. Al-Qur'an, 59: 07.

31. Al-Qur'an, 8: 13.

32. Al-Kafi: 8/58/21, Al-Ihtijaj: 1/626/146, Kitab al-Sulaym b. Qays: 2/718/18.

Chapter Three: Administrative Policies

3.1 Honesty in Policy

75. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Alas! If it were not for piety, I would have been the shrewdest Arab.”^{[1](#)}

76. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “O People! If perjury were not repulsive, I would be the shrewdest person. Let it be known that there is an offence in any [type of] perjury and in any offence there is disbelief. Let it be known that perjury, offence and disbelief are in fire [of Hell].”^{[2](#)}

77. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “I swear by Allah that Mu’awiya is not cleverer than me, but he practices deception [perjury] and commits debauchery; and if it were not for the hideousness of deception, I would have been the shrewdest of all people, but any kind of deception is sinful, and any sin is disobedience of Allah, and for any deceiver there would be a banner raised on the Resurrection Day by which he will be recognized. By Allah, I can not be made forgetful by artifice, nor I can be overpowered by hardship.”^{[3](#)}

78. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “If you bind an agreement between yourself and your enemy or clothe him in protective covenant (dhimma), guard your agreement in good faith and tend your covenant with fidelity. Make of yourself a shield before what you have granted, for men do not unite more firmly in any of the obligations (imposed upon them) by Allah than in attaching importance to fidelity in agreement, despite the division among their sects and the diversity of their opinions. The idolaters had already adhered to that (honoring agreement) among themselves before Muslims, by reason of evil consequences of treachery that they had seen. So never betray your protective covenant, never break your agreement and never deceive your enemy.”^{[4](#)}

3.2 Truth-Oriented

79. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Certainly the best man before Allah is he who loves most to act according to right, even though it causes him hardship and grief, rather than according to wrong, even though it gives him benefit and increase.”^{[5](#)}

80. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Fulfillment of someone’s rights should not prevent you from establishing rights against him.”^{[6](#)}

81. Al-Irshad: When Amir al-Mu’minin set out for Basra, he stopped at a village called ‘Rabadha’^{[7](#)} where the remainder of the Hajj pilgrims gathered around him in his tent to listen to his speech.

Ibn ‘Abbas said, “I went to Ali (a.s.) and saw him stitching his shoes. I told him, ‘Our need for you to fix our affairs is greater than what you are doing.’ He did not say anything until he finished stitching his shoe and placed it next to the other one.”

“Then he said, ‘What is the price of these.’

I said, ‘They have no value now.’

He said, ‘Whatever value they have!’

I said, ‘Half a dirham.’

He said, ‘By Allah, it should have been more valuable to me than ruling over you except for the fact that I may establish rights and ward off wrongs’.”[8](#)

82. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in the battle of Siffin: “By Allah, I did not put off war even for a day except in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me than to kill them in the state of their misguidance although they would be bearing their own sins.”[9](#)

83. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – complaining about his companions who were inclined towards Mu’awiya: “Woe on them! Who are they inclined towards and call me along too? By Allah, I did not want them except for establishing rights, and the others do not want them except for [promoting] wrongs.”[10](#)

84. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – To the people of Egypt when he appointed (Malik) al-Ashtar as their Governor: “Now I have sent to you a man from among the servant of Allah who allows himself no sleep in days of danger, nor does he shrink from the enemy at critical moments. He is severer on the wicked than a blazing fire. He is Malik b. Ashtar, our brother from (the tribe of) Madhhij. Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that accord with right.”[11](#)

85. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “allow rights to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. Be patient in this and look to your (ultimate) account (muhtasib), however this may effect your relatives and favorites. Desire the ultimate end in that of it (imposing the right) which weighs heavily against you, for its outcome will be praiseworthy.”[12](#)

86. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Truth-orientedness brings along mightiness.”[13](#)

87. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who is committed to truth, people would be inclined toward him.”[14](#)

88. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who endeavors to establish rights, would succeed.”[15](#)

3.3 Adherence to Law

89. Al-Imam al-Baqir: “He [Ali (a.s.)] arrested a man from the Bani Asad tribe to execute punishment. His near of kin gathered to mediate for him and asked al-Hasan (a.s.) to go along with them.”

“He (Al-Hasan – a.s.) said, ‘Go to him (Ali – a.s.). He is better aware of your affairs.’

They went to him and brought up their issue.

He said, 'You ask me for anything at my disposal, and I will grant it to you.'

They left him, thinking they have succeeded.

Al-Hasan (a.s.) asked them [what happened?].

They said they got the best result, and told him the story.

He said, 'Do whatever you wish to do for your friend as per his being punished.'

Ali (a.s.) took him out and executed punishment on him. Then he said, 'By Allah this [execution of punishment] is an issue out of my power [rather, it is Allah's command]'.¹⁶

90. Al-Gharat – in a report about Najashi: "In the battle of Siffin, Najashi was Ali (a.s.)'s poet. He drank wine in Kufa and Ali (a.s.) gave him the penalty. He got infuriated, joined Mu'awiya and dispraised Ali (a.s.)."

"When Ali (a.s.) punished Najashi, his companions from Yamani tribe got angry and the closest of them to Ali (a.s.), Tariq b. 'Abd Allah Nahdi, went to him and said, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! I did not imagine that the sinners and the obedient, the separatists and allies are equal before the leaders of justice and the fountainheads of virtue, until I saw your treatment of my brother Aarith [Najashi]. You pained our hearts, dispersed our affairs, and brought us along a road about which we previously thought the wayfarer on it would be led to the fire.'"

"Ali (a.s.) said, (**...and it is indeed hard except for the humble.**)¹⁷ O Brother from the Bani Nahd! Was he not a Muslim man who violated one of Allah's sanctities and we executed against him the penalty which was his expiation? Allah Almighty says, (**...and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair. Be fair; that is nearer to Godwariness**¹⁸)'."¹⁹ See, 7/10: "Execution of Legal Punishment Equally on Near of Kin and Strangers"

3.4 Uncompromisingness

91. The Messenger of Allah (S): "Keep your tongues from [criticizing] Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). He is certainly strict in regard to [the execution of the rules of] Allah the Almighty and uncompromising in his Faith."²⁰

92. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "No one can establish the rule of Allah the Glorified except he who shows no relenting (in the matter of right), who does not behave like wrong doers and who does not run after objects of greed."²¹

93. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – when people decided to swear allegiance to him: "You should know that if I respond to you I would lead you as I know and would not care about whatever one may say or abuse."²²

94. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “By my life, there will be no regard for anyone nor slackening from me in fighting against one who opposes right or gropes in misguidance. O Creatures of Allah, fear Allah and flee unto Allah from his wrath (seek protection in his Mercy).”[23](#)

95. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “I would not compromise in my Faith, nor would be villainous in my concerns.”[24](#)

96. Hiliya al-Awliya – related by ‘Abd al-Wahid Damishqi: “Khawshab al-Khayri called out to Ali (a.s.) in the battle of Siffin and said, ‘O Son of Abi Talib! Forsake us! We want you to seek Allah in our blood and yours. We leave you with the land of Iraq, and you leave us with the land of Saham, and preserve the blood of the Muslims.’”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Far from it! O Son of Umm Zalim! By Allah, if I sought a way to compromise in the Religion of Allah I would act accordingly and it would be easier for me. But Allah does not like it that the followers of the Qur’an compromise and keep silent while He is being disobeyed.’”[25](#). See 3/11, “Decisiveness Toward Administrators” See 2/2, “Dismissing ‘Uthman’s Administrators”

3.5 Planning and Organizing

97. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “...Each day perform the work of that day, for to each belongs what is proper to it...Beware of hurrying to (accomplish) affairs before their (proper) time, of neglecting them when they are possible, of stubborn persistence in them when they are impossible and of weakness in them when they have become clear. So put everything in its place and perform every action in its time.”[26](#)

98. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to the chiefs [collectors] of land tax: “Beware of postponing works and pushing away goodness, for there is repentance in it.”[27](#)

99. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another’s field.”[28](#)

100. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “To make haste before the proper time or to delay after a proper opportunity, in either case is folly.”[29](#)

101. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – describing the Qur’an: “Know that it contains knowledge of what is to come about, stories of the past, cure for your ills and regulation for whatever faces you.”[30](#)

102. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his advice to al-Hasan and al-Husayn (a.s.): “I advise you (both) and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches to fear Allah and to keep your affairs in order.”[31](#)

3.6 Selection of Competent Administrators

103. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Each (of the classes) has a claim upon the ruler to the extent that will set it right. But the ruler will not truly accomplish what Allah has enjoined upon him in this respect except by resolutely striving, by recourse to Allah’s help, by reconciling himself to what the truth requires and by being patient in the face of it in what is easy for him or burdensome.

I Appoint as commander from among your troops that person who is in your sight the most sincere in the way of Allah and His Prophet (S) and of your Imam, who is purest of heart and most outstanding in intelligence, who is slow to anger, relieved to pardon, gentle to the weak and harsh with the strong, and who is not stirred to action by severity nor held back by incapacity.

Then hold fast to men of noble descent and those of righteous families and good precedents, then to men of bravery, courage, generosity and magnanimity, for they are encompassed by nobility and embraced by honor. Then inspect the affairs of the soldiers as parents inspect their own child...

Then look into the affairs of your administrators. Employ them (only after) having tested (them) and appoint them not with favoritism or arbitrariness, for these two (attributes) embrace different kinds of oppression and treachery. Among them look for people of experience and modesty from righteous families foremost in Islam, for they are nobler in moral qualities, more genuine in dignity and less concerned with ambitious designs, and they perceive more penetratingly the consequences of affairs...

Let not your choosing of them be in accordance with your own discernment, confidence and good opinion, for men make themselves known to the discernment of rulers by dissimulating and serving them well, even though beyond this there may be nothing of sincere counsel and loyalty. Rather examine them in that with which they were entrusted by the righteous before you. Depend upon him who has left the fairest impression upon the common people and whose countenance is best known for trustworthiness.

This will be proof of your sincerity toward Allah and toward him whose affair has been entrusted to you. Appoint to the head of each of your concerns a chief from among these men, (a person) who is neither overpowered when these concerns are great nor disturbed when they are many. Whatever fault of your secretaries you overlook will come to be attached to you.[32](#)

104. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Appoint the pious, the knowledgeable and men of policy for taking charge of the works.”[33](#) See 2/2, “Dismissing ‘Uthman’s Administrators”

3.7 Not Employing the Treacherous and the Feeble

105. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Mughayra b. Shu’ba suggested to me that I should appoint Mu’awiya as the governor of Sham and I myself stay in Madina; but I rejected that, and never may Allah see me take

those who mislead assistants.”[34](#)

106. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar when he appointed him as governor of Egypt: “Truly the worst of your viziers are those who were the viziers of the evil (rulers) before you and shared with them in their sins. Let them not be among your retinue, for they are aides of the sinners and brothers of wrongdoers. You will find the best of substitutes for them from among those who possess the like of their ideas and effectiveness but are not encumbered by the like of their sins and crimes; who have not aided a wrongdoer in his wrongs nor a sinner in his sins. These will be a lighter burden upon you, a better aid more inclined toward you in sympathy and less intimate with people other than you. So choose these men as your special companions in privacy and at assemblies.”[35](#)

107. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Rifa’a, his judge in Ahwaz: “Know, O Rifa’a, that this governance is a trusted position. Whoever betrays in it, may curse of Allah be on him until the Day of Judgment; and whoever employs a traitor, truly Muhammad (S) will despise him both in this world and the world to come.”[36](#)

108. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – describing a true leader: “You certainly know that he who is in charge of honor, life, booty, (enforcement of) legal commandments and the leadership of the Muslims should not be a miser as his greed would aim at their wealth, nor be ignorant as he would then mislead them with his ignorance, nor be of rude behavior who would estrange them with his rudeness, nor should deal unjustly with wealth thus preferring one group over another, nor should he accept a bribe while taking decisions, as he would forfeit (others’) rights and hold them up without finality, nor should he ignore sunna as he would ruin the people.”[37](#)

109. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “The person whose retinues are corrupt is like the one whose throat is congested with water [and there is no solution to it], since whatever that is stuck in the throat would be removed [washed down] with water.”[38](#)

110. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The evil of the works is the incapacity of the administrators.”[39](#)

111. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not rely in your affairs on the lazy.”[40](#)

112. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The person whose vizier betrays him, his administration will be spoiled.”[41](#)

113. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The lying of the ambassador produces corruption, ruins the intention, invalidates the prudence and breaks the resolution.”[42](#)

3.8 Generosity in Providing Administrators with Daily Sustenance

115. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then bestow provisions upon them liberally, for that will empower them to set themselves aright and to dispense with consuming what is

under their authority; and it is an argument against them if they should disobey your command or sully your trust.”[43](#) See chapter Seven, “Judicial Policies”

3.9 Choosing Secret Agents to Keep a Check on the Administrators

115. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ka’b b. Malik[44](#): “And now, put someone in your place and with a group of your companions leave the town to reach the villages of Sawad[45](#). There, see into the affairs of my administrators in the region of Tigris and ‘Udhayb[46](#) and check on their conducts. Then return to al-Bihqubadhat[47](#) and take charge of the affairs there; and follow Allah in what He has assigned to you. Know that all the actions of the sons of Adam are recorded and preserved and will be rewarded by them. May Allah make you and us successful in goodness! Let me know of your honesty in what you do. Wassalam![48](#)

116. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then look into the affairs of your administrators. Employ them (only after) having tested (them)...Then investigate their actions. Dispatch truthful and loyal observers (to watch) over them, for your investigation of their affairs in secret will incite them to carry out their trust faithfully and to act kindly toward the subjects. Be heedful of aides. If one of them should extend his hand in a treacherous act, concerning which the intelligence received against him from your observed concurs, and if you are satisfied with that as witness, subject him to corporeal punishment and seize him for what befell from his action. Then install him in a position of degradation, brand him with treachery and gird him with the shame of accusation.”[49](#)

117. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar (on watching over the troops): “Then, do not fail to choose intelligence agents trustworthy and truthful with people to write down the bravery [good services] of every brave one, so that they make sure that you are aware of their good services.”[50](#)

3.10 Rewarding and Punishment

118. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar when he appointed him as governor of Egypt: “Never let the good-doer and the evil-doer possess an equal station before you, for that would cause the good-doer to abstain from his good-doing and habituate the evil-doer to his evil-doing. Impose upon each of them what he has imposed upon himself.”[51](#)

119. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “The best of your commander of the troops should have such a position before you that renders help to them equitably and spends from his money on them and on those of their families who remain behind so that all their worries converge on the one worry for fighting the enemy. Then send a message to them encouraging their self-sacrifice and nobility. Tend to the extension of their livelihood. And prove these by good behavior, attentiveness and kindness. Your kindness to them will turn their hearts to you.”[52](#) See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin:

3.11 Decisiveness toward Administrators

a) Ash'ath b. Qayth

120. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ash'ath b. Qayth, his governor in Azerbaijan: “Certainly, your assignment is not a morsel for you but it is a trust around your neck and you have been charged with protection (of people) on behalf of your superiors. It is not for you to be oppressive towards the ruled, nor to risk yourself save on strong grounds. You have in your hands the funds, which is the property of Allah to whom belongs might and majesty and you hold its charge till you pass it on to me. Perhaps I will not be one of the bad rulers for you. Wassalam![53](#)

121. Nathr al-Durr: [Imam Ali (a.s.) said] to Ash'ath b. Qayth, “Pay back what has been entrusted to you, or I will strike you by the sword.”

And he paid what he was due to pay.

Then he told him, “Who would have protected you if I had struck you by the sword?”

Ash'ath replied, “You are one of those who do what they say.”[54](#) See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 60, (Ash'ath b. Qayth).

b) Ziyad b. Abih

122. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ziyad b. Abih: “I truthfully swear by Allah that if I come to know that you have misappropriated the funds of the Muslims, small or big, I shall inflict upon you such punishment which will leave you empty handed, heavy backed and humiliated. Wassalam![55](#)

123. Ansab al-Ashraf: Ali (a.s.) dispatched an envoy to Ziyad to take back whatever of the taxes that had been collected by him. Ziyad sent what was with him along with the envoy and said, “The Kurds have ruined the taxes and I put up with them. But do not tell this to Amir al-Mu'minin so that he would imagine that it was the result of my negligence.

The envoy returned and reported what Ziyad told him. Ali (a.s.) wrote to Ziyad, “My envoy reported what you told him about the Kurds and that you concealed it from me. You well know that you hid it from me only with the intention to let me know about it. And I truthfully swear by Allah that if I come to know that you have misappropriated the funds of the Muslims, small or big, I shall inflict upon you such punishment which will leave you empty handed, heavy backed and humiliated. Wassalam![56](#)

124. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ziyad, his governor in Fars: “And now, my envoy has indeed brought me surprising news about the Kurds. He alleged that what you said to him would be kept

between you and him, – that the Kurds had rebelled against you and ruined much of the taxes – and you have told him not to report this to Amir al-Mu'minin.”

“O Ziyad! I swear by Allah that you are a liar, and if you do not discharge the taxes, I shall inflict upon you such punishment which will leave you empty handed, heavy backed and humiliated, unless you take upon yourself whatever of the taxes that has been ruined.”⁵⁷ See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: XII, 124 (Ziyad b. Abih).

c) Shurayh al-Qadi

125. Nahj al-Balagha: It is related that shurayh b. Harith who was Amir al-Mu'minin's judge (qadi) at Kufa during his tenure, purchased a house for eighty dinars. When it became known to Amir al-Mu'minin, he sent for him and said to him, “I have come to know that you have purchased a house for eighty dinars, and that you have written a document for it and put witnessing on it.”

Shurayh replied, “Yes, Amir al-Mu'minin, it is so.”

Amir al-Mu'minin cast an angry look at him and said to him, “O' Shurayh, beware, shortly one body (the angel of death) will come to you who will not look at the document, nor question you about your evidence but will take you out of it [the house] open-eyed, and deposit you in your grave empty-handed. Look! O' Shurayh, if you have purchased this house from money other than yours or paid the price from unlawful source, you have incurred loss of this world as well as of the next. If you had come to me at the time of purchase I would have written for you a document on this paper and then you would not have liked to purchase the house even for one Dirham, not to speak of more. That document is this:

This is about a purchase made by a humble slave (of Allah) from another slave ready to depart (for the next world). He has purchased a house out of houses of deceit in the area of mortals and place of those liable to perish. This house has four boundaries as follows:

The first boundary is contiguous to sources of calamities, the second boundary adjoins the sources of distress, the third boundary adjoins devastating desire; and the fourth boundary adjoins deceitful Satan and towards this opens the door of this house.

This house has been purchased by one who has been waylaid by desires from one who is being driven by death at the price of leaving the honor of contentment and entering into the humility of want and submissiveness.

If the purchaser encounters some (evil) consequences of this transaction then it is for Him who dismantles the bodies of monarchs, snatches the lives of despots, destroys the domain of Pharaohs like Cyrus, Caesar, Tubba' and Himyar and all those who amass wealth upon wealth and go on increasing it, build high houses and decorate them and collect treasures and preserve them as they claimed according to their own thinking for children, to take them to the place of accounting and judgment and

the position of reward and punishment, when the verdict will be passed ⁵⁸...and it is thence that the falsifiers become losers.⁵⁸ This document is witnessed by intelligence when it is free from the shackles of desires and away from the adornments of this world.”⁵⁹

d) ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas

126. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from a letter he wrote to ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas, his administrator in Basra: “O’ Abu al-‘Abbas, may Allah have mercy on you, keep yourself restrained in whatever you say or do, good or bad [about your people], as we are both partners in this (responsibility). Prove yourself according to my good impressions about you and do not prove my opinion (about you) wrong. Wassalam!”⁶⁰

127. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Ibn ‘Abbas: “Now, I have come to know such a thing about you that if you have done so then you have displeased your Lord, undermined your trust and disobeyed your Imam and betrayed the Muslims. I have come to know that you have razed the lands and taken away whatever was under your feet. Send me your account and know that the accounting to Allah will be severer than that to the people. Wassalam!”⁶¹ See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin: XII, 204 (‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas).

e) ‘Uthman b. Hunayf

128. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to ‘Uthman b. Hanif Ansari who was his administrator in Basra, when he came to know that the people of the place had invited ‘Uthman to a banquet and he had attended: “And now, O’ Ibn Hunayf, I have come to know that a young man of Basra invited you to a feast and you leapt towards it. Foods of different colors were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought that you would accept the feast of a people who turn out the beggars and invite the rich.

Look at the morsels you take, leave out that about which you are in doubt and take that about which you are sure that it has been secured lawfully. Remember that every follower has a leader whom he follows and from the effulgence of whose knowledge he takes light. Realize that your Imam has contented himself with two shabby pieces of clothes out of the (comforts of the) world and two loaves for his meal. Certainly, you cannot do so but at least support me in piety, exertion, chastity and uprightness.”

“By Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor added any clothes to my two shabby pieces of clothes. I have not taken from its land [even as little as] a span of the hand, nor have I taken more than a meager meal sufficient to feed a wretched animal, whereas even that is more unworthy and insignificant than the gall oak fruit.”

“Of course, all that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt greedy for it and the other party withheld themselves from it. Allah is, after all, the best arbiter.”

“What shall I do with Fadak or with no Fadak, while tomorrow this body is to go into the grave in whose

darkness its traces will be destroyed and (even) news of it will disappear? It is a pit that even if its width is widened or the hands of the digger make it broad and open, the stones and clods of clay will narrow it and the falling earth will close its aperture.”

“I try to keep myself engaged in piety so that on the day of great fear it will be peaceful and steady in slippery places. If I wished I could have taken the way leading towards (worldly pleasures like) pure honey, fine wheat and silk clothes; but it cannot be that my passions lead me and greed takes me to choosing good meals while in Hijaz or in Yamama there may be people who have no hope of getting bread or who do not have a full meal. Shall I lie with a satiated belly while around me there may be hungry bellies and thirsty livers? Or shall I be as the poet has said:

It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full,

While around you people may be badly yearning [of hunger] for dried leather?”

“Shall I be content with being called ‘Amir al-Mu’minin’ (The commander of the Faithful), although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world or shall not be an example for them in the distresses of life? I have not been created to keep myself busy in eating good foods like the tied animal whose only worry is its fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to fill its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely, or draw the rope of misguidance or roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment?”

“Get away from me, O' world! Your rein is on your own shoulders as I have released myself from your clutches, removed myself of your snares and avoided walking into your slippery places. Where are those whom you have deceived by your jesting? Where are those communities whom you have enticed with your embellishments? They are all now confined to graves and hidden in burial places.”

“By Allah, if you [O world!] had been a visible person and a body capable of feeling, I would have inflicted on you the punishment fixed by Allah because of the people whom you received through desires and the communities whom you threw into destruction and the rulers whom you consigned to ruin and drove to places of distress after which there is neither going nor returning.”

“Far from it! Whoever stepped on your slippery place slipped; whoever rode your waves was drowned; and whoever evaded your snares received inward support. He who keeps himself safe from you does not worry even though his affairs may be straitened and the world to him is like a day, which is near expiring. Get away from me! For, by Allah, I do not bow before you so that you may humiliate me, nor do I let loose the reins for you so that you may drive me away. I swear by Allah an oath wherein I, except the will of Allah, shall so train my self that it will feel joyful if it gets one loaf for eating, and be content with only salt to season it. I shall let my eyes empty themselves of tears like the stream whose water has flown away. Should Ali eat whatever he has and fall asleep like the cattle that fill their stomach from the pastureland and lie down, or as the grazing goats, eat the green and go into their pen? His eyes may die if he, after long years, follows loose cattle and pasturing animals.”

“Blessed is he who discharges his obligations towards Allah and endures his hardships, allows himself no sleep in the night but when sleep overpowers him lies down on the ground using his hand as pillow, along with those who keep their eyes wakeful in fear of the Day of Judgment, whose bodies are ever away from beds, whose lips are humming in remembrance of Allah and whose sins have been erased through their prolonged beseeching for forgiveness. **(They are Allah’s confederates. Look! The confederates of Allah are indeed felicitous!)**^{[62](#)}”

“Therefore, O’ Ibn Hunayf, fear Allah and be content with your own loaves so that you may escape Hell.”^{[63](#)}

f) Qudama b. ‘Ajlan

129. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Qudama b. ‘Ajlan, his administrator in Kaskar^{[64](#)}: “Now then, send back to me what is in your possession from the public property as it belongs to the Muslims and your share of it is no more than the share of one of them. O son of Qudama! Do not suppose that the riches of Kaskar are permissible to you, like what you have inherited from your parents. So, hasten to return the property and be quick yourself to come back to me as well. Allah willing!”^{[65](#)} See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin: XII, 271 (Qudama b. ‘Ajlan).

g) Masqala b. Hubayra

130. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Masqala b. Hubayra: “I have come to know concerning you a matter which if you have done it you have done something horrible. I have been informed that you have distributed the property of Muslims among some of the Bedouins of Bakr b. Wa’il Tribe who have asked you for favor and benevolence. By Allah who germinated the seed and created the living beings, and comprehends all things in knowledge if this is true, you will be humbled in my view. Therefore, do not treat lightly the obligations of your Lord and do not reform your world by ruining your religion, since then you will be among **(the biggest losers in regard to works; those whose endeavor goes awry in life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good)**^{[66](#)}.”^{[67](#)}

131. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Masqala: “Now then, the greatest treachery is the treachery against the Muslim community and the greatest deceit against the people of a city is the deceit of their leader, there is five hundred thousand [coins] of the Muslim property with you. Send it to me when my envoy comes to you, otherwise come to me yourself when my letter reaches you; as I have told my envoy not to let you go unless you return the property. Wassalamu Alayk!^{[68](#)}

132. Al-Gharat – related by Dhahl b. Harith: “Masqala invited me to his residence, prepared dinner and we had dinner together. Then he said, “By Allah, Amir al-Mu’minin asks me to return this property and I am not able to do that.”

[Dhahl goes on to say:] I told him, “If you wish he would give you one week of respite so that you can collect the property.”

He said, “By Allah, I do not want to impose it on my folk or ask anyone for it.”

Then he said, “By Allah, if the son of Hind or the son of ‘Affan had demanded that property, they would have left it to me. Did you not see how ‘Uthman [in his rule] granted a hundred thousand dirhams of the tax for Azerbaijan each year to Ash’ath b. Qayth?”

Dhahl said, “I said this man (Ali b. Abi Talib – a.s.) does not believe in (accept) his idea and would not grant you anything.”

He kept silent for a while and so did I. No longer than one night after the talk we had together, he joined Mu’awiya. The news reached Ali (a.s.). He said, “What has happened to him? May Allah kill him! He acted like the masters and ran away like the slaves, and became treacherous like the vicious people. Let it be known that if he had stood up to collect the property and failed, I would not have added to his jailing. If we had found something with him we would have confiscated it; and if we had not found any property with him, we would have released him.”

Then he went to the house of Masqala and destroyed it.⁶⁹ See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin: XII, 328 (Masqala b. Hubayra).

h) Al-Mundhir b. Jarud

133. Ansab al-Ashraf – in a letter to al-Mundhir ibn Jarud, his governor in Istakhr⁷⁰, who had misappropriated certain property in his charge and granted lavishly to whoever he wished: “Now then, the good behavior of your father deceived me about you and I thought that you would follow his way and tread in his path. But according to what has reached me about you, you are not giving up following your passions however detrimental it is to your religion; and you do not listen to [the words of] the benevolent however sincere they are in their well-wishing. I have been informed that you give up many tasks and go out for recreation, diversion and hunting; that you are lavishly generous to your Bedouin tribesmen with public property, as if it is your parents’ bequest.”

“I swear by Allah, if this is true, the camel of your family and your shoelace are better than yourself. Certainly Allah does not like play and diversion; betraying the Muslims and ruining their works enrages Him, and the person who acts this way is not fitting for safeguarding the borders, securing public property and being trusted with the Muslims’ belongings. [Therefore,] proceed to me as soon as this letter of mine reaches you.”

Mundhir went to the Imam, while some people had complained of him that he had taken thirty thousand [coins] from the public property. The Imam asked him about the matter and he denied. He got him to swear, but he refused. Then, he put him in jail.⁷¹ See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin: XII, 340 (al-Mundhir ibn Jarud).

3.12 Dismissing Treacherous Administrators

134. Al-Isti'ab: Ali (a.s.) would appoint the faithful and the trustworthy people in the cities and if any one of them was reported to him to have committed treachery, he would write to him, "There has certainly come to you admonition from your Lord. Observe fully the measure and balance, and do not cheat the people of their goods, and do not cause corruption on the earth. What remains of Allah's provision is better for you, should you be faithful, and I am not a keeper over you.[72](#) When my letter reaches you, settle what you are in charge of until I send someone to take it over from you." Then he would turn his face toward the sky and say, "O Allah! Certainly You know that I neither ordered them to tyrannize Your creatures nor to give up Your rights."

His speeches, sermons and recommendations to his administrators when he would send them on their missions are plenty; I decided not to mention them here to avoid lengthening the book, although they are all beautiful.[73](#)

135. Da'a'im al-Islam: Ali (a.s.) summoned Ash'ath b. Qayth, who was appointed by 'Uthman as the governor of Azerbaijan and received a hundred thousand dirhams. Some said 'Uthman had granted that money to him; others believed he had gained it through his work.

Ali (a.s.) commanded him to present that money, but he refused and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! I have not obtained this money in your hukuma."

The Imam said, "By Allah, if you do not present it to the public treasury, I will strike you with my strike in such a way that it will get back from you what it will."

Thereupon, Ash'ath brought back the property and the Imam placed it in the treasury. He followed up this [inquiry] in relation to 'Uthmin's administrators, taking back whatever of the property left in their hands, and fining them for what they had wasted.[74](#)

136. Al-Fusul al-Muhimma – related by Suda daughter of 'Amarat al-Hamdaniya who went to Mu'awiya after the demise of Ali (a.s.): Mu'awiya started to reproach her for her sarcastic remarks to him during the battle of Siffin. Then he asked him, "What do you need?"

Suda replied, "Allah will certainly inquire you into our affairs and what is in your charge. There is always someone coming to us from you who towers up your position, spreads your dominion, reaps us like the ears of wheat, beats us up like seeds of wild rue, debases us and makes us taste the death. That was Busr b. Artah who came to us, killed our men and took away our property. If there were no obedience, there would prevail glory and dignity among us. So, if you dismiss him, we will be grateful of you; otherwise we will complain to Allah."

Mu'awiya said, "Are you referring to me and threatening me? I have decided to mount you on an unruly camel and turn you back to Busr to carry out his judgment about you."

Suda kept silent and then recited the following couplets:

May Allah's blessing be upon the body whom the grave embraced,

And buried justice in itself.

He took an oath together with the truth and would not substitute it with anything,

He was a companion to faith and truth.

Mu'awiya said, "Who is this person, O Suda?"

Suda said, "By Allah, this is Amir al-Mu'minin Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). (Once) I went to him to talk about a man whom he had appointed as the head of [levying] taxes and he had done injustice to us. I found him standing up ready to start saying prayer. When he saw me, he stopped and came toward me with a bright face, affectionately and leniently and said, 'Do you have any need?'

I said, "Yes, and I told him the story."

He wept and said, "O Allah! You witness that I did not command them to do injustice to people and to abandon Your rights." Then he took a piece of leather out of his pocket and wrote on it as follows:

(In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. There has certainly come to you a manifest proof from your Lord. Observe fully the measurement and the balance, and do not cheat the people of their good, and do not cause corruption on the earth after its restoration. That is better for you, if you are faithful.)⁷⁵

"When you read my letter, settle what you are in charge of until I send someone to take it over from you. Wassalam!"

"Then he gave me this letter. I took it to his governor and gave it to him, and he was dismissed."

Mu'awiya said, "Write for her whatever she wishes. Return her to her town so as she does not have any complaints."⁷⁶

3.13 Punishing Treacherous Administrators

137. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – when he found out about Ibn Harma, who was in charge of Ahwaz market, he wrote to Rafa'a: "When you read my letter, dismiss Ibn Harma from the market, cut him off from people, put him in jail and call it out to the public. And write to your administrators and let them know about my opinion. Do not be negligent in relation to Ibn Harma or you will be perished near Allah and I will dismiss you in the worst of ways; [so] seek Allah's protection from this."

"On the coming Friday, take him out of the jail, give him thirty five lashes and turn him around the

markets. If someone brings a complaint against him and produces witnesses, swear him and then pay him from the assets of Ibn Harma. Order him to be taken to jail degradingly, shamefully and by shouting at him; tie his feet with a rope and bring him out at prayer time. If anyone brought him food, drink, clothes or a mattress, do not obstruct him. Do not let anyone approach him to suggest him a solution or make him hopeful of being freed. If you make sure that someone inculcated something to him that would do harm to the Muslims, punish him with a lash and put him in jail until he would repent.”

“During the night take the prisoners out into the courtyard for an airing, except for Ibn Harma, unless he is feared to die in which case let him out into the courtyard at nights, too. After thirty days, if you see in him capacity, give him thirty five lashes besides the previous thirty one lashes. Write to me about what you did in the market and that whom you have selected after that traitor. And cut off that traitor’s stipend.”[77](#)

138. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar on looking into the affairs of the administrators: “If one of them should extend his hand in a treacherous act, concerning which the intelligence received against him from your observers concurs, and if you are satisfied with that as a witness, subject him to corporal punishment and seize him for what befell from his action. Then install him in a position of degradation, brand him with treachery and gird him with the shame of accusation.”[78](#)

3.14 Forbidding Administrators from Accepting Gifts

139. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Any ruler who hides himself from people’s needs, Allah will also hide Himself from him and his needs on the Judgment day; and if he accepts gifts, he would be a traitor; and if he accept bribes, he would be a polytheist.”[79](#)

140. Akhbar al-Qudat – related by Ali (a.s.) b. Rabi’a: “Indeed Ali (a.s.) had employed a man from Bani Asad tribe called Aabi’at b. Zuhayr. When his employment concluded, he went to Ali (a.s.) along with a sack full of some property and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! people brought gifts to me which amounted to this. If they are lawful for me, I will use them, otherwise I am bringing them to you.’

Ali (a.s.) said, ‘If you would have kept them, that had been treachery.’

Then he took the property and placed it in the public treasury.”[80](#)

141. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his sermon, in which he states his encounter with ‘Aqil when he asked for some property from the public treasury: “A stranger incident than this is that a man came to us in the night with a closed flask full of honey paste but I disliked it as though it was the salvia of a serpent or its vomit. I asked him whether it was a reward or zakat or charity, for these are forbidden to us members of the Prophet’s family. He said it was neither this nor that but a present.”

“Then I said, ‘Childless women may weep over you. Have you come to deviate me from the religion of Allah, or are you mad, or have you been overpowered by some jinn, or are you speaking without

senses?’”

“By Allah, even if I am given the domain of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant I would not do it. For me your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last? We do seek protection of Allah from the slip of wisdom and the evils of mistakes, and from Him we seek succor.”^{[81](#)}

3.15 Mingling Strictness with Softness

142. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to one of his administrators: “Now, the farmers of your city have complained of your strictness, hard heartedness, humiliating treatment and harshness. I thought over it and found that since they are unbelievers they cannot be brought near nor kept away or treated severely because of the pledge with them. Behave with them in between strictness and softness and adopt for them a mingling of remoteness and aloofness with nearness and closeness if Allah so wills.”^{[82](#)}

143. Tarikh al-Ya’qubi: Ali (a.s.) wrote to ‘Amr b. Muslama al-Arhabi: “Now then, the farmers of your area have complained of your strictness and I looked into their affair and I did not see any good in it. Your position must be moderate, i.e., softness mingled with strictness, [of course] without injustice and diminution. Since they bring prosperity to us subordinately. Therefore, take what you demand from them in their subordination. Do not take any guardian besides Allah. Certainly, Allah the Great and Almighty says, (**...do not take your confidants from other than yourselves; they will spare nothing to ruin you**).^{[83](#)}, and Allah the Great and Almighty says about the People of the Book, (**...do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends**),^{[84](#)}, and He – the Great and Almighty – further says, (**Any of you who takes them as friends is indeed one of them**)^{[85](#)}. Rebuke them by taking land tax, be prepared against them and beware of [shedding] their blood. Wassalam!^{[86](#)}

144. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to one of his administrators: “Now, you are surely one of those whose help I take in establishing religion and with whose help I break the haughtiness of the sinful and guard critical boundaries. You should seek Allah’s help in whatever causes you anxiety. Add a little harshness to the mixture of leniency and remain lenient where leniency is more appropriate. Adopt harshness when you cannot do without harshness. Bend your wings (in humbleness) before the subjects. Meet them with your face broad and keep yourself lenient (in behavior) with them. Treat them equally in looking at them with half eyes or full eyes, in signaling and in greeting so that the great should no expect transgression on your part and the weak should not lose hope in your justice. Wassalam!^{[87](#)}

¹. Al-Kafi: 8/24/4, Ghurar al-Hikam: 10041, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 512/9322.

². Al-Kafi: 2/338/6, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/454/671.

³. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 200, Yanabi’ al-Mawadda: 1/454, Al-Mi’yar wa al-Mawazina: 166.

⁴. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Khasa’s al-A’mma: 123, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 145.

⁵. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 125, Waq’atu Siffin: 542, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/69.

⁶. Ghurar al-Hikam: 10328, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 529/9620.

- [7.](#) A village between Makka and Madina where Aba Dharr is buried.
- [8.](#) Al-Irshad: 1/247, Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 33, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/113/90.
- [9.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 55, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/556/464.
- [10.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/184.
- [11.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 38, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/595/741.
- [12.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Khasa's al-A'mma: 123, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 145.
- [13.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4352, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 189/3897.
- [14.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8646, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 460/8362.
- [15.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8651, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 460/8362.
- [16.](#) Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/147, Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/443/1547, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/9/1.
- [17.](#) Al-Qur'an, 2: 45.
- [18.](#) Al-Qur'an, 5: 8.
- [19.](#) Al-Gharat: 2/533 & 539, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/147.
- [20.](#) Al-Irshad: 1/173, Kashf al-Ghumma: 1/236, Bihar al-Anwar: 21/385/10.
- [21.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 110, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 541/10032, also cf., Nathr al-Durr: 1/292.
- [22.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 92, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/110, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/35/23.
- [23.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 24.
- [24.](#) Al- Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/306, Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/364, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/439.
- [25.](#) Hiliya al-Awliya: 1/85, Usd al-Ghaba: 2/92/1298, Al-Isti'ab: 1/457/599.
- [26.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 143 & 147, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/367.
- [27.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 108, Bihar al-Anwar: 75/355/70, Al-Mi'yar wa al- Mawazina: 123.
- [28.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 5, Kashf al-Yaqin: 216/218, Nuzha al-Nazir: 56/39.
- [29.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 363, Nuzha al-Nazir: 48/17, Bihar al-Anwar: 71/341/14.
- [30.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 158, Al-Rawashih al-Samawiya: 22, Bihar al-Anwar: 92/23/24.
- [31.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 47, Ra'za al-Wa'izin: 152, Yanabi' al-Mawadda: 2/30/2.
- [32.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 132 & 137 & 139, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/357/361.
- [33.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- [34.](#) Cf., Al-Qur'an, 18:51. Waq'atu Siffin: 52, Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa: 1/116, Tarikh Damishq: 59/131.
- [35.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Al-Imama wa al-Siyasa: 1/116, Tarikh Damishq: 59/131.
- [36.](#) Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/153/1890, Nahj al-Sa'ada: 5/33.
- [37.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 131, also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/153/1886.
- [38.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/308/526.
- [39.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3958, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 181/3711.
- [40.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10205, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 518/9384.
- [41.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8054, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 423/7430.
- [42.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7259, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 397/6724. It may sometimes come to one's mind that why did Imam Ali (a.s.), who emphasized on appointment of truthful administrators and warned against employment of the inefficient and traitors, employ incompetent administrators and governors and appoint such persons as Ziyad b. Abih, Mundhir b. Jarud, and Nu'man b. 'Ajlal etc., who were traitors; and 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas and Abu Ayyub and others who were incapable.

On the other hand, why did he dismiss a religious and competent person like Qays b. Sa'd and appoint Muhammad b. Abi Bakr in his place? The response to the first question is given in the introduction of section 16 and the second in the same section in relation to the sira of Qays b. Sa'd.

- [43.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- [44.](#) Apparently Malik b. Ka'b is correct, since Imam Ali (a.s.) did not have an administrator by the name of Ka'b b. Malik, rather a person by this name refused to swear allegiance to the Imam. Malik b. Ka'b was indeed one of Imam's trusted administrators in the region of 'Ayn Tamr and the surrounding of Baghdad.

45. Part of Iraqi lands and villages conquered in the time of ‘Umar b. Khattab. It was called Sawad (blackness) as it was covered with palm groves, trees and crops.
46. ‘Udhayb is the Bani Tamim water reservoir and the first water that the travelers encounter while traveling from Kufa toward Makka.
47. The name of three hamlets near Baghdad located on the banks of Euphrates.
48. Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi: 2/204.
49. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 137, Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 1/361.
50. Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 133.
51. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 130, Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 1/356.
52. Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 133.
53. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 5, Waq‘atu Siffin: 20, Al-‘Aqd al-Farid: 3/327.
54. Nathr al-Durr: 1/292.
55. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 20, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/489/695.
56. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/390.
57. Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi: 2/204.
58. Al-Qur‘an, 40: 78.
59. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 3, Raw‘at al-Wa‘izin: 489.
60. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 18, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/493/699.
61. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/397, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 40.
62. Al-Qur‘an, 58: 22.
63. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 45, Rabi‘ al-Abrar: 2/719. Also cf., Manaqib ‘Al al-Abi Talib: 2/101.
64. A big city in Iraq located between Kufa and Basra close to ‘Amara and Kut.
65. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/388.
66. Al-Qur‘an, 18: 103– 104.
67. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/389. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 43.
68. Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/129, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 3/145, Al-Gharat: 1/364.
69. Al-Gharat: 1/365, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/129, Tarikh Damishq: 58/272/7450.
70. The Arabic spelling of (Persian) Istakhr, an ancient city in Persian Empire.
71. Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/391, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 71, Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi: 2/203.
72. Adopted from Al-Qur‘an, 7: 85, 11: 85 – 86.
73. Al-Isti‘ab: 3/210, Ibid., 211/1875.
74. Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 1/396.
75. Al-Qur‘an, 7:85.
76. Al-Fusul al-Muhimma: 127, Al-‘Aqd al-Farid: 1/335, Balaghat al-Nisa: 47, Kashf al-Ghumma: 1/173
77. Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 2/532/1892.
78. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 137, Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 1/361.
79. Thawab al-A‘mal: 310/1. Bihar al-Anwar: 72/345/42.
80. Akhbar al-Qur‘at: 1/59.
81. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 224, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/162/57.
82. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 19, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/489/694, Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/390. It is stated in Ansab al-Ashraf that he wrote this letter to ‘Amr b. Muslama al-Arhabi in which instead of “Behave with them in between strictness and softness”, he wrote “No injustice should be done to them nor their pledge broken; however, they should pay land tax and in order to preserve them nothing beyond their capacity should be taken from them. I commanded you to this and Allah is (our) resort. Wassalam.”
83. Al-Qur‘an, 3: 118.
84. Al-Qur‘an, 5: 51.
85. Al-Qur‘an, 5: 51.
86. Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi: 2/203.

[87](#). Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 46, Al-Mufid, Al-Amali: 80/4, in which it is stated that this letter had been written to Malik al-Ashtar after the murder of Muhammad b. Abi Bakr; but apparently it is not true, since Muhammad b. Abi Bakr was martyred after Malik al-Ashtar.

Chapter Four: Cultural Policies

4.1 Development of Education

145. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is incumbent upon the leader to teach limits (hudud) of Islam and faith to the people under his rule.”[1](#)

146. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Certainly people need good manners more than they need gold and silver.”[2](#)

147. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “O' people, I have a right over you and you have a right over me. As for your right over me, that is to counsel you, to pay you your dues fully, to teach you that you may not remain ignorant and instruct you in behaviorism that you may act upon.”[3](#)

148. Al-Imam al-Baqir (a.s.): “When Ali (a.s.) performed the morning prayers he would go on with after-prayer-invocations (ta'qibat) until sunrise. At sunrise, the poor, the needy and other groups of people would gather around him and he would teach them theology (fiqh) and the Qur'an. At a certain hour, he would end the session and leave.”[4](#)

149. Irshad al-Qulub: “It is reported that when Ali (a.s.) found respite from battle, he would proceed to teach people and to judge among them.”[5](#)

150. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra – related by Ilba b. Ahmar: “Ali .b Abi Talib (a.s.) was lecturing for the people when he said, ‘Who would buy knowledge for one dirham?’

Al-Harith al-A'war (who was one-eyed) bought several sheets for one dirham and brought it to Ali (a.s.) and he wrote abundant knowledge for him.

After that, Ali (a.s.) said in his lecture, “O people of Kufa! Half a man became victorious over you.”[6](#)

151. Al-Gharat – related by Salim b. Abi Ja'd: “Ali (a.s.) would allocate a couple of thousand (coins) as stipend for the reciters of the Qur'an, and my father was one of those reciters.”[7](#)

152. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: Ghalib b. Sa'sa'a went to Ali (a.s.) together with his son, Farazdaq.[8](#) Ali (a.s.) said to him, “Who are you?”

“Ghalib, the son of Sa'sa'a al-Majashi...,” He replied.

He said, "O Abu Ahzal! Who is this young man with you?"

"He is my son, and he is a poet." He replied.

He said, "Teach him the Qur'an, which is better for him than poetry." [9](#)

153. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Qutham b. 'Abbas, who was his administrator in Makka: "Now, make arrangements for Hajj by the people and remind them of the days (to be devoted to) Allah. Sit for giving them audience morning and evening. Explain the law to the seeker, teach the ignorant and discuss with the learned." [10](#)

154. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in response to someone who had asked him a difficult question: "Ask me for understanding but do not ask me for getting confusion [for fault finding], because the ignorant person who tries to learn is like the learned man, but the learned man who tries to create confusion is like the ignorant." [11](#)

155. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in response to someone who had asked him to define religion for him: "Come to me tomorrow so that I enlighten you in the presence of all the people, so that if you forget what I say others might retain it, because an utterance is like a fluttering prey which may be grappled with by someone but missed by others." [12](#)

4.2 Prevention from Abolishing Proper Customs

156. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Abolish no proper custom (sunna) which has been acted upon by the leaders of this community, through which harmony has been strengthened and because of which the subjects have prospered. Create no new custom which might in any way prejudice the customs of the past, lest their reward belong to him who originated them, and the burden be upon you to the extent that you have abolished them... Incumbent upon you is to recall the just government, the excellent customs, the sunna of our Prophet (S) and the obligations (promulgated) in the Book of Allah, which preceded you among those of earlier times." [13](#)

157. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar (as narrated in Tuhaf al-'Uqul): "Increase the amount of learning from the learned and association with the wise in establishing what your townsmen have been upright in and maintaining what they have been straightened by, since this will establish rightfulness more firmly and abolish falsehood; and this will suffice as guidance and exemplar, since proper customs are the path toward obedience to Allah." [14](#)

4.3 Fighting against Evil Customs

158. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): "You should know that among the creatures of Allah, the most distinguished person before Allah is the just leader who has been guided (by Allah) and guides others. So, he stands by the recognized ways (of the Prophet's behavior) and destroys unrecognized innovations. The

(Prophet's) ways are clear and they have signs, while innovations are also clear and they too have signs.”^{[15](#)}

159. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): Some non-Arab Muslims came to Amir al-Mu'minin and said, “We have complaint to you against these Arabs. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah would give us portions equal to theirs and married Salman, Bilal and Suhayb off, but these (Arabs) refuse to do so and say, “We won't do that!”

Amir al-Mu'minin went to them and talked to them about this. The Arabs shouted, “We refuse it O Abu al-Hasan! We refuse it!”

Ali (a.s.) went out while infuriated and his robe being dragged on the ground. He was saying, “O group of the non-Arabs! In truth, they have reduced you to the status of the Jews. They get married to your women but refuse to give you in marriage to theirs. So, engage in commerce and Allah will bless you. Indeed, I heard from the Messenger of Allah that means of living has ten parts; nine in commerce and one in other than that.”^{[16](#)}

4.4 Avoiding Reception Ceremony

160. Nahj al-Balagha: Once Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) was proceeding towards Syria when the countrymen (farmers) of al-Anbar met him. Seeing him, they began to walk on foot and then ran in front of him.

He enquired, “Why are you doing so.”

They replied, “This is the way we respect our chiefs.”

Then he said: “By Allah, this does not benefit your chiefs. You are belaboring yourselves in this world and earning misery for the next world by it. How harmful is the labor in whose wake there is punishment and how profitable is the case with which there is deliverance from the fire (of Hell)!”^{[17](#)}

161. Nahj al-Balagha: It is reported that when Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) returned to Kufa from the battle of Siffin he passed by the residences of the Shibamites (who belonged to the tribe of shibam in Yemen) and heard the women weeping over those killed in Siffin. At that time a Shibamite, Harb b. Shurahbil, came to him... Harb began to walk with him while Amir al-Mu'minin was on horseback, so Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) said to him, “Get back because the walking of a man like you with one like me is mischief for the ruler and disgrace for the believer.”^{[18](#)}

162. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): Amir al-Mu'minin set out on horseback with his companions walking behind him. He turned his face back and asked, “Do you want anything?”

“No, O Amir al-Mu'minin! But we would like to walk along with you.” They replied.

Then he told them, “Go back, because walking behind a riding man is mischief for the rider and disgrace for the walker.”

[The narrator says:] He rode on once again and they followed walking behind them. Then he said, “Go back, because the sound of footsteps behind a man is corruptive to the hearts of the unwise.”¹⁹

4.5 Criticizing rather than Admiring

163. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar, after describing the characteristics of the righteous confidants: “So choose these men as your special companions in privacy and at assemblies. Then let the most influential among them be he who speaks most to you with the bitterness of the truth and supports you least in activities which Allah dislikes in His friends; however this strikes your pleasure. Cling to men of piety and veracity. Then accustom them not to lavish praise upon you nor (to try to) gladden you by (attributing to you) a vanity you did not do, for lavishing of abundant praise causes arrogance and draws (one) close to pride.”²⁰

164. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – one of his companions had told him, “you are our commander and we are your subordinates. Because of you Allah, the great and Almighty took us out of disgrace and freed His servants by granting you glory. You make selections for us and carry them out and command as you wish and enforce it, because you are a speaker whose words are believed and you are a successful ruler and entrusted sovereign. We do not allow disobedience to you in any matter and we do not measure any knowledge with yours, as your status is so lofty to us and your superiority so great.” To which he responded:

“If a man in his mind regards Allah's glory as being high and believes in his heart that Allah's position is sublime, then it is his right that on account of the greatness of these things he should regard all other things small. Among such persons he on whom Allah's bounty is great and Allah's favors are kind has a greater obligation, because Allah's bounty over any person does not increase without an increase in Allah's right over him.”

“In the view of virtuous people, the worst position of rulers is that it may be thought about them that they love glory, and their affairs may be taken to be based on pride. I would really hate that it may occur to your mind that I love high praises or to hear eulogies. By the grace of Allah I am not like this. Even if I had loved to be mentioned like this, I would have given it up in submissiveness before Allah, the Glorified, rather than accept greatness and sublimity to which He is more entitled. Generally, people feel pleased at praise after good performances.”

“Do not mention for me handsome praise for the obligations I have discharged towards Allah and towards you, because of (my) fear about those obligations which I have not discharged and for issuing injunctions which could not be avoided. So, do not address me in the manner despots are addressed. Do not evade me as the people of passion are (to be) evaded; do not meet me with flattery and do not

think that I shall take it ill if a true thing is said to me; and do not entitle me with undue greatness. Certainly the person who feels disgusted when truth is said to him or a just matter is placed before him would find it more difficult to act upon them."

"Therefore, do not abstain from saying a truth or pointing out a matter of justice because I do not regard myself above erring.²¹ I do not escape erring in my actions but that Allah helps me (in avoiding errors) in matters in which He is more powerful than I. Certainly I and you are slaves owned by Allah, other than Whom there is no Lord except Him. He owns in our selves that which we do not own. He took us from where we were towards what means prosperity to us. He altered our straying into guidance and gave us intelligence after blindness."

4.6 Truth-Orientedness in Getting to Know Men

165. Al-Amali – related by Asbaq b. Nubata: "Harith b. Hamdani along with a group of Shi'ites, including myself, went to Amir al-Mu'minin, Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). Being sick, Harith walked with a bent back and a walking stick. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) came toward him, for Harith was highly esteemed by him, and said, 'How are you doing Harith?'

He said, 'Life has fulfilled its demands on me, O Amir al-Mu'minin, and the conflict of your companions at your doorstep is irritating and infuriating me.'

He asked, 'What is their conflict about?'

He replied, 'About you and the previous three caliphs. One group of them are extremists zealots, another group are moderates and followers and the third group are hesitant skeptical who do not know whether to go forth or back.'

Ali (a.s.) said, 'Enough O brother from Hamadan! You should know that the best of my followers are the middle group who will be returned to by the extremists and will be caught up with by those lagging behind.'

Harith told him, 'May my father and mother be your ransom! Would that you cleanse our sullied hearts and elucidate our affairs for us!'

Ali (a.s.) said, 'Possibly you are confused in (certain) affairs. The religion of Allah would not be perceived with men but with signs of truthfulness. Know the truth so that you would get to know the followers of truth.'

'O Harith! The most beautiful words are the words of truth; and the one who declares it is a struggler (in way of Allah).'"²²

166. Al-bayan wa al-Tabiin: When Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) was on the minbar, Harith b. Hut al-Laythi

stood up and said, “Do you think that we suppose Talha and Zubayr are gone astray?”

He replied, “O Harith! You are confused. Certainly the truth would not be perceived with men; so, know the truth so that you would get to know the followers of truth.”²³ See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: V, 147 (Confusion by those lacking insight).

- ¹. Ghurar al-Hikam: 6199, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 328/5637.
- ². Ghurar al-Hikam: 3590, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 143/3210.
- ³. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 34, Ansab al-Ashraf: 3/154, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/91.
- ⁴. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 4/109, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/132.
- ⁵. Irshad al-Ghulub: 218, 'Uddat al-Da'i: 101, Bihar al-Anwar: 103/16/70.
- ⁶. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 6/168, 'Uddat al-Da'i: 101, Bihar al-Anwar: 103/16/70.
- ⁷. Al-Gharat: 1/131, Kanz al-'Ummal: 2/339/4186.
- ⁸. That is Abu Faras Humam b. Ghalib, known as Farazdaq. He was born in 25 AH in Basra and died in 114. The following poem that he wrote in praise of al-Imam al-Sajjad in the presence of Hisham b. 'Abd al-Malik is a an evidence of his bravery:
“This is the person whom the land of Batha knows,
And the Ka'ba and the Haram know him too.”
- ⁹. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 10/21, Kanz al-'Ummal: 2/288/4026.
- ¹⁰. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 67, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/497/702.
- ¹¹. Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 320, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 132/2980.
- ¹². Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 266, Bihar al-Anwar: 2/160/8.
- ¹³. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 130, Ibid. Also cf. Da'aim al-Islam: 1/365 & 357.
- ¹⁴. Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 131.
- ¹⁵. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 146, Al-Jamal: 187, Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/337, Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya: 7/168.
- ¹⁶. Al-Kafi: 5/318/59.
- ¹⁷. Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 37, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2014, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/55/3.
- ¹⁸. Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 322, Waq'atu Siffin: 531, Al-Mi'yar al-Muwazina: 193.
- ¹⁹. Al-Mahasin: 2/470/2632, Al-Kafi: 6/540/16, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 209.
- ²⁰. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 129, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/602/744.
- ²¹. It is evident from what follows in his words that Imam Ali (a.s.) regards his 'isma (infallibility) as a blessing from Allah, and thus says if Allah does not help him in avoiding errors, he would be misguided. Therefore, this statement does not contradict the Imam's infallibility.
- ²². Al-Mufid, Al-Amali: 3/3, Al-Tusi, Al-Amali: 625/1292, Bisharat al-Muhtafa: 4.
- ²³. Al-bayan wa al-Tabiin: 3/211, Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/210.

Chapter Five: Political Policies

5.1 Encouraging to Work

167. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “When things were combined, indolence and incapacity combined and produced poverty.”¹

168. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “I hate the man who is indolent in his worldly affairs; since if he is indolent in the worldly affairs, he would be more indolent in the affairs of the Hereafter.”[2](#)

169. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The leaving early of none of you in the way of Allah is greater than the early leaving of the one who seeks for that which improves [the conditions for] his children and household.”[3](#)

170. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who seeks for lawful worldly gains in order to take care of his parents, children and wife, Allah would revive him [raise him on Resurrection Day] with his face radiating like the full moon.”[4](#)

171. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “I advise you to fear Allah secretly and in public, to practice justice in pleasure and anger, and to earn livelihood in poverty and affluence.”[5](#)

172. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Certainly, seeking for lawful livelihood does not prevent [man] from working for the Hereafter.”[6](#)

173. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to his son, al-Hasan (a.s.): “Do not leave out what is lawful and agreeable, since there is no escape from [fulfilling] enough requirements of life; and what is destined for you will reach you.”[7](#)

174. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The believer's time has three periods [in life]: The period when he is in communion with Allah, the period when he manages for his livelihood and the period when he is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant. It does not behove a wise person to be away (from his house) save for three matters, namely for purposes of earning, or going for something for the next life or for enjoying what is not prohibited.”[8](#)

175. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – in the report about Amir al-Mu'minin's benefactions: “He used to work with his hands, cultivate the land, planted palm trees and he would do all these by himself.”[9](#) See Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: IX, 426 (Bringing Together Worship and Work). Ibid., IX, 433 (Ali (a.s.)'s benefactions).

5.2 Engendering Prosperity in the Cities

176. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “This is that with which Ali, the servant of Allah and Commander of the Faithful, charged Malik al-Ashtar in his instructions to him when he appointed him governor of Egypt: to collect its land tax, to war against its enemies, to improve the condition of the people and to engender prosperity in its cities [regions].”[10](#)

177. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Qarzat b. Ansari: “Now then, indeed some men from among the protected people (Ahl al-Dhimma) in your area have reported that a river in their land has been destroyed and submerged. They have the rights over the Muslims to engender prosperity for them. See into this matter along with them, then repair and improve the river. By my life, bringing them prosperity is

more pleasant for us than their leaving or getting poor or failing to engender prosperity in the cities.
Wassalam!”[11](#)

178. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The superiority of the ruler (sultan) is in engendering prosperity in the cities.”[12](#)

5.3 Agricultural Development

179. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “The person who finds water and land and then becomes poor, Allah would exclude him [from His Mercy].”[13](#)

180. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “In truth, there are five ways of [earning] livelihood for people: rulership, making inhabitation [creating prosperity], trading, leases, and taxes...as for the reason for making inhabitation, Allah Almighty says, **(He brought you forth from the earth and made it your inhabitation)**.[14](#) It is implied here that the Exalted Allah has commanded his servants to engender prosperity on the earth so that their livelihood is provided for through what grows from the earth such as grain, fruits and the like which Allah has made as provision for people.”[15](#)

181. Al-Imam al-Baqir (a.s.): “Indeed, Ali (a.s.) used to write to his commanders of troops, ‘I swear you by Allah, lest you may ever do injustice to the farmers.’”[16](#) See 5/8 (Levying Taxes)

5.4 Development of Crafts

182. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Man’s occupation is treasure.”[17](#)

183. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Allah loves the trustworthy job holder.”[18](#)

184. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in an aphorism attributed to him: “Do not seek speed of action, rather seek good quality. Certainly, people will not be asked how long they took to finish the job; indeed they will be asked about the excellence of the product.”[19](#)

185. Al-Kafi – related by Umm Hasan Nakha’i: “Amir al-Mu’mini passed by me asking, “Umm Hasan! What do you do?”

I said, “I am a spinner.”

The Imam said, “In truth it the most legitimate occupation.” Or, “One of the most legitimate occupations.”[20](#)

186. Tafsir al-Ayyashi – related by Muhammad b. al-Aabbi: “Ibrahim al-Nakha’i passed by a woman who was sitting at her doorstep in the morning holding a spindle in her hands and spinning. Ibrahim told her, ‘O Umm Bakr! But you are old! Is it not the time you put the spindle aside?’”

“Umm Bakr said: ‘Why should I put it aside whereas I heard Ali b. Abi Talib, the Commander of the

Faithful, say: Spinning is among the most agreeable jobs.”²¹ See 5/5 (Development of Trade).

5.5 Development of Trade

187. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.): “Engage in trade as it makes you self-sufficiently independent of what is in the hands of others.”²²

188. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – to the freed slaves: “Carry on trade, may Allah grant you blessing. Verily, I heard the Messenger of Allah say, “Provision is in ten parts. Nine parts are in trade, and one in other occupations.”²³

189. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then make merchants and craftsmen – those who are permanently fixed, those who move about with their wares and those who profit from (the labor of) their own body – your own concern, and urge others to do so, for they are the bases of benefits and the means of attaining conveniences. They bring (benefits and conveniences) from remote and inaccessible places in the land, sea, plains and mountains, and from places where men neither gather nor dare to go. The merchants and craftsmen are a gentle people from whom there is no fear of calamity and pacifist from whom there is no worry of disruption. Examine their affairs in your presence and in every corner of your land.”²⁴

190. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar (as reported in Tuhaf al-‘Uqul): “Now take some advice about merchants and craftsmen, and urge others to do so. Give them good counsel whether they are settled (shopkeeper) or traders or physical laborers because they are sources of profit and the means of provision of useful articles. They bring them from distant and far-flung areas throughout the land and sea, plains or mountains, from where people cannot come and to where they do not dare to go, like the countries of your enemies by whose hands Allah has made craftsmanship operative.”

“So, keep their sanctity, secure their paths and give them back their rights, for they are peaceful and there is no fear of revolt from them. The most favorable affairs for them are safeguarding their security and their authority. Look after their affairs in your presence and in every corner of your land.”²⁵

5.6 Direct Inspection of the Bazaars

191. Al-Imam al-Baqir (a.s.): “Amar al-Mu’minin was among you in Kufa. Every morning he would leave his seat of rule walk in the markets of Kufa one by one, while carrying a double headed whip called ‘sabiba’ on his shoulder. He would stop before people of every market and call out, ‘O Tradesmen! Be wary of Allah Almighty!’”

“When the marketeers heard his call, they would give up what they were doing and attentively listen to him.”

“Then he would say, ‘Make benevolence your vocation. Get the blessing of leniency. Beware of swearing and avoid telling lies. Beware of doing injustice and establish the rights of the oppressed. Do not seek nearness to usury and observe fully the measure and the balance. Do not cheat the people of their goods and do not act wickedly on the earth, causing corruption.’”

“He would walk around all the bazaars of Kufa, then would return and sit for [seeing into the affairs of] the people.”[26](#)

192. Al-Imam al-Husayn: “In truth, Ali (a.s.) rode on the Prophet (S)’s mule called ‘Shahba’ in Kufa and called on every market. He entered the butcher’s little market and called out, ‘O Group of butchers! Do not cut off the spinal cord of the animal nor make haste in taking its life. Let the soul gently leave its body. Do not blow into the meat when selling it.’

“Then he went to the date sellers and said, ‘Display the bad products just like you display the good ones.’”

“Then he went to the fish dealers and told them, ‘Do not sell except the good fish, and beware of selling what is caught dead [floating].’”

“Then he entered the Kunasa quarter where various transactions were going on by copper dealers; liquid sellers; sellers of swaddling clothes, needles; as well as exchangers; sellers of camphor, and cloth. Then he called out loudly, ‘Swearing oaths is common in your markets; mix your oaths with alms, and avoid swearing oaths as Allah Almighty will not purify the person who tells lies by swearing to Him.’”[27](#)

193. Fada’l al-Sahaba – related by Abu al-Sahba: “I saw Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) by the side of a pasture asking about the prices.”[28](#)

194. Da’a’m al-Islam: “In truth, he [Ali (a.s.)] would walk in the market places holding a whip in his hand with which he would punish the defrauders who use short measures and the cheaters in trade with the Muslims.

Asbagh said, “One day I told him: O Commander of the Faithful! You stay home; I will do it for you. He replied, ‘O Asbagh! You are not wishing me well.’”[29](#)

195. Tarikh Damishq – related by Abu Sa’id: “O Tradesmen! Be wary of Allah and avoid swearing! Verily, swearing will ruin the goods and bring the blessings to naught. In truth, a tradesman is vicious unless he receives rightfully and pays rightfully. Wassalam.”[30](#)

196. Rabi’ al-Abrar: “Ali (a.s.) would pass by the salesmen in the market and tell them, ‘Do good. Sell goods cheaply to the Muslims, as it would increase prosperity.’”[31](#)

197. Tarikh Damishq – related by Zadan: “Verily, he [Ali (a.s.)] would walk around alone in the Markets when he was a ruler. He would guide the lot ones, help out the poor, and when he passed by the

salesmen and the shopkeepers, he would open the Qur'an and recite, (***This is the abode of the Hereafter which We shall grant to those who do not desire to dominate in the earth nor to cause corruption***³².) Then he would say, 'This verse is revealed about the just and humble leaders and the people possessing power.'³³

198. Makarim al-Akhlaq – related by Washika: "I saw Ali (a.s.) who was wearing a short garment and had pulled his robe up to the middle of his foreleg while holding a whip in his hand and walking around the market and saying, 'Be wary of Allah and observe the measure fully.' As if he was a children's teacher."³⁴

199. Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra – related by Jarmuz: "I saw Ali (a.s.) leaving his seat of rule while having two pieces of clothes on: a loincloth covering down the middle of his foreleg, and a robe which was rolled up close to the lower part of the loincloth. He was holding a whip and walking in the markets enjoining the marketeers to fear Allah and make fair deals, and would say, 'Observe fully the measure and balance.'³⁵

200. Makarim al-Akhlaq – related by 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas: "When he [Ibn 'Abbas] returned from Basra carrying the property and entered Kufa, he saw Amir al-Mu'minin standing in the market and shouting, 'O People! From now on whomever I see selling hagfish, the fish caught dead [floating] and eels, I will punish him with this whip.' His whip was called 'Sabtiyya'."

Ibn 'Abbas says, "I greeted him and he returned the greeting and then said, 'O Ibn 'Abbas! What happened to the property?'"

"I said, "Here it is, O Amir al-Mu'minin!" and I took it to him. He took me near himself and welcomed me."

After that, the herald came to him [Ali (a.s.)] to proclaim to sell his sword for seven dirhams, and then he said, 'If I had a share of as little as the price of an Arak tooth cleanser from the Muslims' public treasure, I would not sell it.'"

"He sold the sword and bought a shirt for himself for four dirhams, gave two dirhams as alms and treated me as a guest for three days with the remaining one dirham."³⁶

201. Fada'il al-Sahaba – related by Abi Matar al-Basri: [He said] He saw Ali (a.s.) going towards the date sellers. A female slave was crying near a date seller. He asked [her], "What has happened to you?"

The female slave said, "He sold me some dates for one dirham, but my master returned them and he [the date seller] would not refund the money."

Ali (a.s.) said, "O Possessor of the dates! Take back your dates and refund her money as she is only a slave and not in authority."

The date seller pushed Ali (a.s.) back. The Muslims told him, “Do you know whom you pushed back?” He said he did not. They said, “Amir al-Mu’minin!”

At this time, he took back the dates and refunded her dirhams.

Then he said [to Ali (a.s.)], “I would like you to be pleased with me.”

Ali (a.s.) said, “I will be pleased with you only when you observe fully people’s rights.”[37](#)

202. Makarim al-Akhlaq – related by Mukhtar al-Tammar: “I used to spend the nights in the mosques and settle in the open square and get bread from the groceries (he was from Basra). One day I went out when all of a sudden a man called to me and said, ‘Hold up your gown; it would keep cleaner this way and more consistent to Allah-fearing.’”

I asked who he was. I was told he was Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.).

I went after him. He was going towards the camels market. When he got there, he stopped and said, “O Tradesmen! Beware of false swearing, as it would ruin the goods and bring the blessings to naught.”

Then he left that place to go the date sellers’. At this time, a female slave was crying before a date seller.

He asked her, “What has become of you?”

She answered, “I am a handmaid whom my family have sent to buy one dirham of dates. When I took the dates to them, they did not like. I returned them, but this man refuses to take them back.”

He said, “O Man! Take the dates back and refund her money!”

He [the salesman] refused to do so. He was told that this [man] was Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). Then he took back the dates and refunded her money and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! I did not recognize you. I beg your pardon.”

He said, “O tradesmen! Be wary of Allah and make your dealings fairly. May Allah forgive you and us.”

He left that place. It began to rain. He approached one of the shops and asked permission to take shelter [from the rain], but the shopkeeper did not let him in and rejected him.

He [Ali (a.s.)] said, “O Qanbar! Bring him to me.”

Then he punished him by whipping, and said, “I did not beat you because you rejected me, but I did that lest you push out a weak Muslim, break his limbs and an obligation be imposed upon you.”

He left that place too, and arrived in the canvas sellers market and encountered a handsome man. Then said, “O Man! Do you have two garments at five dirhams?”

The man rose to his feet and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! What you want is with me.” Because that man recognized him, he left that place and got to another man and said, “O Young man! Do you have two garments at five dirhams?”

He said he had.

He got two garments, one for three dirhams and the other for two. Then said, “O Qanbar! You take the three dirham garment.”

Qanbar said, “You deserve it more; you go on the pulpit and give sermons to people.”

He said, “And you are young and have youthful wishes, and I am ashamed of myself before Allah to look superior to you. I heard the messenger of Allah say, ‘Clothe your servants from what you clothe yourselves, and feed them from what you eat yourselves.’”

When he put on the garment he noticed that the sleeves are longer than his hands. He said, “Cut off the extra.” And the young man did so. Then he said, “Come forward and let me whipstitch it.”

Ali (a.s.) replied, “Let it be as it is, because things will pass sooner than that.”[38](#)

203. Tarikh al-Tabari – related by Yazid b.’Uday b. ‘Uthman: “I saw Ali (a.s.) passing by Hamdan (neighborhood). Two groups were fighting there. He separated them and was leaving the place when I heard someone say, “Come to my help for God’s sake!”

He quickly ran toward him in such a way that I heard the sound of his footwear and was saying, “Help is coming.”

At this moment, he got to a man who was holding on to another man’s collar. The he said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! I sold a garment to this man for nine dirhams on the condition that he would not give me torn and defective dirhams (and this was their condition of that day). Now, this is his dirhams that I brought to change them for me, but he refused and I held on to him, and he slapped me.”

Ali (a.s.) said, “Change it for him!”

Then he said, “What is your proof for being slapped?”

The man showed his proof. Then Ali (a.s.) seated the man and told him [the complainant] to take revenge on him.

The man said. “I forgave him O Amir al-Mu’minin!”

Ali (a.s.) said, “I wanted to be cautious for your sake.” Then he gave the man nine lashes and said, “This is the ruler’s right.”[39](#)

5.7 Prevention from Hoarding

204. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Rifa'a: "Warn against hoarding, punish the one who commits it and penalize him by revealing what he had hoarded."[40](#)

205. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Then make merchants and craftsmen your own concern... And know, nevertheless, that in many of them is shameful miserliness, detestable avarice, hoarding of benefits and arbitrariness in sales. This is a source of loss to all and a stain upon rulers. So prohibit hoarding, for the Messenger of Allah (S) prohibited it. Let selling be an openhanded selling, with justly balanced scales and prices, without prejudice to either party, buyer or seller. As for him who lets himself be tempted to hoard after you have forbidden him (to do so), make an example of him and punish him, but not excessively."[41](#)

5.8 Levying Taxes

206. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to the tax collectors: "In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. From the servant of Allah Ali, Amir al-Mu'minin to the tax collectors: So now, he who does not fear where he is going does not send forward for himself that which could protect him; and he who follows his desires and surrenders to them for transient gains, will soon be among the repentant."

"Know that the most fortunate person in the world is he who withdraws from what he knows is detrimental to him; and the most wretched person is he who follows passions. So take lesson."

"Know that only whatever of goodness that you send forth [to the Hereafter] will belong to you; and whatever you send forth apart from that, you would like there would be a long distance between you and that. Allah warns you to beware of [disobeying] Him. Allah is the most Affectionate and the most Merciful to His servants. Certainly, the loss of what you are negligent of would return to you. What is demanded from you is little, and Allah's reward to you is great."

"If there were no punishment to be feared of in doing injustice and aggression, which is prohibited, there certainly is enough reward in avoiding it that there remains no excuse to give it up. Be merciful so that you may be granted (His) Mercy. Do not torture servants of Allah; and do not task them beyond their capacity. Be fair to people and be patient in fulfilling their needs, since you are the treasurers of the subjects. Do not hire doorkeepers for yourselves; and do not prevent anyone from gaining access to you to pursue his case. Do not take anyone for anyone else except for the guarantee for the one he has guaranteed. Make yourselves patient in joys [of life]; and beware of postponing tasks and repelling goodness, for certainly there is repentance in doing so. Wassalam!"[42](#)

207. Al-Kafi – related by Muhajir, on the authority of a man from Thaqif tribe: "Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) appointed me as tax collector in the region of Banqiya and a village in Kufa and told me in the presence of the people, 'See into the (land) taxes and make attempts in (collecting) them. Do not neglect even a

single dirham; whenever you want to go there come to me (first).”

[He said,] “I went to him, and he told me, ‘Indeed, what you heard from me was a trick. But take care that you should not beat a Muslim, a Jew or a Christian for a dirham of tax; or sell beasts of burden for [levying] taxes, because we are ordered to take from them the extras [to their income].”[43](#)

208. Al-Sunan al-Kubra – related by ‘Abd al-Malak b. ‘Umayr: “A man from the Thaqif tribe told me that Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) assigned me [to collect taxes] over the vast region of Shapur[44](#) and said, ‘Take care that you should not whip anyone for collecting a dirham of tax or sell their sustenance, their winter or summer clothes, or their beasts of burden to that end. And do not appoint anyone for collecting dirhams.’

“That man said he told him, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! In that case, I would return to you empty-handed as I left you empty-handed!’”

He said, “Even if you return as you left. Woe onto you! Certainly, we are ordered to take from them the extras [to their income].”[45](#)

209. Tarikh Damishq – related by ‘Abd al-Malak b. ‘Umayr: “A man from Thaqif told me that Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) assigned me [to collect taxes] over the region of ‘Ukbara (where there were no one to perform prayers) and told me in the present of the people there, ‘Taxes must be fully levied from them. Take care not to show them leniency.’ Then he told me to go to him at noon time.”

I went to him and I did not see any doorman (at his place) to stop me. I saw him sitting down and there were a bowl and a water jug. He asked for his sac. I thought to myself that maybe he wanted to do me a favor, as I did not know what was in the sac. I found that the sac was sealed. He broke the seal. There was sawiq[46](#) in it. He took it out, put it in the bowl and poured some water on it. Then he drank from it and gave me some to drink, too.

“I could not help asking him, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! You behave like this in Iraq? The Iraqis have much better food than this.’”

He said, “Know that, by Allah, I do not seal it out of avarice; rather I buy as much as it meets my needs, for I fear that if it is abundant, there may other foods be added to it. So, I take care of it [buy sealing it][47](#), and I dislike taking in other than clean food. As for what I said in the presence of the people, I had no option but to say what I said to you. They are deceitful people; but now I order you how to deal with them, for if you act that way, you will be saved; otherwise – besides me – Allah will reprove you, too. If I am informed that you have acted contrary to what I have ordered you to do, I will dismiss you. Do not sell (take from) their daily foods and their summer and winter clothes; do not whip anyone even for a dirham, nor disgrace them, as we are not ordered to do so; do not seize their beasts of burden, since we are ordered to take from them the extras [to their income].”

The man said, "I told him that I would return the same way that I would have gone."

Ali (a.s.) said, "Even if you do so."

The man said, "I went on to collect taxes as he had ordered me. By Allah, when I returned I gave him what was with me to the last dirham."[48](#)

210. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to one of his administrators whom he had sent for (collecting) taxes: "I order him to fear Allah In his secret matters and hidden actions, where there is no witness except He and no one watches save He."

"I also order him that whatever he does in obedience to Allah openly should not be different from what he does secretly. He whose hidden position is not different from his open position and whose action is not different from his words has discharged his obligation and his worship is pure."

"I also order him that he should not harass them, should not be harsh on them and should not turn away from them because of superiority of official position over them, because they are brethren in faith and help in the recovery of levies."

"Certainly you have a fixed share and a known right in this levy, and there are other sharers who are poor, weak and starving. We shall fully discharge your rights. So you should fully discharge their rights. If you do not do so, you will have the largest number of enemies on the Day of Judgment. How wretched is the man whose enemies in view of Allah are the needy, the destitute, the beggars, the turned away, and the indebted and (penniless) travelers."

"He who treats the trust lightly and indulges in treachery and does not keep himself and his faith untarnished by it has certainly secured humiliation in this world, and his humiliation and disgrace in the Hereafter will be greater. Surely, the greatest treachery is the treachery against the Muslim community and the ugliest deceit is the deceit towards the Muslim leaders. Wassalam!"[49](#)

211. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his instructions that he used to write to whomever he appointed for the collection of taxes: "Move on with the fear of Allah who is One and has no partner. Do not frighten any Muslim. Do not pass over his lands so as to make him feel unhappy. Do not take from him more than Allah's share in his property. When you go to a tribe, you should get down at their watering place Instead of entering their houses. Then proceed towards them with peace and dignity till you stand among them. Then salute them and do not be remiss in greeting them."

"Then say to them, 'O servants of Allah, the vicegerent of Allah and His caliph has sent me to you to collect from you Allah's share in your properties. Is there anything of His share in your properties? If so, give it to His vicegerent.' If someone among them says no, then do not repeat the demand. If someone speaks to you in the affirmative, then go with him without frightening him, threatening him, pressuring him or oppressing him. Take what he gives you such as gold or silver (coins). If he has cattle or camels

do not enter upon them save with his permission, because their major part is his. Therefore when you get there do not enter upon them as one who has full control over them or in a violent manner.”

“Do not scare any animal, do not tease anyone and do not let the owner feel grieved about anyone. Divide the property into two parts and let the owner choose one. When he has chosen do not object to it. Then divide the remaining into two parts and let him choose one and when he has chosen do not raise any objection. Continue like this till only that much remains which is enough to satisfy Allah's dues. Then take Allah's due from it. If he disputes your action allow his views, then mix the two (separated) parts and repeat what you had done before till you take Allah's due from his property. Do not take an old, decrepit, broken, limbed, sick or unsound animal. Do not entrust the animals (for custody) except to one whom you trust to take care of Muslims' property till he hands it over to their chief who will distribute it. Do not entrust it to anyone except he who is well-wisher, God-fearing, trustworthy and watchful, and who is not harsh on Muslims' property nor makes them run too much, nor tires them, nor labors them. Then send to us all that you have collected and we shall deal with it as Allah has ordered.”

“When your trustee takes over (the animal) tell him that he should not separate the she-camel from its young and should not milk all its milk because that would affect its young and also that he should not exert it in riding. In this matter he should behave justly between it and all its companions. He should allow rest to camels (who are tired), and drive with ease those whose hoofs have been rubbed off. When passing a water spring he should stay the camels there for drinking and should not take them away from vegetated land to barren paths. He should allow them rest now and then and give them time near water and grass. In this way when they reach us by leave of Allah they will be fat with plenty of marrow and would not be fatigued or distressed. We will then distribute them according to the (commands of) the Book of Allah and the sunna of his Prophet (S). Certainly this will be a great source of reward for you and a means to secure guidance, if Allah so wills.”[50](#)

212. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Investigate the situation of the land tax in a manner that will rectify the state of those who pay it, for in the correctness of the land tax and the welfare of the tax-payers is welfare of others. The welfare of others will not be achieved except through them, for the people, all of them, are dependent upon the land tax and those who pay it. Let your care for the prosperity of the earth be deeper than your care for the collecting of land tax, for it will not be gathered except in prosperity. Whoever exacts land tax without prosperity has desolated the land and destroyed the servants (of Allah). His affairs will remain in order but briefly.”

“So if your subjects complain of burden, of blight, of the cutting off of the irrigation water, of lack of rain, or of the transformation of the earth through its being inundated by a flood or ruined by drought, lighten (their burden) to the extent you wish their affairs to be rectified. And let not anything by which you have lightened their burden weigh heavily against you, for it is a store which they will return to you by bringing about prosperity in your land and embellishing your rule. You will be able to depend upon the increase in their strength (resulting) from what you stored away with them when you gave them ease; and upon their

trust, since you accustomed them to your justice toward them through your kindness to them. Then perhaps matters will arise which afterwards they will undertake gladly if in these you depend upon them, for prosperity will carry that with which you burden it.”

“Truly the destruction of the earth only results from the destitution of its inhabitants, and its inhabitants become destitute only when rulers concern themselves with amassing (wealth), when they have misgivings about the endurance (of their own rule) and when they profit little from warning examples.”[51](#)

213. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar (as narrated in Tuhaf al-‘Uqul): “Gather tax-payers of all the regions under your dominion and order them to inform you of the situations of their regions including ways of prosperity and the collection of taxes. Then you should ask the experts about what they had informed. If they complain of burden, of diseases, of the cutting off of the irrigation water, or of a change in the condition of the land either due to flood or drought or pestilence, you should remit the tax to the extent that you hope Allah will improve their position. If they seek help in prospering what they can do with their fortune, you should satisfy its provisions; as the result of your satisfying the provisions is their prosperity.”

“The remission granted by you for the removal of distress from them should not be grudged by you, because it is an investment which they will return to you in the form of prosperity of your country and the progress of your dominion in addition to easing by Allah the earning of their praise, well intention, and happiness for meting out justice to them. The land tax cannot be gotten through fatigue and exhaustion, yet it is knots upon which you depend. If something happens, you can depend upon their strength because of the investment you made in them through catering to their convenience, and can have confidence in them because of the justice extended to them by being kind and fair to them and their realizing your excuses. Circumstances may so turn that you may ask for their assistance, when they will bear it happily, for prosperity is capable of bearing whatever you load on it. The ruin of the land is caused by the poverty of the cultivators, while the cultivators become poor when the tax-collectors concentrate on the collection (of money), having little hope for continuance (in their posts) and profiting little from warning examples.”[52](#)

5.9 Not Postponing Distribution of Public Assets

214. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by Abi Salih al-Samman: “I saw Ali (a.s.) enter the public treasury. He noticed some property there and said, ‘These are here and people are in need?’ Then he ordered the property to be distributed among people, had the place swept and sprinkled with water and said prayers there.”[53](#)

215. Al-Gharat – related by Bakr b. ‘Isa mentioning the sira of Imam Ali (a.s.): “Certainly, he distributed (among people) whatever left in the public treasury. There came no Friday when there remained anything in the treasury. Every Thursday evening, he ordered the treasury to be cleaned off and sprinkled with water. Then, he would say two rak’ats of prayers.”[54](#)

216. Al-Gharat – related by Majma' al-Taymi: "In truth, Ali (a.s.) would sprinkle the treasury with water and performed supererogatory prayers there, saying, 'Bear witness on the Day of Resurrection that I did not lock up the property in you from the Muslims.'" [55](#)

217. Fada'l al-Sahaba – related by Mujamma' al-Taymi: "In truth, Ali (a.s.) would order the treasury to be swept up and sprinkled with water. After that, he would say prayers there in the hope that it would bear witness for him on the Day of Resurrection that he did not lock up the property from people." [56](#)

218. Tarikh Damishq – related by Abu Hakim Sahib al-Hifa on the authority of his father: "Verily, Ali (a.s.) would distribute the collected property [among people] three times a year. Once some property was brought to him from Isfahan. He said, 'Let's go for the fourth distribution. Certainly I am not the one who amasses [property].'"

[The narrator says] "He distributed the ropes; some people took [their share], and some refused to take." [57](#)

219. Muruj al-Dhahab – pointing out the events of the year 38 AH / 658 CE: "Ali (a.s.)'s companions received from him dividends [their share of distributed property] three times a year, depending on whatever of property he would receive. He, then, received some property from Isfahan, and said, 'Let's go for the fourth distribution. By Allah, I am not the one who amasses [property].'"

"He was an exemplar for the people in distribution of [the public] property, and would take a share for himself like one of other people." [58](#)

220. Al-Amali – related by Hilal b. Muslim al-Jahdari: "I heard my grandfather, Jarrah (or Jawwah), say, 'I was in the presence of Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) in an evening when some property was brought to him.'

He said. "Distribute this!"

"O Amir al-Mu'minin! It is night now, put it off until tomorrow." The people said.

"Do you guarantee that I will live until tomorrow?" He said.

They replied, 'It is not in our hands.'

He said, "Distribute it, then, and do not put it off."

A candle was brought in and the property was distributed the same night. [59](#)

221. Al-Gharat – related by Aahhak b. Muzahim: [Ali (a.s.) said:] "My friend, the Messenger of Allah did not keep anything for the morrow, nor did Abu Bakr. 'Umar b. Khattab, however, decided to establish bureaus and put off [the distribution of] the properties from one year to another; but I will do as my friend, the Messenger of Allah would do."

[The narrator said:] Ali (a.s.) distributed the properties every Friday and would say:

“This is my harvest, and the best of it;

Yet, every harvester has his hand in his own mouth (and eats it himself)[60](#).” [61](#)

222. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Ajlan: “Ali (a.s.) used to distribute seeds of flax, pepper-grass, caraway, and other things among people.”[62](#)

223. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by Sha’bi: “I was a young man when I entered a square in Kufa together with other young men. I saw Ali (a.s.) who was standing over a pile of gold and silver and holding a whip in his hand with which he was keeping people off and at the same time distributing the property among people until there was nothing was left of it. Then, he returned home without taking anything with him, neither little nor much.”

“I went back to my father and said to him, ‘Today, I saw the best of people or the most foolish one!’ He asked who he was.”

“I said, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), the Commander of the Faithful. I saw him acting in such and such a way, and told him the story.’”

“My father wept and said, ‘My son! You have seen the best of people.’”[63](#)

224. Al-Imam al-Baqir: “Some property was brought to Ali (a.s.). He seated the weighers and exchangers next to himself. Then, he made a pile of gold and a pile of silver, and said, ‘O reds and O whites! Turn red and white and deceive others, not me!’”

“This is my harvest, and the best of it;

Yet, every harvester has his hand in his own mouth (and eats it himself).”[64](#)

225. Tarikh Damishq – related by Abu Salih al-Samman: “I saw Ali (a.s.) enter the treasury and see something there. Then he said, ‘May I not see it here, while people are in need of it.’ Then he ordered it to be distributed, had the treasury swept and sprinkled with water, then performed prayers there or took an afternoon nap; i.e., he slept there.”[65](#)

226. Al-Da’awat: “Whenever amir al-Mu’minin gave out what was in the treasury, he would order it to be swept and would perform prayers there and would say in his invocation, ‘O Allah! I seek Your protection from the sin that brings my act to naught; and I seek Your protection from the sin that expedites retribution; and I seek Your protection from the sin that alters blessings; and I seek Your protection from the sin that holds back provision; and I seek Your protection from the sin that averts repentance; and I seek Your protection from the sin that tears apart safeguards; and I seek Your protection from the sin that brings about penitence; and I seek Your protection from the sin that withholds portion (in

bounties).”⁶⁶

5.10 Equality in Distributing Public Assets

227. Al-Ikhtisas – describing traits and virtues of Imam Ali (a.s.): He made equal distributions, and practiced justice among citizens. He appointed ‘Ammar b. Yasir and Abu Haytham b. Tayhan as directors of Madina treasury and wrote [to them], “Arabs. Qurayshis, Ansars, and non-Arabs and whoever is a Muslim, whether from Among Arab or non Arab tribes are equal.”

Sahl b. Hanif brought a freed black slave to him and asked, “How much would you give him?”

Amir al-Mu’minin asked him, “How much have you received?”

“Three dinars, and the others have received the same amount.” He replied.

“Give the freed one the same amount as others: three dinars.” The Imam said.⁶⁷

228. Al-Amali – related by Ibrahim b. Salih al-Anmati: In the morning after the allegiance he entered the treasury and distributed the property that had been gathered there among all the people present, giving three dinars to each one of them. Sahl b. Hunayf stood up and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! I freed this slave.”

Then the Imam gave him [the freed slave] three dinars; the same amount that he had given to Hanif.⁶⁸

229. Al-Kafi – related by Abu Mikhnaf: “A group of the Shi’ites came to Ali (a.s.) and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Would that you distributed these assets among the dignitaries and chiefs and give them priority to us so that things settle down. Then you would return to the best of features that Allah has accustomed you to; that is, making equal distributions, and practicing justice among citizens.’

Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s.) said, “Woe on you! You are commanding me to seek support by doing injustice and inequity to the Muslims over whom I have been chosen as a guardian. By Allah, I will not do that as long as the world keeps going on and as long as I see stars in the stars. By Allah, even if it were my property, I would distribute it equally among them; how would it be when the property is theirs?”⁶⁹

230. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his sermon given when he was reprimanded for equal distribution of assets: “Regarding this booty, no one should enjoy precedence in the shares of the booty. Allah the Great and Almighty has completed its distribution. It is Allah’s possession, and you are the Muslim servants of Him. This is the Book of Allah; we recognize it, declare it, and submit to it. Our prophet’s covenant is with us. Hence submit to the matter. Allah’s Mercy may be upon you! Whoever does not yield to this matter may leave us in any way he chooses.”⁷⁰

231. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Masqala b. Hubayra al-Shaybani, his administrator in Ardashir Khurrah⁷¹: “Know that the right of those Muslims who are around you and those who are

around me in this property is equal. For that reason they come to me and take from it.”[72](#)

232. Al-Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Hudhayfa b. Yaman, his governor of Mada’in: “I command you to collect land taxes rightfully and equally; do not violate what I sent you for and do not be negligent of it, nor make any innovation in it. Then, distribute it equally and fairly among those who are entitled to it.”[73](#)

233. Al-Gharat – related by Abu Ishaq al-Hamadani: Two women came to Ali (a.s.) at the time of distribution [of property], one Arab and the other non-Arab. He gave each one of them 25 dirhams and a kurr[74](#) of corn.

The Arab woman said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! I am an Arab and she is a non-Arab.”

Ali (a.s.) said, “By Allah! I do not see any precedence of the children of Isma’il (Ishmael) over the children of Ishaq (Isaac) in this booty.”[75](#)

234. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by Harith: “I was with Ali (a.s.) when two women came to him and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! We are poor and needy.’

Ali (a.s.) said, ‘If you are honest, your rights would be incumbent upon us and all the well-to-do Muslims.’

Then he ordered a man to go along with them to the market and to buy for each one of them a kurr of corn, three pieces of clothes (dresses, scarves, and wrappers) and to give a hundred dirhams from his distributed grants to each one of them.

When they returned, one of them unveiled her face and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Favor me by what Allah has favored and honored you.’

He asked, ‘How has Allah favored and honored me?’

‘By the Messenger of Allah.’ She said.

Ali (a.s.) said, ‘You are right, who are you?’

‘I am an Arab woman and this woman is a freed slave.’ She said.

[Harith said:] “He picked up something from the ground and then said, ‘I studied what was between the two tablets; I did not find any children of Isma’il favored to the children of Ishaq even by a gnat’s wing.”[76](#)

235. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by Mus’ab: “Ali (a.s.) distributed everything among us; he even distributed perfume among our wives.”[77](#)

236. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by Harith: “I heard Ali (a.s.) saying in his sermon, ‘We ordered to give red garments and needles to the muhajirun women.’

[Harith says:] “He had taken the needles as poll tax (jizya) from a group of Jews.”[78](#)

237. Fada’l al-Sahaba – related by Fadala b. ‘Abd al-Malik, on the authority of Karima, daughter of Humam Tabiya: “Ali (a.s.) distributed red garments among us in Kufa.” Fadala says, “We assumed it as his justice.”[79](#)

238. Al-Manaqib – related by Hakim b. Aws: “Ali (a.s.) would send [leather] containers of honey to us to be distributed among us. Then he would order the containers to be licked. Several times fruits were brought to him and he ordered them to be sold and the money deposited in the treasury.”[80](#)

239. Tarikh Damishq – related by Kulayb: “Some property was brought to Ali (a.s.) from Isfahan. He divided it into seven portions and found some bread. He divided that bread into seven parts, too, and dedicated each part to one of the portions. Then, he called the chiefs of the tribes and drew lots among them to decide who to receive his portion first.”[81](#)

240. Al-Gharat – related by Kulayb al-Jarmi: “I was with Ali (a.s.) when some property was brought to him from the mountains. He stood up and we rose along with him, too, and went toward the donkey-keepers and camel-drivers. People crowded around him. Then he took some pieces of rope, tied them together and made a fence around the property and said, ‘I do not let anyone pass through this rope.’”

“We sat behind the rope. Ali (a.s.) walked over the rope and said, ‘where are the chiefs of the seven tribes?’”

“They went to him and began to move the saddlebags here and there until they divided them into seven portions.”

Kulayb said, “He [Ali (a.s.)] found some bread among the property. He divided it into seven parts, then placed a piece of bread on each portion and said:

‘This is my harvest, and the best of it;

Yet, every harvester has his hand in his own mouth (and eats it himself).’

Kulayb said, “Then he drew lots on the portions and the chiefs of each tribe called their tribesmen to carry away the saddlebags.”[82](#)

241. Muruj al-Dhahab: “He took back the properties that ‘Uthman had granted to a group of Muslims and distributed what was in the treasury, without favoring anyone to anyone else.”[83](#)

242. Muruj al-Dhahab – from the report on the battle of Jamal: “Ali (a.s.) took hold of what was [left] in the battlefield of the enemy such as arms, animals, property, etc., sold them and distributed the money among his companions (those present in his army), taking for himself as much as his other companions, i.e., five hundred dirhams.”

“Then a man from among his companions came to him and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! I did not get anything because I was not present for such and such reason.’ And he gave his excuse for not being present. Ali (a.s.) gave his own five hundred dirhams to him.”[84](#)

243. Al-Jamal: [After the incidence of Jamal] Ali (a.s.) dismounted and summoned a group of his companions. They accompanied him to the treasury and entered it. Then he sent for the qarīs (the Qur’an reciters) and called them in; he also summoned the treasurers and commanded them to open the doors behind which the assets were kept. When he saw the excessive property, he said:

“This is my harvest, and the best of it.”

Then he distributed the property among his companions, giving six thousand dirhams to each one of them who consisted of twelve thousand people. He took for himself the same amount as others. At this time, a man came in and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! My name has been left out of your registers and I was beset with such and such a problem.’ Ali (a.s.) gave his own share to that man.[85](#)

244. Al-Gharat – related by al-Mughayra al-Aabbi: “Nobles of Kufa were dishonest to Ali (a.s.) and were inclined towards Mu’awiya; for Ali (a.s.) did not grant anybody beyond their rights from the spoils. [But] Mu’awiya b. Abi Sufyan had allotted two thousand dirhams to each one of the nobles.”[86](#)

245. Imam Ali (a.s.) – condemning his disobedient companions: “Is it not strange that Mu’awiya calls out to some rude low people and they follow him without any support or grant, but when I call you, although you are the successors of Islam and the (worthy) survivors of the people, with support and distributed grants, you scatter away from me and oppose me?”[87](#)

246. Imam Ali (a.s.) – about certain persons in Madina who had gone over to Mu’awiya: “They have known justice, seen it, heard it and appreciated it. They have realized that here, to us all men are equal in the matter of right. However, they ran away to selfishness and partiality. Let them remain remote and far away.”[88](#) See 6/1 (Establishing Justice).

An Explanation on How in Early Islam Public Revenue was Distributed

The term “Public Treasury” in hadith texts is a general term for the Muslims’ public income that is left to the Islamic state to be spent. A study of hadith collections reveals, in general, two categories of expenditure for the public treasury, i.e., specific and general.

Specific Expenditure

This category includes a series of public expenditure that has particular labels such as providing for the poor, the needy, the disabled and the martyrs families; providing salaries for judges and troops; education and health care; the prisoners expenditures; [discharging the] debts of the [desperate] debtors; [discharging] blood money (diya) for the murdered who had no personal perpetrators; and

engendering prosperity in the cities, etc.

General Expenditure

In early Islam, after providing for the specific expenditure, the surplus of public treasury was distributed among the Muslims. In hadith texts, this type of expenditure is referred to as people's public right in public treasury.

Ideal distribution of public treasury from the Islamic point of view stresses two fundamental features, i.e., 1) Observing justice in distribution, 2) Not locking up public assets.

1. Observing justice in distribution: Economic justice in distribution of public facilities in Islam incorporates two main criteria: giving priority to social welfare and fulfilling the needs of the underprivileged and vulnerable strata and increasing their welfare; observing justice in equal entitlements.

The clearest instance of these two criteria is seen in Imam Ali (a.s.)'s distribution policies. In his letters to his governors, he has always asserted the allocation of part of treasury resources to the underprivileged and the low-income class. His strong emphasis on canceling undue and ambiguous privileges and granting equal rights to relatives and non-relatives, Arabs and non-Arabs, men and women, the renown and the unknown has displayed a brilliant image of human justice to the seekers of justice in the world.

2. Not locking up public assets: expedition of infaq (expending) and avoidance of locking up public assets is one of the basic characteristics of economic policies in Islam. Despite its emphasis on the necessity of moderation, and even planning and precautions in infaq, Islam has strongly condemned locking up the public property and stressed on expediting infaq.

The ideal practice of infaq from the public treasury in respect to these two features can be stated as follows: Whenever part of the (state's) incomes is through certain planning dedicated to a particular purpose, in a way that both the income and the expending are applicable, delay in expending in such cases is regarded as "storing" and "parsimony", as described in the hadiths concerning "avoidance of accumulating public property".

The Holy Prophet's concern for observing this principle was so great that when even a small amount of the property that was supposed to be handed over to those who were entitled to it remained in his hand, traces of sorrow would appear in his countenance. In the time of 'Umar, when there had been an unprecedented increase in public incomes, the government proceeded to establish public treasury and to set up state council. The public incomes were collected and stored all year round, and distributed among Muslims at the end of the year.

Rejecting this policy, Imam Ali (a.s.) took up the Prophet (S)'s procedure in this respect after his taking over the hukuma. His avoidance of delaying the distribution of the public treasury, even for a single

night, indicates his great concern for refraining from piling up public property.

5.11 Fulfillment of Basic Needs for All

247. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Allah the Glorified has fixed the livelihood of the destitute in the wealth of the rich. Consequently whenever a destitute remains hungry it is because some rich person has denied (him his share). Allah the Sublime will question them about it.”^{[89](#)}

248. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Allah has fixed sufficient livelihood for the destitute in the wealth of the rich. If the destitute remain hungry and naked, attempts must be made to restrain the rich. It is justified if Allah judge the rich on the Day of Resurrection and punish them for this [negligence].”^{[90](#)}

249. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There is no one in Kufa except that they enjoy welfare. The lowest people in rank among the Kufans have wheat bread, sit in the shade and drinks from the Euphrates.”^{[91](#)}

250. Tahdhib al-Ahkam – related by Muhammad b. Abi Hamza on the authority of a man who had met Ali (a.s.): “A begging blind man passed by. Amir al-Mu’minin asked who that man was. They said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! He is a Nazarene.’

[The narrator says] “Amir al-Mu’minin said, ‘You exploited him to the extent that he grew old and disabled, and now you hold him back?’”^{[92](#)}

5.12 Supporting Lowest Class

251. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Qutham b. ‘Abbas: “See what has been collected with you of the funds of Allah (in the public treasury) and spend it over the persons with families, distressed, the starving and the naked, at your end. Then send the remaining to us for distribution among those who are on this side.”^{[93](#)}

252. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then (fear) Allah, (fear) Allah regarding the lowest class, the wretched, needy, suffering and disabled who have no means at their disposal, for in this class there is he who begs and he who is needy (but does not beg). Be heedful for Allah’s sake of those rights of theirs, which He has entrusted to you. Set aside for them a share of your treasury and in every town a share of the produce of the lands taken as booty for Islam (sawafi al-Islam), for to the farthest away of them belongs the equivalent of what belongs to the nearest. You are bound to observe the right of each of them; so be not distracted from them by arrogance, for you will not be excused if, to attend to the very important affairs, you neglect the trifling. So avert not your solicitude from them and turn not your face away from them in contempt.”

“Investigate the affairs of those (of the lowest class) who are unable to gain access to you, those upon whom eyes disdain to gaze and whom men regard with scorn. Appoint to attend exclusively to them a person whom you trust from among the God-fearing and humble and let him submit to you their affairs

(demands). Then act toward them in a manner that will absolve you before Allah on the day that you meet Him. For among the subjects these are more in need of equity than others; in the case of each of them prepare your excuse with Allah by accomplishing for him his rightful due.”

“Take upon yourself the upkeep of the orphans and aged from among those who have no means at their disposal and do not exert themselves in begging. (All of) This is a heavy burden upon rulers. The truth, all of it, is a heavy burden.”[94](#)

253. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar (as related in Tuhaf al-‘Uqul): “Take upon yourself the upkeep of the orphans and aged from among those who have no means at their disposal and do not exert themselves in begging. Arrange pensions for them. They are the servants of Allah. Seek Allah’s favor through relieving them [from their plights] and keeping them in their proper positions in provisions and rights, since deeds are regarded sincere when they are well intended.”

“People, or some of them, will not be tranquil even if you settle their needs and fulfil their rights completely; therefore, they will ask you for their needs openly. This is a heavy burden upon rulers. The truth, all of it, is a heavy burden. At times, Allah lightens it for those who seek the next world and endure [hardships] upon themselves and trust in the truthfulness of Allah’s promise to those who endure [hardships] and reckon [their actions]. So, be one of them and seek Allah’s help.”[95](#)

254. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar, on various classes of people: “Know that subjects are of various classes.... Then there is the lowest class, the needy and the wretched, those who have the right to aid and assistance. With Allah there is plenty for each [of the classes]. Each has a claim upon the ruler to the extent that will set it aright.”[96](#)

255. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to one of his administrators sent for collecting taxes: “Certainly you have a fixed share and a known right in these taxes, and there are other sharers who are poor, weak and starving. We shall fully discharge your rights. So you should discharge their rights fully, too. If you do not do so, you will have the largest number of enemies on the Day of Judgment. How wretched is the man whose enemies in the view of Allah are the needy, the destitute, the beggars the turned away, the indebted and (penniless) travelers.”[97](#)

256. Da’a’im al-Islam: “In truth, he [Ali (a.s.)] gave lengthy instructions to Mikhnaf b. Sulaym al-Azdi – whom he had sent collecting taxes – in which he enjoined him to be wary of Allah who is his Lord in hidden affairs and secret actions, and to meet people cheerfully and gently. He enjoined him to commit himself to humility and to avoid arrogance, as Allah elevates the humble and debases the arrogant.”

“Then he told Mikhnaf, ‘O Mikhnaf b. Sulaym! Certainly you have a fixed share and a known right in these taxes, and you have other sharers in them who are poor, the destitute, the indebted, warriors, (penniless) travelers, slaves, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled. We shall fully discharge your rights. So you should discharge their rights fully, too. If you do not do so, you will have the largest number of enemies on the Day of Judgment. How wretched is the man whose enemies are such

people!”⁹⁸

5.13 Great Concern for the Orphans

257. Al-Kafi – related by Hbib b. Abi Thabit: “Honey and figs were brought for Amir al-Mu’minin from Hamadan and Hulwan⁹⁹. Then he ordered the authorities of the tribes to bring along the orphans. He seated them above the [leather] containers of honey to eat from it and he distributed the honey, goblet after goblet, among people.”

They asked him, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! Why do they eat honey?”

He said, “The Imam is the father to the orphans; indeed, I had them eat honey, as their father.”¹⁰⁰

258. Rabi’ al-Abrar – related by Abu Tufayl: “I saw Ali (a.s.) calling orphans and giving them honey to eat to the extent that one of the companions said, “I wish I were an orphan, too!”¹⁰¹

259. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by al-Hakam: “I saw Ali (a.s.) to whom several [leather] containers of honey were brought. Then he called the orphans and said, ‘Come on and eat!’ to the extent that I wished I had been an orphan. Then he distributed the honey among people and one container was left. Then he ordered it to be given to the people of the mosque [to be eaten].”¹⁰²

260. Al-Manaqib: “Ali (a.s.) saw a woman carrying a goatskin of water on her shoulder. He took the goatskin from her and carried it to her house. Then he asked about her situations. The woman said, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib sent my husband to a frontier region. He was killed and left behind orphan children to me. I am destitute and have to serve people as housemaid.’”

“Ali (a.s.) returned and was distressed all through the night.”

“When the morning dawned, he took a basket of food on her back. Some said. ‘Let us carry it for you.’”

“He said, ‘Who will on Resurrection Day carry my sins for me?’”

“Then he went to her house and knocked at the door.”

“The woman asked, ‘Who are you?’”

“Ali (a.s.) replied, ‘The one who carried your water goatskin for you yesterday. Open the door; I have got some food for your children with me.’”

“The woman said, ‘May Allah be pleased with you and judge between me and ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.’”

“Then he entered and said, ‘I would like to earn some rewards; will you make dough and bake bread or amuse the children and I make bread?’ “

“The woman said, ‘I am more acquainted with baking and more capable of it. You stay with the children and keep them amused, until I get over with the baking of bread.’ Then the woman took the flour and kneaded it, and Ali (a.s.) picked up the meat, cooked it and made morsels of dates, meat and other foodstuff and put them in the children’s mouth; and every time the children swallowed a morsels, he would tell them, ‘My child! Forgive ‘Ali b. Abi Talib for what has befallen you!’”

“When the woman kneaded the flour, she said, ‘O Servant of Allah! Make some fire in the oven!’ Ali (a.s.) hastened to make the fire, and when it flared up and the heat touched his face, he said, ‘O Ali! Taste it! This is the punishment of the one who neglects the widows and the orphans.’”

“Another woman who knew Ali (a.s.) saw him and said to her, ‘Woe on you! This is Amir al-Mu’minin!’”

The narrator goes on to say, “The woman hastily said, ‘I am ashamed of you O! Amir al-Mu’minin!’”

“‘I am ashamed of you, O servant of Allah! Since I did neglect you.’ Said Ali (a.s.).” [103](#)

261. Kashf al-Yaqin: “It is reported that one night Ali (a.s.) passed by a woman whose little children were crying out of hunger. The woman was amusing and playing with them to make them go to sleep, while she had set up a fire under a pot containing just water so that the children would suppose that there is some food in the pot being cooked for them.”

“Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s.) found out about the woman’s condition. He went to his house along with Qanbar. Then, he took a basket of dates; a sac of flour; some fat, rice and bread, and put them on his back. Qanbar asked to carry it himself, but he refused [to let him do so].”

“When he reached the woman’s house, he asked permission for entrance.”

“The woman let him in.”

“Then, he put some rice in a pot together with some fat. When he finished preparing the food, he called the children and asked them to eat. When they became full, he began to hop around the room (by mimicking a lamb) and bleating, making them laugh.”

“When they left the house, Qanbar said, ‘O My master! I saw something astonishing last night the reason of which I did not understand; that is, your carrying the food on your back was for earning rewards, but I did not know the reason for your hopping around the room and baaing!’”

“The imam (a.s.) said, ‘O Qanbar! I went to see these children while they were crying of starvation. I liked to leave them while they were satiated and laughing, and I found no other way (for making them laugh) than ha I did.’” [104](#)

5.14 Prevention of Extravagance in Public Property

262. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Rulers’ generosity in the public property of Muslims is [equal to] tyranny and treachery.” [105](#)

263. Imam Ali (a.s.) – addressing ‘Abd Allah b. Zam’a, one of his followers, who came to him during his caliphate to ask for some property: “This money is neither for me nor for you, but it is the collective property of the Muslims and the acquisition of their swords. If you had taken part with them in their fighting you would have a share equal to theirs, otherwise the earning of their hands cannot be for other than their mouths.” [106](#)

264. Da’a’im al-Islam: “He [Ali (a.s.)] was sitting and distributing some property among Muslims. An elderly man stopped near him and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! I am an aged man, as you see, and I am a contracted slave (mukatab) [107](#). Help me by means of this property.’ He said, ‘By Allah, this wealth is not the earning of my hands. Nor it is my father’s bequest to me; rather it is trusted to me to keep and return it to its proprietors; take a seat, though.’”

“The old man sat down and the people were gathered around him. He looked at them and said, ‘May Allah forgive the one who helps this indebted [due to his contract] old man!’”

“People began to help him out.” [108](#)

5.15 Not Preferring One’s Children and Kin

265. Al-Isti’ab: “Ali (a.s.) ...would not leave anything of the property in the treasury, except for the things that he was unable to distribute the same day and would say, ‘O World! Deceive other than me!’ He would not appropriate anything of the booties for himself, nor would he dedicate anything to his kith and kin.” [109](#)

266. Al-Ikhtisas – reporting on the virtues of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s.): “One day before his martyrdom, people came to his audience and all of them testified that he boosted the public assets and withheld himself from their world; he did not take bribes, nor used the Muslims’ treasury even as little as a camel’s tether; he did not make use of his own property except to his need. All of them testified that the most distant people to him were in a position to him like the nearest ones.” [110](#)

a) Hasan and Husayn

267. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by Dawud b. Abi Awfi, on the authority of a man from Khath’am tribe: “I saw Hasan and Husayn (a.s.) eating bread, vinegar and vegetable. Then I said, ‘You are eating such food, whereas there are various foods in Ruhba [111](#) [for you to eat]?’”

“They said, ‘You are unaware of Amir al-Mu’minin!’” [112](#)

268. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by Khalid b. Mu’ammār al-Sadusi addressing Ilbā’ b. al-Haytham: “What do you expect from a man who, when I wanted to add few dirhams to the share of Hasan and Husyan (a.s.) so that they could possibly make up for the shortages of their lives, rejected and got infuriated and refused to do so.” [113](#)

269. Fada’il al-Sahaba – quote from Abu Salih: “I went to visit Umm Kulthum, Ali (a.s.)’s daughter. She was sitting behind a curtain that was between her and me combing her hair. Hasan and Husyan (a.s.) arrived in and went to her while she was still sitting and combing her hair.”

“They said, ‘Don’t you give anything to Abu Salih to eat?’”

Abu Salih says, “They brought in a bowl containing some broth and grains. I asked, ‘You serve me with such food, whereas you are masters?!’”

“Um Kulthum said, ‘O Abu Salih! What would you say if you see Amir al-Mu’minin!’” [114](#)

270. Tarikh Damishq – related by ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Sufyan: “One of the chiefs of villages in the region of Sawad (Iraq) brought a cotton garment to me as a gift, and presented similar garments to Hasan and Husyan (a.s.). Then, when Ali (a.s.) proceeded to give the Friday Sermon in Mada’in, he saw Hasan and Husyan (a.s.) wearing the garments. He sent someone to me and Hasan and Husyan (a.s.) to ask [us] where the garments were from.”

‘Abd Allah b. Abi Sufyan said, “One of the chiefs of villages in the region of Sawad brought these garments [as gifts] to me and Hasan and Husyan (a.s.).”

He went on to say, “Ali (a.s.) took them and put them in the treasury.” [115](#)

271. Al-Imam al-Baqir (a.s.): “Ali (a.s.) distributed some clothes in Kufa among people. There was a silk hooded cloak among the clothes that Hasan (a.s.) demanded for himself, but Ali (a.s.) refused to give it to him and drew lots among the Muslims and a young man from Hamidan won the cloak. He wore it and left the place. They told him that Hasan (a.s.) had demanded it from his father but he refused to give it to him. Then, that man from Hamidan sent it to Hasan (a.s.) and he accepted it [116](#).” [117](#)

[b\) Umm Kulthum](#)

272. Al-Ikhtisas: “Some seafaring gifts were brought for Ali (a.s.) from Basra whose price was not known. His daughter, Umm Kulthum, said to him, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Will you give it to me to wear it round my neck as ornament?’

“The Imam said, ‘O Abu Rafi’! Put it in the treasury! This [granting] is impossible, except when there is no Muslim woman left without one like that.’” [118](#)

273. Al-Musannaf – related by Abu Rafi’, who was Ali (a.s.)’s treasurer: “I embellished Ali (a.s.)’s

daughter with a pearl from the treasury which Amir al-Mu'minin knew about. He saw it and asked, 'Where did she get it? It is [incumbent] upon me to cut off her hands for Allah's right.'"

Abu Rafi' says, "When I found about it, I said, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! I embellished my own niece [brother's daughter] with it, otherwise where could she have gotten it?'"

"When he heard this, he kept silent." [119](#)

274. Tahdhib al-Ahkam – related by 'Ali b. Abi Rafi': "I was Amir al-Mu'minin's treasurer and scribe. There was a necklace in his treasury which had been obtained in the battle of Basra."

"Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.)'s daughter sent a message to me that, 'I have heard that there is a necklace of pearl in Amir al-Mu'minin's treasury that is at your disposal. I would like you to lend it to me to wear it during 'Id al-adha (the festival of the day of immolation).'"

"I sent back the message, 'O Daughter of Amir al-Mu'minin! Is it guaranteed to be returned as a loan?'"

"She replied, 'It is a guaranteed loan to be returned in three days.'"

"So I handed it over to her."

"Amir al-Mu'minin found it with her, recognized it and asked, 'How did this necklace happen to be at your disposal?'"

"She said, 'I borrowed it from 'Ali b. Abi Rafi', Amir al-Mu'minin's treasurer, in order to wear it as ornament during 'Id al-adha and then return it to him.'"

"Amir al-Mu'minin sent for me and I went to him. He told me, 'O Son of Abu Rafi! Are you betraying the Muslims?!'"

"I said, 'I seek refuge in Allah from betraying the Muslims.'"

"He said, 'How did you lend Amir al-Mu'minin's daughter a necklace from the treasury of the Muslims without my permission and without their consent?'"

"I said, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! She is your daughter and she asked me to lend it to her to wear it as ornament. I lent it to her and as a loan it is guaranteed to be returned; and I guarantee it by my own property and it is upon me to return it safe and sound to its place.'"

"He said, 'Return it today! Take care that this should not be repeated or you will receive my punishment!'"

"Then he said, 'I swear that if my daughter had taken that necklace by other means than the way of a guaranteed loan to be returned, she would have been the first Hashimi woman that I would have had her

hand cut off for larceny.”

“The words reached her daughter and she told her father, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! I am your daughter and part of your flesh. Who is more deserving to wear it than me?”

“O Amir al-Mu’minin said to her, ‘O Daughter of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib! Do not depart from truthfulness. Do all the women of the muhajirun ornament themselves on this ‘Id with such a necklace?”

‘Ali b. Abi Rafi’ said, “I took the necklace from Ali (a.s.)’s daughter and returned it to its place.” [120](#)

c) ‘Aqil

275. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): “When Imam Ali (a.s.) took up government, he mounted the pulpit and after praising Allah, said, ‘By Allah, I would not take a dirham from your treasury as long as I have a palm tree in Madina. Be truthful and fair to yourselves! Do you suppose that I deprive myself and bestow on you?”

The narrator says, “[At this time] ‘Aqil stood up and said, ‘By Allah, you treat equally a black man in Madina and me?”

The Imam said, “Sit down! Was there no other person than you to speak? You have no precedence over that black man, except by precedence in religion or piety.” [121](#)

276. Imam Ali (a.s.): “

By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on prickly thorns or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Day of Resurrection as an oppressor over any person or a usurper of anything out of worldly wealth. And how can I oppress any one for the sake of a life that is fast moving towards destruction and is to remain under the earth for a long time. By Allah, I certainly saw [my brother] ‘Aqil fallen in destitution and he asked me a sa’ [122](#) out of your [share of] wheat, and I also saw his children with disheveled hair and a dusty countenance due to starvation, as though their faces had been blackened by indigo.

He came to me several times and repeated his request to me again and again. I heard him, and he thought I would sell my faith to him and follow his tread leaving my own way. Then I [just] heated a piece of iron and took it near his body so that he might take a lesson from it, then he cried as a person in protracted illness cries with pain and he was about to get burnt with its branding. Then I said to him, ‘Moaning women may moan over you, O ‘Aqil! Do you cry on account of this [heated] iron which has been made by a man for fun while you are driving me towards the fire which Almighty Allah has prepared for [a manifestation of] His wrath? Should you cry from pain, but I should not cry from the flames?” [123](#)

277. Al-Manaqib: “‘Aqil went to him [Ali (a.s.)] and asked Hasan, ‘Clothe your uncle!’ Hasan clothed him

with a garment and a robe of his own. When dinner was prepared, there was only bread and salt.”

“Aqil said, ‘Is not there anything else beside what I see?’”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Is it not Allah’s blessing? We are greatly thankful of Him.’”

“Aqil said, ‘Give me some money to discharge my debt, and be quick to fulfil my request so as I go away from you.’”

“He asked him, ‘O Abu Yazid! How much is your debt?’ And he said it was a hundred thousand dirhams”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘By Allah, there is no such an amount of money with me and I so not own this much; but wait until I receive my share [of the treasury] so that I help you out [with half of it]; and were it not for the needs of my household, I would grant it all to you.’”

“Aqil said, ‘The treasury is at your disposal and you put me off to [the time of receiving] your own share? Now, how much is your share? And if you give your entire share to me, how much would it be?’”

“He said, ‘You and me are [treated] like one of the Muslims in this property.’”

“They were talking together on top of dar al-hukuma (the seat of rule) overlooking the [safe] boxes of the marketeers. Ali (a.s.) told him, ‘O Abu Yazid! If you do not accept my words, go down, break the boxes, and take what is in there!’”

“Aqil said, ‘What is in these boxes?’”

“He replies, ‘The wealth of the traders.’”

“Aqil said, ‘Do you command me to break the boxes of the people who have trusted Allah and placed their wealth in there?’”

“Amir al-Mu’minin said, ‘Do you command me to break into the treasury of the Muslims and give their property to you, whereas they have trusted Allah and locked it? If you like, take your sword and I will take my sword too and go to Hayra [124](#), since there live wealthy merchants. We will ambush them and take their wealth!’”

“Aqil said, ‘Did come here for robbery?’

“He said, ‘If you one person, it is better to rob all the Muslims!’”

“Aqil said, ‘Do you permit me to go to Mu’awiya?’

“He said, ‘I permit you.’”

“Aqil said, ‘Help me with this journey.’”

“He said, ‘O Hasan! Pay your uncle four hundred dirhams.’”

“Aqil left the place while saying:

Soon he will make me rich, he who made me independent of you

And the Proximate Sustainer will discharge our debts.” [125](#)

d) ‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far

278. Al-Gharat – related by Habib b. Abi Thabit: “‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far, son of Abu Talib told Ali (a.s.), ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! I wish you ordered them to help me or to provide me with pension. By Allah, I have nothing except that I sell some of the animals that I keep in my house.’”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘No, I do not see anything [of a share] for you [in the treasury], except that you have your uncle steal something and give it to you!’” [126](#)

e) Imam’s Granddaughter

279. Ansab al-Ashraf – related by Muslim, the author of Al-Hana: “When Ali (a.s.) was through with the battle of Jamal, he came to Kufa and entered the treasury.... Then Hasan or Husayn (a.s.)’s daughter came in and took something from there. He [Ali (a.s.)] went after her, opened her fist and took it back from her.”

“We said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! There is a right for her in the treasury!’”

“He said, ‘When her father will have received his share, he may give her as much as he wishes.’” [127](#)

f) Imam’s Sister

280. Al-Ikhtisas: “Ali (a.s.)’s sister, Umm Hani, daughter of Abi Talib, came to visit him. He gave her twenty dirhams.”

“Umm Hani asked her non-Arab freed slave girl, ‘How much did Amir al-Mu’minin give you?’”

“She said, ‘Twenty dirhams.’”

“Umm Hani returned [to Ali (a.s.) angrily].”

“Ali (a.s.) told her, ‘Go back! May Allah have Mercy on you! We did not see any precedence of Isma’il (Ishmael) over Ishaq (Isaac) in the Book of Allah.’” [128](#)

g) Imam’s Maidservant

281. Al-Musannaf – related by Umm ‘Uthman, a maidservant mothering Ali (a.s.)’s son: “I went to visit

Ali (a.s.) and saw carnations before him scattered in the yard. I asked him to give me some of these flowers for our daughter.”

“He said, ‘Like this (gesturing with his hands meaning for a good price); because these belong to the Muslims; or wait until we receive our share so that I can give you a bunch for your daughter.” [129](#)

5.16 Piety and Prudence in Expending Public Treasury

282. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to his administrators: “Sharpen your pens, shorten the space between the lines, [in writing to me] be brief and terse in wording and attend to the meaning, and avoid excessive writing; for public treasury will not withstand extravagance.” [130](#)

283. Ihqaq al-Haq: “One night Ali (a.s.) entered the treasury and was writing down the distribution of the property when Talha and Zubayr arrived in. He turned off the light before him and ordered a light brought in from his house.”

“Talha and Zubayr asked the reason. He said, ‘The oil of the light belongs to the public treasury. It does not befit me to associate with you in its light.” [131](#)

284. Makarim al-Akhlaq – related by ‘Aqil b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Khawlani: “My aunt was the wife of ‘Aqil, son of Abu Talib. She went to visit Ali (a.s.) in Kufa and he was sitting on a worn out donkey packsaddle. She said, ‘At this time Ali (a.s.)’s wife from Bani Tamim tribe arrived. I told her: Woe onto you! Your house is full of goods and the Commander of the Faithful is sitting on a torn packsaddle?”

“The woman said, ‘Do not reproach me. By Allah, whatever he sees that is unfamiliar to him, he places it in the treasury.’” [132](#)

285. Fada’l al-Sahaba – related by A’mash: “Ali (a.s.) gave breakfast and dinner [to others], and he himself ate from what was brought to him from Madina.” [133](#)

286. Al-Gharat – related by Bakr b. Isa: “Imam Ali (a.s.) would say, ‘O Kuffis! If I will have left you with other [belongings] than my mount, my travelling apparatus, and my servant, then I will be treacherous!’”

“His livelihood was brought to him from his products from the region of Yanbu’ in Madina.” [134](#)

287. Al-Jamal – related by Abi Mikhnaf Lut b. Yahya on the authority of his masters: “When Amir al-Mu’minin decided to set out for Kufa, he stood up among the Basrans and said, ‘O People of Basra! By what do you want to find fault with me?’ He pointed to his clothes and said, ‘By Allah, these [two pieces of clothes] are made [out] of my wife’s spinning. By what do you want to find fault with me, O People of Basra?’ and pointed to a bag in his hand which contained his disbursement and then said, ‘By Allah, this is from my crops in Madina. So if I leave you and more than what you see is with me, then I will be among the traitors in the sight of Allah.’” [135](#)

288. Tarikh Damishq – related by ‘Antara: “I went to visit Ali (a.s.) in the region of Khuwarnaq¹³⁶ and he was wearing an old ragged garment...I said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Allah has allotted a share for you and your family in this property, and you are treating yourself like this?’ He said, ‘By Allah, I would not take anything from yours, and this is but the garment that I took with me from home (or he said, ‘from Madina’).¹³⁷

289. Al-Gharat – related by Zadan: “Together with Qanbar, I went to Ali (a.s.). Then Qanbar said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Rise up that I have hidden something valuable for you.’

“He asked, ‘What is it?’”

“Qanbar said, ‘Come with me.’”

“Ali (a.s.) stood up and left for his home. There he saw bags full of gold and silver cups. Qanbar said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! You do not leave anything [any property] except that you divide it. Therefore, I saved these for you.’”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Did you want to bring lots of fire into my house?!’ Then he unsheathed his sword, and struck down on the cups and cleaved each into two or three parts. Then he said, ‘Divide them into portions!’ And they did so.”

“Then he uttered the following poem:

This is my harvest, and the best of it;

Yet, every harvester has his hand in his own mouth (and eats it himself).

O White (silver) deceive someone else! O Yellow (gold) deceive someone else!”¹³⁸

290. Al-Ikhtisas – in an account on Imam Ali (a.s.)’s food: “He heard the sizzling of meat being roasted in his house. Then, he rose to his feet and said, ‘Inflicting chastisement on Ali b. Abi Talib by roasting karaker¹³⁹?!’

The narrator goes on to say, “His family got distressed and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! A camel has been slaughtered in your wife’s tribe and her family has brought her a share as a gift.’ He said, ‘Have it! [May it be] Pleasant and pure!’”¹⁴⁰

291. Tarikh Damishq – related by ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakrah: “Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) did not take anything from our treasury (of Basra) until he parted from us, except for a cheap fur garment or a black tunic from the region of Darabgard [in Shiraz].¹⁴¹

292. Al-Gharat – related by Abu Raja’: “Ali (a.s.) brought a sword to the market and said, ‘Who will buy this from me? If I had enough for [buying] a garment, I would not sell this.’”

“I said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! I sell you a garment on credit until you receive your share [of the public treasury].”

“So, I sold him the garment [on credit] until the time of distribution of treasury. When he received his share, he paid me for it.” [142](#)

- [1.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/86/8. Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 209.
- [2.](#) Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/14/2.
- [3.](#) Al-Sara’ir: 2/228, Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/15/9, ‘Awali al-Ali: 3/194/6.
- [4.](#) Musnad of Zayd: 255.
- [5.](#) Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 390, Bihar al-Anwar: 78/304/1.
- [6.](#) Al-Amali, Mufid: 3/119, Bihar al-Anwar: 77/422/41.
- [7.](#) Kanz al-’Ummal: 16/177/44215.
- [8.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 390, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 203, Al-Tusi, Al-Amali: 147.
- [9.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 15/147.
- [10.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 126.
- [11.](#) Tariikh al-Ya’qubi: 2/203.
- [12.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 6562, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 357/6044.
- [13.](#) Qarib al-Asnad: 115/404, Bihar al-Anwar: 103/65/10.
- [14.](#) Al-Qur’an, 11: 61.
- [15.](#) Wasa’il al-Shi’a: 13/195/10, Bihar al-Anwar: 93/46 & 47.
- [16.](#) Qurb al-Asnad: 138/489, Bihar al-Anwar: 100/33/10.
- [17.](#) Al-Mawa’iz al-’Adadiya: 55.
- [18.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/113/1, Man la Yahdarahu al-Faqih: 3/158/3580, Al-Khisal: 621/10.
- [19.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/267/103.
- [20.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/311/32. Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/382/1127.
- [21.](#) Tafsir al-Ayyashi: 1/150/494, Bihar al-Anwar: 103/53/15.
- [22.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/149/9, Man la Yahdarahu al-Faqih: 3/193/3753, Al-Khisal: 621/10.
- [23.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/319/59, Man la Yahdarahu al-Faqih: 3/192/3722, ‘Uddat al-Da’i: 72.
- [24.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 53.
- [25.](#) Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 140.
- [26.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/151/3, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 7/6/17, Al-Amali, Mufid: 197/31.
- [27.](#) Al-Ja’fariyat: 238, Da’a’m al-Islam: 2/538/1913.
- [28.](#) Fada’il al-Sahaba: 1/547/919, Dhakha’ir al-’Uqba: 192.
- [29.](#) Da’a’m al-Islam: 2/538/1913.
- [30.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/409, Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadiith wa al-Athar: 5/260/4, Al-Gharat: 1/110.
- [31.](#) Rabi’ al-Abrar: 4/154.
- [32.](#) Al-Qur’an: 28: 83.
- [33.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/489, Al-Bidaya wa al-Nahaya: 8/5, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/104.
- [34.](#) Makarim al-Akhlaq: 1/247/732.
- [35.](#) Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra: 3/28, Tarikh Damishq: 42/484, Tarikh al-Islam.
- [36.](#) Makarim al-Akhlaq: 1/249/740.
- [37.](#) Fa’a’il al-Sahaba: 2/621/1062, Rabi’ al-Abrar: 4/153.
- [38.](#) Makarim al-Akhlaq: 1/224/659. Also cf., Al-Gharat: 1/105, Manaqib al-Imam Amir al-Mu’minin: 2/602/1103.
- [39.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/156, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/442.
- [40.](#) Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/36/80.
- [41.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 140.
- [42.](#) Waq’atu Siffin: 108, Al-Mi’yar al-Muwazina: 122, also cf., Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 51.

- [43.](#) Al-Kafi: 3/540/8, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 4/98/275, Man La Yahziru'l faqih: 2/4/1605.
- [44.](#) One of Baghdad environs.
- [45.](#) Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 9/345/18736, Usd al-Ghaba: 4/98/3789, Kanz al-'Ummal: 4/501/11488.
- [46.](#) A food made of wheat and barley flour.
- [47.](#) Obviously, he means that if this food is added to, friends and relatives might have added a better food to it; so, he buys to his need and seals the container.
- [48.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/487, Hilyatu'l Awliya: 1/82. Also cf., Al-Mi'yar al-Muwazina: 248.
- [49.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 26, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/528/719. Also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/252.
- [50.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 25, Al-Kafi: 3/536/1, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 4/96/274.
- [51.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53. Also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/362.
- [52.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137.
- [53.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/371. Tarikh Damishq: 42/476.
- [54.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/69. Also cf., Manaqib al-Imam Amir al-Mu'minin: 2/32/517.
- [55.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/49, Tarikh al-Khulafa: 213. Also cf., Hilyatu'l Awliya: 7/300.
- [56.](#) Fada'il al-Sahaba: 1/533/886, Tarikh al-Islam: 3/643.
- [57.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/477, Al-Amwal: 284/673, Kanz al-'Ummal: 4/584/11703.
- [58.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/421.
- [59.](#) Al-Tusi, Al-Amali: 404/904, Tanbih al-Khawatir: 2/173, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/95.
- [60.](#) Ibn Athir said, "This is a parable first uttered by 'Amr, Jadhima's nephew. He and his friends were picking mushrooms; whenever his friends found a good mushroom, they would put it in their mouth but he would place it in his sleeve to take it to his [maternal] uncle. Ali (a.s.) has implied by this parable that he does not ruin the Muslims' property; rather, he puts it in its rightful place." Al-Nihaya: 1/309.
- [61.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/47, Bihar al-Anwar: 100/60/9.
- [62.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 2/199, Al-Qarat: 1/60, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/136.
- [63.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 2/198, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/135.
- [64.](#) Al-Amwal: 285/675, Hilyatu'l Awliya: 1/81, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 19/126.
- [65.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/476, Musnad of Ibn Ja'd: 315/2145.
- [66.](#) Al-Da'awat: 60/150, Bihar al-Anwar: 94/93/9.
- [67.](#) Al-Ikhtisas: 152, Bihar al-Anwar: 40/107/117.
- [68.](#) Al-Tusi, Al-Amali: 686/1457, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/111
- [69.](#) Al-Kafi: 4/31/3, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 185, Nathr al-Durr: 1/318. Also cf., Al-Amali: 175/6.
- [70.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 184, Al-Mi'yar al-Muwazina: 112, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 7/40.
- [71.](#) A region in Fars (province in southern Persia) which Ardashir Babakan developed and includes Shiraz and Kazirun.
- [72.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 43, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/516/712.
- [73.](#) Irshad al-Qulub: 321, Al-Daraja al-Rafi'a: 289, Bihar al-Anwar: 28/88/3.
- [74.](#) A Babylonian dry measure of six ass-loads.
- [75.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/70, Al-Ikhtisas: 151, Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 6/567/12990.
- [76.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/376.
- [77.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/374.
- [78.](#) Ibid.
- [79.](#) Fada'il al-Sahaba: 1/547/920, Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba: 191, Al-Riya' al-Na'ira: 3/221.
- [80.](#) Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/111, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/117/24.
- [81.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/476, Fada'il al-Sahaba: 1/545/913.
- [82.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/52, Bihar al-Anwar: 100/60/10.
- [83.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/362.
- [84.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/380. Also cf., Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 1/250.
- [85.](#) Al-Jamal: 400.
- [86.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/44.

- [87.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 180, Al-Gharat: 1/291, Tarikh Tabari: 5/107, Al-Bidayata wa al-Nihaya: 7/316.
 - [88.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 70, Khassa's al-A'imma: 113, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/521/714.
 - [89.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 328, Rawḥa al-Wa'izin: 497, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 152/3343.
 - [90.](#) Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 7/37/13206, Kanz al-'Ummal: 6/528/16840.
 - [91.](#) Fada'il al-Sahaba: 1/531/883, Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar: 8/157/15.
 - [92.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/293/811.
 - [93.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 67, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/497/702.
 - [94.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53. Also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/366.
 - [95.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 141.
 - [96.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 132. Also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/357.
 - [97.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 26.
 - [98.](#) Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/252, Bihar al-Anwar: 96/85/7.
 - [99.](#) An ancient city in Persia, which Arabs conquered in 660 CE, the Seljuqs set on fire in 1046 CE and was destroyed by earthquake in 1149 CE.
 - [100.](#) Al-Kafi: 1/406/5, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/123/30.
 - [101.](#) Rabi' al-Abrar: 2/148, Al-Mi'yar wa'l Muwazina: 251, Manaqib Al al-Amir al-Mu'minin: 2/75.
 - [102.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/373.
 - [103.](#) Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/115, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/52. Also cf., Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin: IX, 400 (The Leader of the Oppressed).
 - [104.](#) Kashf al-Yaqin: 136/129.
 - [105.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4725.
 - [106.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 232, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/110, Ghurar al-Hikam: 3702.
 - [107.](#) A mukatab slave is one who has contracted with his master that if he pays his price he will be freed.
 - [108.](#) Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/310/1171, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/110.
 - [109.](#) Al-Isti'ab: 3/210/1875.
 - [110.](#) Al-Ikhtisas: 160.
 - [111.](#) Ruhba has several meanings. It is the name of a village near Qadisiya; it also means public square as well as the courtyard to mosque. Here it seems to mean the city public square.
 - [112.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 2/375, Al-Wara': 90/129, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/108.
 - [113.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 10/250.
 - [114.](#) Fada'il al-Sahaba: 1/540/901, Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar: 8/156/7.
 - [115.](#) Tarikh Damishq: "Tarjumat al-Imam Ali (a.s.)" researched by Muhammad Baqir al-Mahmudi" (3/182/1223).
 - [116.](#) Qurb al-Asnad: 148/537, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/104/4.
 - [117.](#) Imam Ali, Hasan and Husyan (a.s.) are infallible and never commit mistakes and flaws, nor do they defy each other in action or impugn one another. Thus, if we encountered a hadith that contradicted their infallibility and could not be rationally explained, it would be put aside. The present hadith seems to require some deliberation, especially that the name Abu al-Bukhtari is mentioned in the chain of transmission who is regarded a weak transmitter, and the hadiths related by him alone are rejected.
- Regarding such hadiths, however, it can generally be explained that the demand for extra share has not been the issue; rather, they intended to display the paradigm of an Islamic Rule, and that in such rule nobody is given precedence in consuming the public treasury over others, even for Imam Hasan (a.s.).
- [118.](#) Al-Ikhtisas: 151, Bihar al-Anwar: 40/106.
 - [119.](#) Al-Musannaf fi al-Ahadith wa'l Athar: 7/622/6, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/156.
 - [120.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 10/150/606. Tanbih al-Khawatir: 2/3. Also cf., Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/108.
 - [121.](#) Al-Kafi: 8/182/204, Tanbih al-Khawatir: 2/151, Al-Ikhtisas: 151.
 - [122.](#) A sa' is about three kilograms in weight.
 - [123.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 224. Also cf., Al-Saduq, Al-Amali: 719/988.
 - [124.](#) An ancient city near Kufa in which Al al-Nu'man Mundhar's house was located; and had many rivers and a better

climate than Kufa.

[125.](#) Manaqib Al al–Abi Talib: 2/108, Bihar al–Anwar: 41/113/23.

[126.](#) Al–Gharat: 1/66, Sharh Nahj al–Balagha: 2/200.

[127.](#) Ansab al–Ashraf: 2/370.

[128.](#) Al–Ikhtisas: 151.

[129.](#) Al–Musannif fi al–Ahadith wa’l Athar: 8/157/18 and 7/622/2, Manaqib Al al–Abi Talib: 2/109.

[130.](#) Al–Khisal: 310/85, Bahar al–Anwar: 41/105/6.

[131.](#) Ihqaq al–Haq: 8/539, Al–Manaqib al–Murtadawiya: 289.

[132.](#) Makarim al–Akhlāq: 1/286/894, Manaqib Al al–Abi Talib: 2/97.

[133.](#) Fada’il al–Sahaba: 1/536/892, Hilyat al–Awliya: 1/82, Al–Riya’ al–Na’ira: 3/221.

[134.](#) Al–Gharat: 1/68, Sharh Nahj al–Balagha: 2/200. Also cf., Manaqib Al al–Abi Talib: 2/98.

[135.](#) Al–Jamal: 422, Manaqib Al al–Abi Talib: 2/98.

[136.](#) A place around Kufa.

[137.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/477 and 481, Al–Amwal: 284/671, Hilyat al–Awliya: 1/82.

[138.](#) Al–Gharat: 1/55, Manaqib al–Imam Amir al–Mu’minin: 2/33/519. Also cf., Manaqib Al al–Abi Talib: 2/108.

[139.](#) This statement means that if the meat being roasted in Ali’s house is procured by unlawful means, he will be chastised for it. Karaker here means tasty meat, as it is from the breast part of camel’s meat, which is its most delicious part. AL–Nahaya: 4/166.

[140.](#) Al–Ikhtisas: 152.

[141.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/476, Al–Amwal: 283/670.

[142.](#) Al–Gharat: 1/63, Hilyat al–Awliya: 1/83, Sharh Nahj al–Balagha: 2/200.

Chapter Six: Social Policies

[6.1 Establishing Justice](#)

293. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Ibn ‘Abbas: “Your envoy came to me. You have reported what you have seen or heard concerning the people of Basra after my return. I inform you about those people: They are [in two groups] a group desiring something and aspiring to obtain it, and another who are afraid of a punishment. So, make the eager ones hopeful by doing justice to them, and being fair and doing good to them.”^{[1](#)}

294. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al–Ashtar: “Let the dearest of your affairs be those which are middlemost in rightfulness, most inclusive in justice and most comprehensive in (establishing) the content of the subjects... Verily the foremost delight of the eye for rulers is the establishment of justice in the land and the appearance of love for them among the subjects.”^{[2](#)}

295. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Aswad b. Qutaba, the commander of Hulwan Troops: “Now, if the actions of a governor follow the passions he will be greatly hampered in justice. So, all the people should be equal in right before you, because injustice cannot be a substitute for justice. Avoid that thing the like of which you would not like for yourself.”^{[3](#)}

296. Imam Ali (a.s.): “This is the commandment of ‘abd Allah, Ali Amir al-Mu’minin, to Muhammad b. Abi Bakr when appointed him as the governor of Egypt. He ordered him to be wary of Allah secretly and openly; to fear Allah in privacy and in public; to be humble to the Muslims; to be hard on the evil-doers; to do justice to those under protective covenant (dhimmis); to be fair to the oppressed and severe to the oppressors; to pardon people and to be charitable to them as much as possible; Allah will reward the charitable and punish the sinful.”[4](#)

297. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his commandment to Muhammad b. Abi Bakr when appointed him as the governor of Egypt: “Behave humbly with the people, keep yourself lenient, meet them large-heartedly, accord them equal treatment so that the big should not expect injustice from you in their favor and the low should not be despondent of your justice to them. Allah, the Sublime will certainly question you, O’ community of his creatures, about your actions, small or big, open or concealed. If He punishes you it is because you have been oppressive, and if He forgives, then it is because He is the Most Generous.”[5](#)

298. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his words when he was spoken ill of for showing equality in the distribution (of shares from public treasury): “Do you command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed? By Allah, I won’t do so as long as the world goes on, and as long as one star leads another in the sky! Even if it were my property, I would have distributed it equally among them, then why not when the property is that of Allah.”[6](#)

299. Imam Ali (a.s.): “By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on prickly thorns or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Day of Judgment as an oppressor over any person or a usurper of anything out of worldly wealth. And how can I oppress any one for the sake of a life that is fast moving towards destruction and is to remain under the earth for a long time.”[7](#)

300. Imam Ali (a.s.): “By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (spheres) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant I would not do it. For me your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last?”[8](#)

301. Imam Ali (a.s.): “On the Day of Resurrection I will argue with people in nine things: performing prayers (salat), paying alms tax (zakat), bidding what is good and forbidding what is wrong, doing justice among people, equal distribution, fighting in the way of Allah, implementing punishments, and the like.”[9](#)

302. Tarikh Damishq – related by Ali b. Rabi’a: “Ja’da b. Hubayra came to Ali (a.s.) and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! If two men come to, and you are more likeable to one of them than his own soul or his household or his property, and the other one would kill you if he could, then would you judge in favor of the first man and against the second one?!’”

“He struck me on the chest and said, ‘Certainly, if it were up to me, I would do so; but this is an affair pertaining to Allah.’”[10](#)

303. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh – in a report about ‘Ubayd Allah b. al-Hurr al-Ju’fi¹¹: “When ‘Uthman was killed and the war broke out between Ali (a.s.) and Mu’awiya, he [‘Ubayd Allah] went toward Mu’awiya and remained with him because of his love for ‘Uthman. He and Malik b. Masma’ accompanied Mu’awiya in the battle of Siffin.”

“‘Ubayd Allah stayed with Mu’awiya and his wife was in Kufa. Since his separation lasted long, his brother-in-law married her off to one ‘Ikrima b. Khubays. When ‘Ubayd Allah was informed about this, he left for Kufa and went to Ali (a.s.) to make a complaint against ‘Ikrima.”

“Ali (a.s.) told him, ‘You helped out the enemy and now you got yourself in such a misery?’”

“‘Ubayd Allah said, ‘Will this deprive me of your justice?’”

“The Imam said, ‘No.’”

“The he told his story to Ali (a.s.) and he returned his wife to him. She was pregnant. [Thus] He left her with someone in whom he trusted until she gave birth to her child, he handed the child to ‘Ikrima and returned the woman to ‘Ubayd Allah.”

“‘Ubayd Allah went back to Sham where he stayed until Ali (a.s.) was killed.”¹²

304. Tarikh al-Ya’qubi – related by al-Zahri: “One day, I went to see ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Aziz. While I was with him, he received a letter from one of his administrators stating that their city needed reconstruction.”

[Zahri goes on to say] “I told Umar, ‘One of Ali b. abi Talib (a.s.)’s administrators had sent him similar letter and he had replied to him as follows: Now then, place the city in the citadel of justice and clean the tyranny off its pathway!’”

“‘Umar wrote the same reply to his administrator.”¹³ See 1/4 (The Imam’s Motives for Accepting the Rulership).

6.2 Commitment to Rights

305. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in Siffin: “So now, Allah, the Glorified, has, by placing me over your affairs, created my right over you, and you too have a right over me like mine over you. A right is very vast in description but very narrow in equitableness of action.”

“Right does not accrue to any person unless it accrues against him also, and it does not accrue against a person unless it also accrues in his favor. If there is any right which is only in favor of a person with no (corresponding) right accruing against him it is solely for Allah, the Glorified, and not for His creatures by virtue of His might over His creatures and by virtue of the justice permeating all His decrees. Of course, He the Glorified, has created His right over creatures that they should worship Him, and has laid upon Himself (the obligation of) their reward equal to several times the recompense as a mark of His bounty

and the generosity that He is capable of.”

“Then, from His rights, He, the Glorified, created certain rights for certain people against others. He made them so as to equate with one another. Some of these rights produce other rights. Some rights are such that they do not accrue except with others. The greatest of these rights that Allah, the Glorified, has made obligatory is the right of the ruler over the ruled and the right of the ruled over the ruler. This is an obligation which Allah, the Glorified, has placed on each one against the other. He has made it the basis of their (mutual) affection, and an honor for their religion. Consequently, the ruled cannot prosper unless the rulers are sound, while the rulers cannot be sound unless the ruled are steadfast.”

“If the ruled fulfil the rights of the ruler and the ruler fulfils their rights, then right attains the position of honor among them, the ways of religion become established, signs of justice become fixed and the sunna gains currency. In this way time will improve, the continuance of government will be expected, and the aims of the enemies will be frustrated.”

“But if the ruled gain sway over the ruler, or the ruler oppresses the ruled, then difference crops up in every word, signs of oppression appear, mischief enters religion and the ways of the sunna are forsaken. Then desires are acted upon, the commands (of religion) are discarded, diseases of the spirit become numerous and there is neither hesitation in disregarding even great rights, nor in committing big wrongs.”

“In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honored, and there are serious chastisements from Allah, the Glorified, onto the people.”

“You should therefore counsel each other (for the fulfillment of your obligations) and co-operate with each other. However extremely eager a person may be to secure the pleasure of Allah, and however fully he strives for it, he cannot discharge (his obligation for) obedience to Allah, the Glorified, as is really due to Him.”

“It is an obligatory right of Allah over the people that they should advise each other to the best of their ability and co-operate with each other for the establishment of truth among them. No person, however great his position in the matter of truth, and however advanced his distinction in religion may be, is above cooperation in connection with the obligations placed on him by Allah. Again, no man, however small he may be regarded by others, and however humble he may appear before eyes, is too low to cooperate or to be afforded cooperation in this matter.”¹⁴

306. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Allah, the Glorified, has created the rights of His servant as vanguard to His own rights. Therefore, whoever fulfils the rights of the servants of Allah it will prompt him to fulfil the rights of Allah.”¹⁵

6.3 Developing Constructive Freedoms

307. Imam Ali (a.s.): “O People, verily Adam (a.s.) did not beget slave men and women; all people are free.”[16](#)

308. Imam Ali (a.s.): “And now, verily Allah, the Blessed and the Exalted, raised up Muhammad (S) so as to turn His servants out from the servitude of the slaves toward servitude of Himself, from the covenant of the slaves toward covenant of Himself, from obedience to the slaves toward obedience to Himself, and from the guardianship of the slaves toward guardianship of Himself.”[17](#)

309. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not be the slave of others, for Allah has made you free.”[18](#)

310. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who fulfils the requirements of servitude [to Allah], deserves freedom, and the one who neglects the rules of freedom, returns to slavery.”[19](#)

311. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Beware of what infuriates your Lord and frightens people away from you! The one who infuriates his Lord will be exposed to death, and the one who frightens people away has disclaimed freedom.”[20](#)

312. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The beauty of a free [unattached] person is in keeping away from infamy”.[21](#)

313. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A free person remains free even though distress befalls them. A slave remains a slave even though destiny assists them.”[22](#)

314. Imam Ali (a.s.): “O Kufis!

I have experienced in you three things and two others: you are deaf in spite of having ears, dumb in spite of speaking, and blind in spite of having eyes. You are neither true supporters in combat (encounter) nor dependable brothers in distress.”[23](#)

315. Imam Ali (a.s.) – after hearing about the arbitration: “Woe on you! I had to bear a lot of worries from you. Some day I call you (to jihad) and some day I whisper to you in confidence, you are neither true free men at the time of call, nor trustworthy brothers at the time of speaking in confidence.”[24](#)

316. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to him: “Whatever befalls a free man, he will bear it and see it as per his high magnanimity, unless when a [small] fraction of his freedom is degraded; that is when he refuses and does not respond to it.”[25](#)

6.4 Endeavor in Pleasing People

317. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Let the dearest of your affairs be those which are middlemost in rightfulness, most inclusive in justice and most comprehensive in (establishing) the content of the subject. For the discontent of the common people invalidates the content of favorites,

and the discontent of favorites is pardoned at (the achievement of) the content of the masses. Whereas the support of religion, the solidarity of Muslims and preparedness in the face of the enemy lie only with the common people of community, so let your inclination and affection be toward them. Verily the foremost delight of the eye for rulers is the establishment of justice in the land and the appearance of love for them among the subjects. But surely the subjects' love will not appear without the well-being of their breasts."[26](#)

318. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Thus, you should behave in your rule like him who desires to secure the praise of the subjects, the reward of Allah, and the satisfaction of the Imam. There is no strength save in Allah.”[27](#)

6.5 Kindness and Amiability to People

319. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Infuse your heart with mercy, love and kindness for your subjects. Be not in face of them a voracious animal, counting them as easy prey, for they are your brothers in religion or your equals in creation. Error catches them unaware, deficiencies overcome them, and evil deeds are committed by them intentionally and by mistake. So grant them your pardon and your forgiveness to the same extent that you hope Allah will grant you His pardon and His forgiveness.

For you are above them, and he who appointed you is above you, and Allah is above him who appointed you. Allah has sought from you the fulfillment of their requirements and He is trying you with them. Set yourself not up to war against Allah, for you have no power against His vengeance, nor are able to dispense with His pardon and His mercy.

Know that there is nothing more conducive to the ruler's trusting his subjects than his being kind towards them, lightening their burdens and abandoning coercing them in that in which they possess not the ability. So in this respect you should attain a situation in which you can confidently trust your subjects, for trusting (them) will sever from you lasting strain. And surely he who most deserves your trust is he who has done well when you have tested him, and he who most deserves your mistrust is he who has done badly when you have tested him.”[28](#)

[In Tuhaf al-‘Uqul the following is added to the above:] If you realize this state for and against you, you will be more cognizant in doing good and having good impression with people in addition to what Allah will reward you on the Judgment Day.”[29](#)

320. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Ibn. ‘Abbas when he was his governor in Basra: “You should know that Basra is the place where Satan descends and mischief happens. Therefore, Keep the people of this place pleased with good treatment and remove the knots of fear from their hearts.”[30](#)

6.6 Direct Contact with People

321. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Set aside for those who have requests from you a portion (of your time) in which you yourself are free (to attend) to them. Hold an open audience for them and therein be humble before Allah who created you. Keep the soldiers and aids that are your bodyguards and police away from them so that their spokesman may address you without stammering (in fear). For I heard the Messenger of Allah (S) say not (only) on one occasion: ‘No community shall be sanctified within which the rightful due of the weak may not be taken from the strong without stammering (by the weak)’...”

“Then there are certain of your affairs which you must take in hand personally. Among them is giving an ear to your administrators when your secretaries have been unable to find the correct solution.... Prolong not your seclusion from your subjects, for rulers’ seclusion from subjects is a kind of constraint and (results in) a lack of knowledge of affairs. Seclusion from them cuts rulers off from the knowledge of that which they have been secluded. Then the great appears to them as small and the small as great. The beautiful appears as ugly and the ugly as beautiful.”[31](#)

322. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Qutham b. ‘Abbas, his governor in Mecca: “There should be no intermediary between you and the people except your tongue and no guard save your own face. Do not prevent any needy person from meeting you, because if the needy is returned unsatisfied from your door in the first instance then even doing it thereafter will not bring you praise.”[32](#)

323. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to the tax collectors: “Do not employ doorkeepers for yourself or bar anyone from [making] they requests so as they may hand it over to you.”[33](#)

324. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to the commanders of troops: “From the servant of Allah, Ali (a.s.) b. Abi Talib, Amir al-Mu’minin to the commanders in charge of garrisons: Now, it is obligatory on an officer that the distinction he achieves or the wealth with which he has been exclusively endowed should not make him change his behavior towards his subjects, and that the riches Allah has bestowed on him should increase him in nearness to his people and kindness over his brethren.”[34](#)

325. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Qayth b. Sa’d: “Cut down your distance with people, leave your door open, and apply yourself to the Truth.”[35](#)

326. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There are three traits that if any of the leaders possesses, he deserves to be [regarded as] trustworthy in his leadership: to be just in his judgments; not to hide himself from his subjects; and to execute Allah’s ordinances [equally] on both the acquaintances and the strangers.”[36](#)

6.7 Tolerating Difficulties Caused by People

327. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The person who does not withstand the cost of people’s provision, then he has

prepared power to be transferred [to someone else].”[37](#)

328. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Tolerance adorns statesmanship.”[38](#)

329. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in aphorisms attributed to him: “The one who manages his soul in tolerating the ignorance of people deserves to become a ruler.”[39](#)

330. Imam Ali (a.s.): “When you take over as a ruler, be lenient.”[40](#)

331. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The foundation of a rule is to make use of leniency.”[41](#)

332. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The foremost of a rule is tolerance.”[42](#)

333. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who acts leniently is successful.”[43](#)

334. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who is not lenient to his subordinate does not achieve his desires.”[44](#)

335. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in what he wrote to Hudhayfa b. Yaman: “I command you to be tolerant in your affairs and lenient and just to your subjects.”[45](#)

336. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in a letter he wrote to the people of Mada’in: “I assigned your affairs to Hudhayfa .b Yaman whose approach I favor and whose righteousness I am hopeful of. I have commanded him to do good to your benevolent ones and to be strict on your evil doers and to be lenient to your beautifully-minded. I ask Allah for well-being and benevolence and His All-embracing Mercy for you and for myself in this world and the world to come.”[46](#)

337. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is incumbent upon you to be lenient, for it is the key to righteousness and the character of those who possess intellect.”[47](#)

338. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Tolerance and leniency ease off hardships and facilitate difficult means.”[48](#)

339. Imam Ali (a.s.): “For the one who exercises leniency, difficulties will become easy.”[49](#)

6.8 Avoiding Anger

340. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his instructions to Ibn ‘Abbas when appointed him as his in Basra: “Meet people with a broad face, allow them free audience and pass generous orders. Avoid anger because it is an augury of Satan.”[50](#)

6.9 Avoidance of Fault-finding

341. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Certainly, people possess faults. So, do not disclose what is concealed from you; for Allah, the Glorified would judge about it. Veil imperfection to the extent you are able, so that Allah veils what you would like it to be veiled.”[51](#)

342. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Let the farthest of your subjects from you and the most hateful to you be he who most seeks out the faults of men. For people possess faults, which the ruler more than anyone else should conceal. So, do not uncover those of them, which are hidden from you, for it is only incumbent upon you to remedy what appears before you. Allah will judge what is hidden from you. So, veil imperfection to the extent you are able; Allah will veil that of yourself which you would like to have veiled from your subjects.”[52](#)

343. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in the aphorisms attributed to him: “The mischievous would seek out vices of people and overlook their merits, like the flies that seek out putrid places.”[53](#)

344. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Whenever you ask a debauched woman who committed debauchery with her, and she answered ‘so-and-so’, then two punishments must be inflicted on her: a punishment for her debauchery and another one for imputing a Muslim man.”[54](#)

345. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Seeking out imperfection is the worst of vices.”[55](#)

6.10 Uncovering Excuses to Remove Suspicions

346. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “If any of your subjects should suspect you of an injustice, explain to them your justification. By your explanation turn their suspicions away from yourself. Thereby, you train your soul, act kindly to your subjects and justify (yourself) in a manner to attain your need, i.e., setting them in the way of the truth.”[56](#)

6.11 Helping out the Oppressed

347. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who does not take revenge of the oppressor on behalf of the oppressed, Allah will take his strength from him.”[57](#)

348. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the learned to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders, and would have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view this world of yours is no better than the sneezing of a goat.”[58](#)

349. Imam Ali (a.s.): “O' people! Support me in your own affairs. By Allah, I will take revenge of the oppressor on behalf of the oppressed and will put a string in the nose of the oppressor and drag him to the spring of truthfulness even though he may grudge it.”[59](#)

350. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The low is in my view worthy of honor till I secure (his) right for him, while the strong is in my view weak till I take (other's) right from him.”[60](#)

351. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then, look into the matter of the judgments among people in good intention. The true judgment is to take back the rights of the oppressed from the oppressors, to support the weak against the strong, and to institute Allah’s doctrinal provisions according to their proper ways and courses. This will set aright Allah’s servants and lands.”[61](#)

352. Al-Imam al-Baqir: “Ali (a.s.) was returning home in the heat [of the day] when he saw a woman standing there who said, ‘My husband has wronged me and harassed me, and scared me and threatened to beat me.’”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘O Servant of Allah! Let the weather cool off, then I will go with you if God wills.’”

“The woman said, ‘His anger will boil over towards me.’”

“He lowered his head, then raised it and said, ‘No, By Allah, until the right of the oppressed is secured without stammering. Where is your house?’”

“He went to the man’s house, stopped at the door and called, ‘assalamu alykum!’

“A young man came out. Ali (a.s.) said, ‘O Servant of Allah! Be wary of Allah! You have scared your wife away.’”

“The young man said, ‘What do you have to do with her? By Allah, I will burn her because of your words!’”

“Then Amir al-Mu’minin said, ‘I am bidding you to do good and refraining you from doing wrong, then you respond to me with wrong and ignore good?’”

The narrator [al-Imam al-Baqir (a.s.)] said, “People were gathering around and saying, ‘Greetings to you O Amir al-Mu’minin!’”

“Repentant and confused, the man said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Forgive my fault. By Allah, [from now on] I will be like the ground for her to step on’”

“Ali (a.s.) sheathed his sword and said, ‘O Servant of Allah! Enter your house and do not force your wife into such troubles.’”[62](#)

353. Al-Ikhtisas: Sa’d b. Qays Hamadani saw Ali (a.s.) near a wall on a hot day. Then, he asked him, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! [What are you doing here] At this hour?”

He said, “I did not come out except for helping an oppressed person or assisting a petitioner.”

At this time a woman came toward him who was disheartened and bewildered. She stopped before him and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! My husband has wronged me, harassed me, and threatened to beat me. Come along with me to go to him.”

He lowered his head, then raised it and said, ‘No, By Allah, until the right of the oppressed is secured without stammering. Where is your house?’

She said in such a neighborhood.

He went along with the woman until they reached her house. The woman said, “This is my house.” [The narrator goes on to say] He greeted, and then a man came out who was wearing a long colorful garment. Then Ali (a.s.) told him, “Be wary of Allah! You have scared your wife.” The young man said, “What do you have to do with her? By Allah, I will burn her because of your words!”

[The narrator says:] Whenever he [Ali (a.s.)] went somewhere he would carry his whip in his hand and wear his sword. If someone was judged to be punished by whipping, he would whip him and if someone was judged to be punished with a sword, he would promptly carry it out.

All of a sudden the young man noticed that Ali (a.s.) had unsheathed his sword and was saying, “I am bidding you to do good and refraining you from doing wrong, and you are rejecting good? Repent! Or I will kill you.”

[The narrator says:] People from the nearby alleys came toward Amir al-Mumin (a.s.) and crowded before him. [At this time] The young man repented and said, “O Amir al-Mumin! Forgive me! May Allah forgive you [too]! By Allah, [from now on] I will be like the ground for her to step on.”

Then he ordered the woman to go back to her house and he himself returned [home] too, while reciting, ***(There is no good in much of their secret talks, excepting him who enjoins charity or what is right or reconciliation between people....)***[63](#)

“Praise be to Allah who through me reconciled between a woman and her husband. Allah, the Blessed and the Exalted, says, ***(There is no good in much of their secret talks, excepting him who enjoins charity or what is right or reconciliation between people, and whoever does that, seeking Allah’s pleasure, soon We shall give him a great reward.)***[64](#)

354. Al-Kafi – related by Usayd b. Safwan, a companion to the Holy Prophet (S): “On the day of Amir al-Mu’minin’s demise, the town of Kufa was quivering by [people’s] weeping, and the people were astounded just like the day of the Prophet (S)’s demise.”

“[Meanwhile,] A man came running [toward us] while uttering the *istirja’* phrase *inna li’llahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un* ***(Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return)***[65](#) and said, ‘Today, the chain of succession broke off.’ He stopped at the door of the house in which Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s.) was, and said, ‘O Abu al-Hasan may Allah have Mercy upon you! You were the first one of this people in [embracing] Islam and their most sincere in faith.... The weak and degraded were powerful and dear with you, and the powerful and dear were weak and degraded with you until you would take back from them the rightful due. The distant people and the nearest ones were the same to you in this matter.’[66](#)

See, 6/6: "Direct Contact with People"

6.12 Setting up Complaints House

355. Subh al-A'sha: "The first person who set up a place for the complainants to drop (lodge) their complaints was Amir al-Mu'minin Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.)."⁶⁷

356. Al-Awa'il – related by Muhammad b. Sirin: "Ali (a.s.) set up a house in which the people would drop (lodge) their complaints, so long as they wrote curses and dropped in it. Then, he closed it down."⁶⁸

357. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: "There was a house belonging to Amir al-Mu'minin, which he named bayt al-qisas (the complaints house) and the people would drop their letters of complaints in it."⁶⁹

358. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to his companions: "Any one of you who have a request from me, write it in a note so that I spare you from direct questioning."⁷⁰

6.13 Inspection in Order to Avert the Tyranny of the Troops

359. Imam Ali (a.s.): "

From the servant of Allah Ali, Amir al-Mu'minin to whomever through whose jurisdiction the army passes, whether collectors of revenue or officers of the realm:

Now, I have sent an army that will pass by you, if Allah wills. I have instructed them about what Allah has made obligatory on them, namely that they should avoid molestation and evade harm. I hold myself clear before you and those (unbelievers) who are under your protection from any annoyance committed by the army except when one is compelled by hunger and there is no other way of satisfying it.

Then, if anyone of them takes anything through force, you should punish him. None of you should be silly enough to obstruct them or intervene in matters, which we have allowed them by way of exception. I am myself in back of the army. So refer to me their high-handedness, and any hardship which is caused by them and which you cannot avert except through Allah and through me. I shall then avert it with the help of Allah, if He so wills."⁷¹

6.14 Attempts toward Unification of Muslim Community

360. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Abu Musa Ash'ari, in response to the issue of arbitration: "

Certainly, many people have turned away from many a [lasting] benefit [of the next life], for they bent towards the world and spoke with passions. I have been struck with wonder in this matter upon which people who are self-conceited have agreed. I am providing a cure for their wound but I fear lest it develops into a clot of blood (and becomes incurable). Remember that no person is more covetous than

I for the unity of the umma of Muhammad (S) and their solidarity. I seek through it good reward and an honorable place to return to. I shall fulfil what I have pledged upon myself.”[72](#)

361. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on warning against sedition: “You should not become landmarks of sedition and signs of innovations but should adhere to that on which the rope of the community has been wound and on which the pillars of obedience have been founded.”[73](#)

362. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his speech to the Khawarij: “

And be with the great majority (of Muslims) because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the one isolated from the group is a prey to Satan just as the one isolated from the flock of sheep is a prey to the wolf.”[74](#)

363. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Let the Islam and its dignity keep you away from rebelliousness and blathering and keep your words in unity. Be obliged to the religion of Allah, for none other would be accepted from any one; and (be obliged) to the word of sincerity which makes the religion firmly set.”[75](#)

364. Imam Ali (a.s.): “You should therefore avoid change in the matter of Allah's religion for your unity in respect of a right, which you dislike, is better than your scattering away in respect of a wrong that you like! Certainly, Allah the Glorified has not given any person, whether among the dead or among those who survive, any good for [his] separation.”[76](#)

365. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Certainly, Satan has made his ways easy for you and wants to unfasten the knots of religion one by one and to cause division among you in place of unity, and bring you turbulence by division. So, keep away from his evil ideas and enchantments.”[77](#)

366. Imam Ali (a.s.): “By Allah, no communities differ [among themselves] after their prophet except that their falsities overwhelm their truths, or what Allah wills.”[78](#)

367. Imam Ali (a.s.): “By Allah, I have begun thinking about these people that they would shortly snatch away the whole country through their unity on their wrong and your disunity (from your own right).”[79](#)

368. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on warning people against disunity: “You should also fear what calamities befell peoples before you on account of their evil deeds and detestable actions. Remember, during good or bad circumstances, what happened to them, and be cautious that you do not become like them!”

“After you have thought over both conditions of these people, attach yourself to everything with which their position became honorable, on account of which enemies remained away from them, through which safety spread over them, by reason of which riches bowed before them and as a result of which distinction connected itself with their rope. These things were abstention from division, sticking to unity, calling each other to it and advising each other about it. You avoid everything, which broke their backbone and weakened their power, such as malice in the heart, hatred in the chest, turning away (from each other's help) and withholding the hand from one another's assistance!”

“Think about the condition of people from among the believers who passed before you. What distresses and trials they were in! Were they not the most over-burdened among all the people and in the most straitened circumstances in the whole world? The Pharaohs took them as slaves. They inflicted on them the worst punishments and bitter sufferings. They continuously remained in this state of ruinous disgrace and severe subjugation.

They found no method for escape and no way for protection from sufferings. Till when Allah, the Glorified, noticed that they were enduring troubles in His love and bearing distresses out of fear for Him, He provided escape from the distress of trials. So, He changed their disgrace into honor and fear into safety. Consequently, they became ruling kings and conspicuous leaders. And Allah's favors over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached.”

“Look, how they were when their groups were united, their views were unanimous, their hearts were moderate, their hands used to help one another, their swords were intended for assisting one another, their eyes were sharp and their aims were the same. Did they not become masters of the corners of the earth and rulers over the neck of all the worlds? Thereafter, also see what happened to them towards the end when division overtook them, unity became fractured, and differences arose between their words and their hearts. They divided into various groups and were scattered fighting among them. Then, Allah took away from them the apparel of His honor and deprived them of the prosperity produced by His favors. Only their stories have remained among you for the guidance of those who may learn the lesson from them.”

“You should take a lesson from the fate of the progeny of Isma‘il, the children of Ishaq and the children of Isra‘il. How similar are their affairs and how akin are their examples. In connection with the details of their division and disunity, think of the days when [such tyrants as] Cyrus and the Caesar become their masters. They turned them out from the pastures of their lands the rivers of Iraq and the fertility of the world, towards thorny forests, the passages of (hot) winds and hardships in livelihood. In this way they turned them into just herders of camels. Their houses were the worst in the world and their places of stay were the most drought-stricken. There was not one voice towards which they could turn for protection, nor any shade of affection on whose strength they could trust. Their condition was full of distress. Their hands were scattered. Their majority was divided. They were in great anguish and under layers of ignorance. They buried their daughters alive, worshipped idols, disregarded kinship and practised robbery.”

“Now, look at the various favors of Allah upon them, that He deputed towards them a prophet who got them to pledge their obedience to him and made them unite at his call.”[80](#)

[1.](#) Waq‘atu Siffin: 105, Nathr al-Durar: 1/322.

[2.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 128 & 133, Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 1/355 & 358.

[3.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 59, Bahar al-Anwar: 33/511/708.

[4.](#) Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 176, Algharat: 1/224.

[5.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 27 & 46, Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 177.

- [6.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 126, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 185.
- [7.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 224, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 506/9285, Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim: 1/163.
- [8.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 224, Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim: 1/163, Yanabi' al-Mawadda: 1/442/6
- [9.](#) Fada'il al-Sahaba: 1/538/898, Al-Khisal: 363/53.
- [10.](#) Tarikh Damishq: 42/488, Al-Bidaya wa al-Nahaya: 8/5, Manaqib al-Imam Amir al-Mu'minin: 2/57/545.
- [11.](#) 'Ubayd Allah b. Hurr Ju'fi was a brave champion and one of the companions of 'Uthman. when the latter was killed, he became inclined toward Mu'awiya and said, 'Allah knows that I love 'Uthman and will help him until I die.

Thus, he left for Sham and attended in the battle of Siffin along with Mu'awiya and remained beside him until Ali (a.s.) was killed. After the uprising of Imam Husayn (a.s.), he left Kufa lest the Imam would enter Kufa while he was there saying, 'By Allah, I do not want to see him nor he see me.'

When Imam Husayn (a.s.) entered Qasr Bani Maqatil (one of the stations between Makka and Kufa) and saw his tent. He sent one of his companions to him ['Ubayd Allah) to call him for his assistance, but he did not reply. Imam Husayn (a.s.) put on his shoes and went to him, he greeted and sat down. Then he invited him to join the uprising, but he did not reply.

After Imam Husayn (a.s.) was killed, 'Ubayd Allah went to visit Ibn Ziyad. The latter reprimanded him for not helping the troops of Yzid against Imam Husayn (a.s.). Then, he held back his tears and left for the land of Karbala. He observed the battlefield and asked Allah's Forgiveness for them and composed [a along poem in which he praised Imam Husayn (a.s.) son of Fatima (a.s.) and his martyred companions, showing his repentance and pity for not joining them in the uprising against the trickster tyrants of the time.]

Then he and his children rose up and turned to fighting and robbery. He robbed not only private but also public property. His uprising continued through the time of Mukhtar and Mus'ab, ending up to his cooperation with 'Abd al-Mali b. Marwan. he was killed when confronting the troops of Mus'ab. (Tarikh al-Tabari: 6/128-138)

- [12.](#) Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 3/25.
- [13.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/306.
- [14.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 216. Also cf., Al-Kafi: 8/352/550.
- [15.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4780, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 223/4347.
- [16.](#) Al-Kafi: 8/69/26, Bahar al-Anwar: 32/134/107.
- [17.](#) Al-Kafi: 8/386/586, Falah al-Salil: 372/248, Bahar al-Anwar: 77/365/34.
- [18.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 31, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 77, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 526/9572.
- [19.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8529-30, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 450/8004-5.
- [20.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2728, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 100/2292.
- [21.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4745, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 222/4333.
- [22.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1322, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 48/1202-3, Bihar al-Anwar: 78/12/70.
- [23.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 97.
- [24.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 125.
- [25.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/279/210.
- [26.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 128 & 133, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/355 & 358.
- [27.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 138.
- [28.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/354 - 356.
- [29.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 126 - 130.
- [30.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 18, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/492/499.
- [31.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 142.
- [32.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 67, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/497/702.
- [33.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 108, Bihar al-Anwar: 75/355/70.
- [34.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 50, Waq'atu Siffin: 107, Al-Amali, Al-Tusi: 217/381, Al-Mi'yar wa al-Muwazina: 103.
- [35.](#) Tarikhk al-Ya'qubi: 2/202.

- [36.](#) Kanz al-‘Ummal: 5/764/14315.
- [37.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8982.
- [38.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 772, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 24/219.
- [39.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/318/656.
- [40.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3974, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 133/2998.
- [41.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5266, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 263/4781.
- [42.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9947.
- [43.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7842, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 453/8112.
- [44.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9006.
- [45.](#) Irshad al-Qulub: 321, Al-Darajat al-Rafi’a: 288: Bihar al-Anwar: 28/88/3.
- [46.](#) Irshad al-Qulub: 322, Al-Darajat al-Rafi’a: 289. Also cf., Algharat: 1/211.
- [47.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 6114, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 334/5705, Ibid., 52/1363.
- [48.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1778.
- [49.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8400, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 455/8245.
- [50.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 76, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/498/704.
- [51.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3505. Also cf., Da’a’im al-Islam: 1/355.
- [52.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 128.
- [53.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/269/113.
- [54.](#) Al-Kafi: 7/209/20, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 10/48/178, ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Riwa’a: 2/39/118.
- [55.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4580.
- [56.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Taaaf al-‘Uqul: 145.
- [57.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8966, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 428/7261.
- [58.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 3, Ma’aani al-Akhbar: 1/362, Al-Irshad: 1/289, ‘Ilal al-Sharaya’: 151/12.
- [59.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 136, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/49/33.
- [60.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 37, Bihar al-Anwar: 39/351/25.
- [61.](#) Tuhaf al-‘Uqul: 135.
- [62.](#) Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/106, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/57/7.
- [63.](#) Al-Qur’an, 4: 114.
- [64.](#) Al-Ikhtisas: 157, Bihar al-Anwar: 40/113.
- [65.](#) Al-Qur’an, 2: 156.
- [66.](#) Al-Kafi: 1/454/4, Kamal al-Din: 388 – 390/3, Al-Saduq, Al-Amali: 312/363.
- [67.](#) Subh al-A’sha: 1/414.
- [68.](#) Al-Awa’il: 142.
- [69.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 17/87.
- [70.](#) Al-‘Aqd al-Farid: 1/203.
- [71.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 60, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/486/691.
- [72.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 78, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/304/554.
- [73.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 151, Yanabi’ al-Mawadda: 3/372/4.
- [74.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 127, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 101/2312, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/373/604.
- [75.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 4/45.
- [76.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 176, Bihar al-Anwar: 2/313/76, Yanabi’ al-Mawadda: 3/437/9.
- [77.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 121.
- [78.](#) Al-Mufid, Al-Amali: 235/5, Al-Tusi, Al-Amali: 11/13, Waq’atu Siffin: 224.
- [79.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 25.
- [80.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 192, Bihar al-Anwar: 14/472/37.

Chapter Seven: Judicial Policies

7.1 Selection of the Elite for Judgment

369. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Malik Ashtar: “Then choose to judge among men him who in your sight is the most excellent of subjects, i.e., one who is not beleaguered by (complex) affairs, who is not rendered ill-tempered by the litigants, who does not persist in error, who is not distressed by returning to the truth when he recognizes it, whose soul does not descend to any kind of greed, who is not satisfied with an inferior understanding (of a thing) short of the more thorough, who hesitates most in (acting in the face of) obscurities, who adheres most to arguments, who is the least to become annoyed at the petition of the litigants, who is the most patient (in waiting) for the facts to become clear and who is the firmest when the verdict has become manifest; a man who does not become conceited when praise is lavished upon him and who is not attracted by temptation. But such (men) are rare.”^{[1](#)}

7.2 Financial Support of the Judges

370. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Malik Ashtar: “Then choose to judge among men him who in your sight is the most excellent of subjects...and grant generously to him that which will eliminate his lacks and through which his need for men will decrease.”^{[2](#)}

7.3 Job Security for Judges

371. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Malik Ashtar: “Then choose to judge among men him who in your sight is the most excellent of subjects.... Bestow upon him that station near to you to which none of your other favorites may aspire, that by it he may be secure from (character) assassination before you by men of importance. (In sum) study that (i.e., the selection of judges) with thorough consideration, for this religion was prisoner in the hands of the wicked, who acted with it out of caprice and used it to seek (the pleasures of) the present world.”^{[3](#)}

[It is also narrated in the same letter in Tuhaf al-‘Uqul:] Then, very often check his decisions and grant generously to him that which will eliminate his lacks, and through which his need for men will decrease. Bestow upon him that station near to you to which none of your other favorites may aspire, so that he remains safe from the harm of those around you. Be respectful to him when you associate with him, favor him in sessions, agree to his judge, implement his rulings, support him, and choose the best of his matches as his supporters. They should be from among jurisprudents and people of piety who would advise for the sake of Allah and his servants. He may discuss with them in any doubtful question, refer to them in what he does not attend, and they should be witnesses on his settlement of disputations, God willing.”^{[4](#)}

7.4 Enjoining to Observe Judgment Rules

372. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to Shurayh: “Look into the state of those delaying in discharging people’s rightful due from among the rich and the needless, who put the Muslims’ riches at the rulers’ disposal. So, take the Muslims’ rightful due from them and sell the houses and lands, for I heard the messenger of Allah saying: ‘delay by the rich Muslims is [equal to] oppression to Muslims; and those who do not own lands, nor houses or wealth are not to be obliged.’”

“And let it be known that no one will enjoin people to rightfulness except he who drive them away from falsehood. Then, treat Muslims equally by way of your facial expression, speaking, and meeting so that those who are near you not to be tempted to do injustice and your enemy not to lose hope at your justice. And return the swearing to the claimant by presenting evidence (two witnesses), for this will remove ambiguity and maintain (sound) judgment.”

“And let it be known that Muslims are just, with some bearing witness to others except the one who has been whipped for a punishment and has not repented or is known as giving false witnesses. And take care not to express suffering and pain in a judgment session, for Allah has decreed a reward for it and there is a good reward in store for the one who judges rightfully.”

“And let it be known that peace among Muslims is permissible, excepting the peace that renders unlawful something lawful or lawful something unlawful; and give a respite to the one who claims to have absent witnesses. If he presents them, his right will be restored, and if not, he will be duly judged. Take care not to carry out a verdict concerning retaliation (qisas), Divine sanctions, and the Muslims’ rights without informing me about it – God willing. And do not sit for judgment except after you have had your meal.”⁵

373. Al-Kafi – related by Ahmad b. Abi ‘Abd Allah (in the form of marfu⁶): “Amir al-Muminin told Shurayh, ‘Do not whisper to anyone in a judgment session, and if you get infuriated, stand up. Then, do not make any judgment while being infuriated.’”⁷

374. Imam Ali (a.s.) – when he was informed that Shurayh was making judgments in his house: “O Shurayh! Sit in the mosque as it is more just to be among the people, and certainly it is feebleness for a judge to sit in his house.”⁸

375. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Rifa‘a, when appointed him as his judge in Ahwaz: “Leave aside aspirations, object to the desires, and adorn knowledge with righteous manners. Forbearance is a good assistant for religion; should forbearance be a man, it would be a competent one. “

“Beware of [expressing] boredom, for it is [a sign] of folly and meanness! Do not let the one who is not your like attend your sessions, and choose the brave men. Judge by the appearances, and leave the interior to the Knower [Allah]. Give up saying, ‘I suppose!’ or ‘It seems to me!’ There is no ambiguity in

religion.⁹ Do not dispute with the fools and the legal experts (faqih)s; because the latter will deprive you of his blessings and the former will dishearten you by his evils. Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in a manner that is best by the Qur'an and the sunna. Do not accustom yourself to laughter, for it effaces your eminence and make your enemy brazen against you. Beware of accepting gifts from the adversaries and be wary of the inward state of affairs!"

"The one who trusts in a silly woman and consults with her and consents to her will repent. Beware of the tears of the faithful, for the one who moves them to tears will be shattered; and the seas of fire will be put out with their tears. Do not humiliate the adversaries, and do not chide the beggar. Do not associate with the inexperienced in the judgment sessions and do not consult with them in your verdicts, for consultation is done in warfare and in urgent expediency. Religion is not a matter of opinion; rather, it is a matter of following and obedience. Do not waste the obligations, and do not [merely] depend on supererogation."

"Do good to the one who did evil to you; forgive the one who did you injustice; pray for the one who assisted you; pardon the one who deprived you; and be humble to the one who granted to you. Be thankful to Allah for what He granted to you and praise Him for what He tried you with. Knowledge consists of these three: the firm sign, the established practice and the just duty, and their touchstone is what we command."¹⁰

376. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to Rifa'a: "Do not make judgment while you are angry, nor when you are drowsy."¹¹

377. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Muhammad b. Abi Bakr: "If you judge among people, you should treat them with gentleness, treat them leniently, relax your face before them, and use equal looks at them so that the chief will not expect your injustice for their sake and the weak will not despair of your fairness with them."¹²

378. Imam Ali (a.s.): "The one who practices justice should treat people equally in looks and sitting [postures]."¹³

379. Imam Ali (a.s.): "It behoves a judge to avoid paying attention to one of the litigants, to share his glances at them equally, and not to let one party do injustice to the other."¹⁴

380. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): "A man came to Ali (a.s.) to stay with him [as a guest]. Then he brought up a lawsuit that he had not earlier informed Amar al-Mu'minin about. Amar al-Mu'minin asked him if he were one of the litigants. And he said he was. Then he said, 'Go away from us, verily the Messenger of Allah has prohibited that one litigant be a guest [to the judge] unless the other one be with him to.'"¹⁵

7.5 Dismissing Judges Violating Judgment Rules

381. ‘Awali al-Li‘ali: “Amar al-Mu’minin appointed Abu al-Aswad al-Du’li as a judge. Then he dismissed him. He [Abu al-Aswad] asked him, ‘Why did you dismiss me, whereas I did not commit any crime nor betrayed?’”

“Ali (a.s.) replied, ‘I noticed your voice was louder than that of the litigant.’”¹⁶

7.6 Overseeing the Judgment of the Judges

382. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar after mentioning to him the way to select judges: “Then, very often check his decisions.”¹⁷

383. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to Shurayh: “Take care not to carry out a verdict concerning retaliation (qisas), Divine sanctions, and the Muslims’ rights without informing me about it – God willing!”¹⁸

384. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): “When Amar al-Mu’minin appointed Shurayh as a judge, he warned him not to carry out any verdict unless he informs him about it.”¹⁹

7.7 Warning against Unjust and Negligent Judgments

385. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The vilest act is the injustice of the judges.”²⁰

386. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one whose judgments are unjust, his power will vanish.”²¹

387. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Among all the people the most detested before Allah Almighty there are two persons: ... and the one who has picked up men from among the ignorant, he is senseless in the thickness of mischief. Those resembling like men have named him scholar but he has not lived soundly even for a day. He goes out early morning to collect things whose little is better than plenty, till when he has quenched his thirst from polluted water and acquired meaningless things. He sits among the people as a judge responsible for solving whatever is confusing to the others. And if he opposes the judge preceded him, he will not be secure of his verdict being invalidated by the one who come after him, as he did to the preceding ones. If an ambiguous problem is presented before him he manages shabby argument about it of his own accord and passes judgment on its basis.”

“In this way he is entangled in the confusion of doubts as in the spider's web, not knowing whether he was right or wrong. He does not consider as knowledge what he does not accept it himself and believes in no religion except what he has come to believe himself. If he measures something with another, he will not disclaim his own view; and if he wrongs, he will conceal it lest they tell him he does not know, for he is well aware of his own ignorance. Thus, he ventures to make judgments. So, he is the key to darkness, seeking doubts and wandering astray in ignorance.”

“He does not excuse for what he does not know so as to keep safe. He does not try to find the reality of knowledge in order to make gains. He scatters the traditions as the wind scatters the dry leaves. [The unjustly divided] Inheritances will weep because of you and the blood will cry on account of you. By his judgments, what is lawful becomes unlawful and what is unlawful becomes lawful. He is neither to be trusted in the verdicts he passes nor is competent in what is performed by him; for he [only] claims to have knowledge about rights.”[22](#)

7.8 Imam’s Direct Judgments

388. ‘Awali al-Li’ali: “Ali (a.s.) is reported to have been sitting in the mosque of Kufa to judge, and there was a special platform for this purpose, called the platform of judgment (dakkatu’l qada).”[23](#)

389. Irshad al-Qulub: “It is reported that when Ali (a.s.) found respite from battles, he would engage in educating people and judging among them.”[24](#)

390. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his sermon when he assembled people, exhorted them to jihad, and they all kept silent: “What is the matter with you? Have you become dumb?”

A group of them replied: "O' Amir al-Mu'minin! If you go forth we shall be with you."

Whereupon Amir al-Mu'minin said: “What has happened to you? You may not be guided aright or shown the right path! Should in these circumstances I go forth? In fact, at this time one of the brave and the valorous among you whom I select should go out. It does not befit me to leave the army, the city, the public treasury, the land revenue, and the dispensation of justice among Muslims and looking after the demands of the claimants; and then, follow one contingent after the other moving here and there like a featherless arrow moving in the quiver. I am the axis of the mill. It rotates on me while I remain in my position. As soon as I leave it the center of its rotation would be disturbed and its lower stone would also be disturbed. By Allah, this is a very bad advice.”[25](#)

7.9 Consistency in Judgment Procedures

391. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “...then, you should do your best for inspecting the reporters on judgments. They should not disagree nor dispute regarding the verdict of Allah and the traditions of the Prophet (S). Disagreement is the waste of justice, inadvertence in the religion, and cause of divergence. Allah has shown what to do and what to spend; and ordered to refer to those with whom Allah has entrusted the knowledge of His Book and authorized for issuing rulings, in what they are ignorant.”

“Divergence of judges occurs when tyranny controls them and each depends on his own opinion without referring to those whose leadership is imposed by Allah. Neither the religion nor its followers will be righteous by such behaviors. Judges should issue verdicts according to what they know from the

prophet's traditions and practices. If it is impossible for them to judge in a case, they should refer to the people of judging. If people of judging are absent, they should discuss the case with the Muslims' jurisprudents. They should not leave this to other categories of people."

"Two judges of the Muslim community should never issue different rulings regarding one case before they file it before the Leader. Hence, the Leader will judge in that matter according to his knowledge that he received from Allah. The two judges then should agree on the Leader's ruling whether it corresponds or differs their opinions. You should have piercing eye in this matter because this religion has formerly been a prisoner in the hands of vicious persons when action was taken according to passion, and worldly wealth was sought."

"Write letters to the judges of your regions ordering them to provide before you any question of judgment about which they dispute. You should see into these rulings, authorize any ruling that you find consistent with Allah's Book, the Prophet's traditions, and the Imam's indication, and order the judges to follow. Regarding matters that you suspect you should gather the jurisprudents before you and discuss the matter with them. Authorize what they agree upon unanimously. Each matter about which the subjects dispute should be referred to the Imam. The Imam should seek Allah's aid and do his best for instituting the doctrinal provisions and imposing the subjects to follow his commandment. There is no strength save in Allah."[26](#)

392. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on disparagement of the differences of view among scholars: "When a problem is put before anyone of them he passes judgment on it from his imagination. When exactly the same problem is placed before another of them he passes an opposite verdict. Then these judges go to the chief who had appointed them and he confirms all the verdicts, although their Allah is One (and the same), their Prophet is one (and the same), their Book (the Qur'an) is one (and the same)."

"Is it that Allah ordered them to differ and they obeyed Him? Or He prohibited them from it but they disobeyed Him? Or (is it that) Allah sent an incomplete Faith and sought their help to complete it? Or they are His partners in the affairs, so that it is their share of duty to pronounce and He has to agree? Or is it that Allah the Glorified sent a perfect faith but the Prophet fell short of conveying it and handing it over (to the people)? The fact is that Allah the Glorified says: **(We have not omitted anything from the Book...)**[27](#)

And says that one part of the Qur'an verifies another part and that there is no divergence in it as He says: **(Had it been from [someone] other than Allah, they would have surely found much discrepancy in it.)**[28](#)

Certainly the outside of the Qur'an is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never disappear, its marvels will never pass away and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself."[29](#)

7.10 Execution of Legal Punishment Equally on Near of Kin and Strangers

393. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his sermon: “The most appropriate thing a ruler should undertake about his subjects is to commit himself to the affairs that Allah has imposed on them as His rights in the religious matters. Certainly, it is upon us to command you on what Allah has commanded you [to do], and prohibit you from what Allah has prohibited you from [doing]. And [it is also upon us] to carry out Allah’s commands on both the people who are near and those who are far [in kinship], and not to heed on whom justice is being administered.”^{[30](#)}

394. Al-Imam al-Baqir: “Indeed, Amir al-Mu’minin ordered Qanbar to whip a man as legal penalty. He gave the man the due lashes plus three more. Ali (a.s.) [found out about it and] retaliated him with three lashes in return.”^{[31](#)}

395. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): “Amir al-Mu’minin said to ‘Umar b. Khattab, ‘There are three things that if you take heed of and act accordingly, you will be free from needing other things, and if you abandon them, other things will be of no benefit to you.’”

“‘Umar asked, ‘What are those three O Abu al-Hasan!’”

“The Imam said, ‘Executing legal penalty on the near and the far [of kin]; administering justice on the basis of the Book of Allah in both [states of] anger and satisfaction; and equitable distribution among the black and the white.’”

“‘Umar said, ‘By my life, you said it tersely and eloquently.’”^{[32](#)} See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin, Vol. VII, Section VII, Chapter Four (Najashi, Tariq b. ‘Abd Allah)

7.11 Submission to Judgment

396. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh – related by al-Sha‘bi: “Ali (a.s.) found his shield with a Nazarene. He took him to Shurayh [the judge], sat beside him and said, ‘If my litigant were a Muslim, I would be equal to him.’ And then said, ‘This is my shield.’

“The Nazarene said, ‘This is my own shield’, and Amir al-Mu’minin was not lying!”

“Shurayh asked Ali (a.s.), ‘Do you have any evidence?’”

“Ali (a.s.) said, laughing, ‘No.’”

“The Nazarene took the shield, walked a few steps away, and then returned and said, ‘I bear witness that these are the Prophets’ commands. Amir al-Mu’minin brought me to his judge and he judged against him.’”

“Then the Nazarene converted to Islam and admitted that Ali (a.s.) had unknowingly dropped the shield on his way to Siffin. Ali (a.s.) was pleased by his embracing Islam, and granted him the shield as well as a horse. The Nazarene took part in his company in the battle against Khawarij.”[33](#)

397. Al-Gharat – related by Sha‘bi: “Ali (a.s.) found his shield with a Nazarene. He took him to Shurayh and made a complaint against him. When Shurayh noticed him, he headed for another direction. Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Stop where you are!’ He went to him, sat beside him and said, ‘O Shurayh! If my litigant were a Muslim, I would certainly sit next to him; but he is a Nazarene and the Messenger of Allah said, ‘If you happen to walk on the same way with them [the People of the Book], force them to the narrow part of the road and humiliate them, as Allah has humiliated them; but do not do any injustice to them.’”

“Then Ali (a.s.) said, ‘This is my shield and I have not sold it, nor given it away.’”

“Shurayh told the Nazarene, ‘What does Amir al-Mu‘minin say?’

“‘This is my shield, and to my view Amir al-Mu‘minin is not a liar.’ Said the Nazarene.”

“Shurayh faced Ali (a.s.) and asked, ‘Do you have any evidence?’”

“He said he did not.”

“Then shurayh passed the verdict in favor of the Nazarene.”

“Then he [the Nazarene] delightedly set out to go, turned back and said, ‘Let it be known that I bear witness that this judgment is [the type of] Prophets’ judgments. Amir al-Mu‘minin brought me to his judge and he passed a verdict against him! I bear witness that there is no god apart from Allah, Who is unique and without partners. I also bear witness that Muaammad is His servant and His Prophet. I swear by Allah O Amir al-Mu‘minin! The shield is yours! It dropped off your tawny camel while you were on your way to Siffin along with your troops.’”

“Then Amir al-Mu‘minin said, ‘Now that you have embraced Islam, keep the shield for yourself!’ and he mounted him on a horse [granting it to him too].”[34](#)

398. Rabi‘ al-Abrar: “A man made a complaint to ‘Umar against Ali (a.s.), who was sitting down. ‘Umar faced Ali (a.s.) and said, ‘O Abu al-Hasan! Get up and sit next to your litigant! Ali (a.s.) stood up and sat next to his litigant and both began to debate, the man left and Ali (a.s.) returned to his place.”

“‘Umar found him troubled in his face and asked him, ‘O Abu al-Hasan! Why do I see you disturbed? Are you upset about what happened?’”

“He said, ‘Yes.’

“‘Why?’ Asked ‘Umar.”

“Ali (a.s.) replied, ‘You called me by my nickname in the presence of the litigant. Why did you not say: ‘O Ali! Get up and sit next to your litigant?’”

“Umar held Ali (a.s.)’s head [in his hands] and kissed between his eyes. Then said, ‘May my father be sacrificed for you! Because of you, Allah guided us and by you, He moved us out of darkness into light.’”³⁵

7.12 The Status of Islamic State Expediency in Issuing Verdicts

399. Al-Gharat – related by Shurayh, “Ali (a.s.) sent someone to me ordering me ‘to go on judging as you did before until the integration and consistency of people’s affairs is maintained’.”³⁶

400. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – explaining Ali (a.s.)’s statement “If my steps acquire firmness out of these slippery places, I would alter several things”.: Undoubtedly, in certain legal ordinances and events he moved in a direction which contradicted the companions (sahabis)’s declarations on such issues as amputation of the thief’s tips of fingers [rather than the whole hand], sale of a slave-maid having children [from her master], etc.; what prevented him from reforming the previous ordinances was his involvement in battles against the rebels and Kharijis, to which he referred as madahid (slippery places) and out of which he wished his steps acquired firmness.

Thus, he ordered his judges “to go on judging as you did before until the integration and consistency of people’s affairs is maintained”. Here the word “until” suggests that he allowed them to follow the previous procedures in judgment so long as people’s integration is maintained; and [it is evident] that the clauses after “until” and “as far as” are in contrast to the main clauses (i.e., when integration is maintained, do not follow the previous procedures any more).³⁷

¹. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 135.

². Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 135 & 136, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/605/744.

³. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53.

⁴. Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 136.

⁵. Al-Kafi: 7/412/1, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/225/541, Man la Yahḍirahu’l Faqih: 3/15/3243.

⁶. A hadith, which is either directly or through intermediaries attributed to the Prophet (S) or one of the Imams (a.s.). [Mu’jam al-Mustalahat al-Rijal wa al-Daraya: 155.]

⁷. Al-Kafi: 7/413/5, Man la Yahḍirahu’l Faqih: 3/14/3239.

⁸. Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/534/1897.

⁹. Apparently it is intended to say that Divine Ordinances are explicit and there is no need for dispute and philosophizing.

¹⁰. Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/534/1899.

¹¹. Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/534/1909, Dasturu Ma’alim al-Hikam: 63.

¹². Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 177, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/586/733.

¹³. Al-Kafi: 7/413/3, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/226/543, Nasb al-Raya: 4/73.

¹⁴. Da’a’im al-Islam: 2/533/1895. Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/226/544,

¹⁵. Al-Kafi: 7/413/4, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/226/544, Man la Yahḍirahu’l Faqih: 3/12/3236.

¹⁶. ‘Awali al-Li’ali: 2/343/5.

¹⁷. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/605/744.

- [18.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/226/541, Al-Kafi: 7/412/1, Man la Yahḍirahu'l Faqih: 3/16/3243.
- [19.](#) Al-Kafi: 7/407/3, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/217/510, Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/534/1898.
- [20.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3011, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 119/2671.
- [21.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7943, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 454/8161.
- [22.](#) Al-Kafi: 1/55/6, Al-Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 17, Al-Irshad: 1/231, Al-Ihtijaj: 1/621/143.
- [23.](#) 'Awali al-Li'ali: 2/344/8.
- [24.](#) Irshad al-Qulub: 218, 'Udda al-Da'i: 101, Bihar al-Anwar: 103/16/70.
- [25.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 119.
- [26.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 136, Bihar al-Anwar: 77/251/1.
- [27.](#) Al-Qur'an, 6:38.
- [28.](#) Al-Qur'an, 4:82.
- [29.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 18, Al-Ihtijaj: 1/620/142, Bihar al-Anwar: 2/284/1.
- [30.](#) Al-Gharat: 2/501, Bihar al-Anwar: 27/254/15.
- [31.](#) Al-Kafi: 7/260/1, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 10/278/1085, Da'a'im al-Islam: 2/444/1552.
- [32.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/227/547, Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/208, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 2/147.
- [33.](#) Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/443, Jawahir al-Matalib: 2/127.
- [34.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/124, Bihar al-Anwar: 101/290/4, Al-Bidaya wa al-Nahaya: 8/4.
- [35.](#) Rabi' al-Abrar: 3/595, Al-Manaqib: 98/99, Shara Nahj al-Balagha: 17/65.
- [36.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/123.
- [37.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 19/161.

Chapter Eight: Security Policies

8.1 Importance of Security

401. Imam Ali (a.s.): "The worst of cities is the one in which there is no security and prosperity."^{[1](#)}

402. Imam Ali (a.s.): "O Allah! You know what we did was neither to seek power nor to acquire anything from the vanities of the world. Rather, we wanted to restore the signs of Your religion and to usher prosperity into Your cities so that the oppressed among Your creatures might be safe and Your forsaken commands might be established."^{[2](#)}

403. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: "Now soldiers, by the leave of Allah, are the fortresses of the subjects, the adornment of rulers, the might of religion and the means of security. The subjects have no support but them.... Never reject a peace to which your enemy calls you and in which is God's pleasure, for in peace there is ease for your soldiers, relaxation from your cares and security for your land."^{[3](#)}

404. Imam Ali (a.s.): "The fact is that there is no escape for men from a ruler, good or bad, in whose rule the faithful persons perform (good) acts, while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits. During the rule, Allah would carry everything to end. Through the ruler tax is collected, enemy is fought, roadways are

protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoys peace and allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked.”[4](#)

8.2 Collecting Information

405. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his administrators: “In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the All-merciful. From the servant of Allah, Ali the commander of the faithful, to whomever of the administrators who reads my letter: Now then, some men have sworn allegiance to us who have escaped [now]. We suspect that they have moved towards the cities of the Basra region. Inquire your townspeople about them and assign secret agents from all over your land over them. Then, write to me of whatever you happen to find out in this respect. Wassalam!”[5](#)

406. Waq’atu Siffin: “Ali (a.s.) pretended that the next morning he would be setting out to fight against Mu’awiya. The news reached Mu’awiya and the Shamis got into a panic and were shattered by this [rumor]. Mu’awiya b. al-Aahhak b. Sufyan, the standard bearer of the Bani Salim tribe, was with Mu’awiya while antagonizing him and the Shamis and favoring the people of Iraq and Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). He used to write the news to ‘Abd Allah b. Tufayl ‘Amiri, who would then send it to Ali (a.s.).”[6](#)

407. Waq’atu Siffin: “Ali (a.s.) sent a group to obstruct the course of the spring water to Mu’awiya. The latter dispatched al-Aahhak along with a gang toward them and they dispersed them [Ali (a.s.)’s group].”

“Ali (a.s.)’s secret agents came to him and reported what had happened. Then Ali (a.s.) asked his companions, ‘What shall we do?’”

“A group said do this and the other said do that. When he noticed their discrepancy, he ordered [to prepare] to launch an assault on Mu’awiya the next morning. In the morning, he led them to the battle (of Siffin), and the Shamis were defeated.”[7](#)

408. Ansab al-Ashraf: “Ali (a.s.)’s secret agent in Sham came to him and handed him a report on Busr. This secret agent is said to have been Qays b. Zurara b. ‘Amr b. Hityan Hamadani. Qays was Ali (a.s.)’s secret agent in Sham and used to report the news to him.”[8](#)

709. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to ‘Abd Allah b. Badil: “Beware of encountering the enemy’s troops, until I come to you! Send the secret agents toward them and make sure they carry arms with them to fight with. The secret agents should be from among the brave troops; for the coward would not bring you correct reports. You and whoever is with you, by the leave of Allah, abide by my commands. Wassalam.”[9](#)

410. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in the report on the battle of Siffin: “A man from the Himyar tribe, by the name of Hasin b. Malik, was with Mu’awiya and [at the same time] had correspondence with Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.), informing him about the secrets of Mu’awiya.”[10](#)

8.3 Rectifying the Enemies

411. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who rectifies his enemy, has [indeed] augmented his company.”[11](#)

412. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who corrects the opponents will achieve his goal.”[12](#)

413. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The pinnacle of prudence is rectifying the opponents and putting up with the enemies.”[13](#)

414. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Rectifying the enemies with nice words and decent behavior is more convenient than confronting them and fighting against them with pain and suffering.”[14](#)

415. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Doing good to the wicked would rectify the enemy.”[15](#)

416. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The sages used to say in the past, ‘It is befitting to frequent houses of others for ten purposes: first, to the House of Allah for performing the rituals [of Hajj], discharging Allah’s right, and fulfilling His obligatory commands;... and nine, to the houses of the enemies so as by tolerance their turbulence would calm down and by leniency and visitation their enmity would resolve their enmity.”[16](#)

417. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Refraining from persecuting [others] would rectify the hearts of the enemies.”[17](#)

418. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Shake hands with your enemies, even though they dislike it, for it is one of the things to which Allah has enjoined his servants, [where] He says, ***(Repel [evil] with what is best. [If you do so,] behold, he between whom and you was enmity, will be as though he were a sympathetic friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient and none is granted it except the greatly endowed.*** [18](#))[19](#)

419. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the Aphorisms attributed to him: “If your enemy pretended friendship and honesty to you, accept it with warm friendship, for if he goes on with this [attitude] and gets accustomed to it, his friendship will turn sincere.”[20](#)

8.4 Compromise Accompanied by Sagacity

420. Imam Ali (a.s.): “I found compromise more beneficial than combat so long as it is not weakening to Islam.”[21](#)

421. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Of all the benevolence, guiding to peace and compromise is the best.”[22](#)

422. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Never reject a peace to which your enemy calls you and in which is God's pleasure, for in peace there is ease for your soldiers, relaxation from your cares and security for your land. But be cautious, very cautious, with your enemy after (having made) peace with him, for the enemy may have drawn near in order to take advantage of (your) negligence. Therefore be prudent and have doubts about trusting your enemy in this (matter).”[23](#)

8.5 Keeping Extremely vigilant against the Enemy

423. Imam Ali (a.s.): “[The warrior should be wakeful for] If he sleeps the enemy does not sleep.” [24](#)
424. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Be extremely vigilant against your enemy.” [25](#)
425. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not feel safe from any enemy, even though they express appreciation.” [26](#)
426. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The worst of the enemies is the one who is more insightful, and more surreptitious in conspiracies.” [27](#)
427. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the Aphorisms attributed to him: “Be more wary of a surreptitious enemy than the enemy who openly fights against you.” [28](#)
428. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The weakest enemy in deception is the one who manifests his enmity.” [29](#)
429. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who manifests his enmity, is less deceitful.” [30](#)
430. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not be deceived by the enemy’s flattery, for the enemy is like water which although it takes long to boil it with fire, it does not fail to put it [the fire] out.” [31](#)

8.6 Not Underestimating the Enemy

431. Imam Ali (a.s.): Do not underestimate any of the enemies, even though he is weak [32](#)
432. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the Aphorisms attributed to him: “Beware of underestimating the enemy, for it bars you from watchfulness. Many a small one has defeated the great ones!” [33](#)
433. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the Aphorisms attributed to him: “Do not underestimate the power of your enemy when you are fighting with him, for if you win [the battle], you will not be praised, and if he defeats you, you are not excused. The weak that keep a watchful eye on the powerful enemy are closer to safety than the powerful who is conceited of his own power over the weak.” [34](#)

8.7 Avoid Consultation with the Enemy, except for Trial

434. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Ignorant is the one who seeks consultation with his enemy.” [35](#)
435. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not consult with your enemy, and conceal your news from him.” [36](#)
436. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Consult with your enemies in order to find out the extent of their enmity and their goals.” [37](#)
437. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the Aphorisms attributed to him: “As a trial, consult with your enemy in order to realize the extent of his enmity.” [38](#)

438. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who seeks help from his enemy for [meeting] his need, will move farther away from [meeting] his need.”^{[39](#)}

8.8 Knowing the Right Time in Encountering the Enemies

439. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Employ [the strategy of] waiting for possibilities and timeliness in order to gain victory.”^{[40](#)}

440. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not assault the enemy before you are powerful [enough].”^{[41](#)}

441. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not disclose your enmity to those over whom you have no power.”^{[42](#)}

442. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not challenge your enemy when he is upcoming, as his upcoming will help him over you; nor challenge him when he is turning away, as his turning away will suffice you over him.”^{[43](#)}

443. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is most destructive to your enemy that you do not inform him that you have taken him as enemy.”^{[44](#)}

444. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the Aphorisms attributed to him: “It is most fatal to your enemy that you do not let him know that you have taken him as enemy.”^{[45](#)}

8.9 Not Punishing on the Basis of Conjecture

445. Al-Jamal: Ibn ‘Abbas entered the presence of Amir al-Mu’minin and Ali (a.s.) began to speak and said, “O Ibn ‘Abbas! Do you have any news?”

He said, “I saw Talha and Zubair.”

He told him, “Those two asked my permission for ‘Umra (pilgrimage) and I granted them permission after I had them pledge not to practice deception, commit perfidy or get involved in corruption.”

“O Ibn ‘Abbas! By Allah, they have no intention other than sedition. I have the vision that they have gone to Makka to seek assistance against me; for the treacherous libertine Ya‘la b. Manih has taken the wealth of Iraq and Fars to spend to this end. The two men will soon ruin my affair and shed the blood of my followers and companions.”

‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas said, “If you think so, why did you give them permission and why did you not put them in jail and shackle them so that the Muslims get rid of them?”

The Imam said, “O Ibn ‘Abbas! Are you getting me to start to tyrannize and practice evil before doing good; and punish them on the basis of conjecture and accusation? Far from it! By Allah, I will not withdraw from the pledge I made to Allah as to judge on the basis of justice and speaking the truth.”

“O Ibn ‘Abbas! I gave them permission and I know what they will commit; however, I asked Allah for help against them, and I swear by Allah that I will kill them and make them hopeless, and they will not fulfill their wish, for Allah will punish them for their injustice and perfidy to me and persecuting me.”[46](#)

446. Tarikh al-Tabari – related by Jundab: When Ali (a.s.) was informed about the frivolities of Bani Najiya and the murder of their chief, he said, “May his mother die! How feeble-minded he was and how daring he was toward Allah! Once somebody came to me and said, ‘There are men among your companions who, I am afraid, may separate from you. What do you think of them?’”

“I told him, ‘I do not administer punishment on the basis of accusation, nor do I chastise on the basis of conjecture; I do not fight against anyone but the one who has antagonized me and manifested his enmity to me, and that I will not start to fight him unless after I have invited him and presented my proofs to him. Then, if he repents and returns to us, I will accept him as one of our brothers; but if he refused and wished for nothing but battle against us, we will ask Allah for helping us against him and will fight him. May Allah keep away from me what He wishes!’”

“Once again he came to me and said, ‘I am afraid that ‘Abd Allah b. Wahb al-Rasbi and Zayd b. Husayn would ruin your affair. I heard them say things about you that if you hear, you will not let them go unless you kill or chastise them. So, never release them from the prison.’”

“I said, ‘I consult with you about them. What do you suggest?’ He said, ‘I suggest you to send for them and behead them.’”

“Then, I found out that he was neither pious nor wise. I said, ‘By Allah, I do not suppose you are pious, nor helpful or wise. By Allah, if I ever wanted to kill them, it would be more fitting for you to say to me, ‘Be wary of Allah! Why do you consider their blood as lawful since they have not killed anyone, nor have they rose up in war against you, or given up obeying you?’”[47](#)

447. Imam a-Sadiq: “Amir al-Mu‘minin Ali b. Abi Talib – upon whom be blessings from Allah – said in Kufa to the people, ‘O People of Kufa! You suppose I do not know what can rectify you? Yes, I do. But I do not like to do so by ruining myself.’”[48](#)

448. Al-Gharat – reporting on withdrawal of Khirrit b. Rashid, one of the Kharijis, from Amir al-Mu‘minin: ‘Abd Allah b. Qa‘in says: “... I came to Amir al-Mu‘minin and reported to him what I had heard about Khirrit, what I had told his cousin and what response he had given me.”

“The Imam said, ‘Leave him alone. If he accepts the truth, we will know him by this and accept him; and if he rejects it, we will send for him.’”

I said, ‘O Amir al-Mu‘minin! Why do you not seize him right now to have him give his assurances [to be secure of his evils]?’

He said, “If we treat all those whom we accuse like this, then we should fill up prisons by them; and I do

not believe it to be permissible to attack people, imprison them, and punish them, unless they have openly express their antagonism toward us.”⁴⁹ See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VI, 447 (The Revolt of Khirrit b. Rashid)

8.10 Warning against Torture

449. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who whips a person out of cruelty, Allah, the Blessed and the Exalted, will whip him with fiery whips.”⁵⁰

450. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Among all the people the most detested before Allah is the person who bares a Muslim’s back unrightfully and beat him who has not beaten him, or kill him who has not intended to kill him.”⁵¹

451. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to the chiefs [collectors] of land tax: “Even if there had been no fear of punishment for revolt and disobedience, which Allah has prohibited, the reward in keeping aloof from it would be enough (incentive) to abstain from going after it. Then, have pity [on others] so as to be pitied on; do not torture servants of Allah, and do not demand from them beyond their capacity.”⁵²

452. Imam Ali (a.s.): “O People! I called you to the Truth, you turned your back on me, and I beat you with the lash, you tired me out. Know that after me you will be ruled by rulers who would not be content with this; rather, they would torture you with whips and iron. But I do not torture you with whips and iron, for whoever tortures people in this world, Allah will torture him in the Hereafter.”⁵³

453. Musnad Zayd – related by Zayd b. Ali (a.s.), from his father, from his grandfather about Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.): “In truth, he [Ali (a.s.)] told ‘Umar concerning a pregnant woman who had admitted to committing adultery and ‘Umar had ordered her to be stoned: ‘Perhaps you have shouted at her or frightened her?’

‘Umar replied, ‘That is so.’

Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Have you not heard from the Messenger of Allah saying, “There should be no legal punishment to the one who has confessed after being tortured. Certainly, the confession of the person whom you shackle, incarcerate, or threaten is invalid”?’

He (the narrator) said, “‘Umar released the woman. Then he said, ‘Women are unable to give birth to a son like Ali (a.s.) b. Abi Talib [any more]. If Ali were not here ‘Umar would be ruined.””⁵⁴

454. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his sermon at the beginning of his hukuma: “Surely, Allah has made unlawful the things, which are not unknown and made lawful the things, which are without defect. He has declared paying regard to Muslims as the highest of all regards. He has placed the rights of Muslims in the same grade (of importance) as devotion (to Himself and His oneness). Therefore, a Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand every (other) Muslim is safe save in the matter of truth. It is not, therefore,

lawful to molest a Muslim except when it is obligatory.”[55](#)

8.11 Warning against Invective

455. Imam Ali (a.s.) – related by ‘Abd Allah b. Sharik: “Hujr b. ‘Adi and ‘Amr b. Hamq went out while openly disavowing and cursing the Shamis. Ali (a.s.) sent a message to them to avoid what he had been reported about.”

“The two came to Ali (a.s.) and said: ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! Are we not in the right?

“He said, ‘Yes.’”

“They asked again, ‘Are they not in the wrong?’”

“He said, ‘Yes.’”

“They said, ‘Why, then, did you prevent us from cursing them?’”

“He said, ‘I did not like you to be among the cursers and damners who curse and then disavow; but if you recounted their misbehavior and said: “Their conduct is such and their behavior is so”, it would be more in the right and more plausible to give excuse for. And if instead of cursing and disavowing them, you would say: “O Allah! Preserve our blood and theirs, put things right between them and us and deliver them from misleading so that the one who does not know the truth may know it and the one who is eager for misguidance may be averted from it”, this would be more lovely to me and better for you.’”

“They both said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! We accept your advice and we seek to be refined by your good manners.’”

456. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not find fault with your enemy even if he finds fault with you.”[56](#)

8.12 Gentleness as long as no Intrigue is Going on

457. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Gentleness will soften the roughness of opposition.”[57](#)

458. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in the aphorisms attributed to him: “Get close to your enemy as far as you may fulfil your need; and do not get too close to him lest you should debase your comrades and yourself. Look at the stick erected before the sun. If you slant it, the shadow will elongate; and if you go to extremes in slanting, the shadow will diminish.”[58](#)

459. Imam Ali (a.s.) – related from ‘Abd al-Malik b. Abi Harrat al-Hanafi: “One day Ali (a.s.) went out to give a sermon. He was lecturing while the Khawarij were chanting in a corner of the mosque *la hukm illa li’llah* (judgment belongs to Allah alone)!”

“Ali (a.s.) said, ‘Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest)! It is a true word that is intended for a false meaning. If they keep silent, I will abandon them; if they go on talking, I will debate with them; and if they rise against us, we will fight them.’”⁵⁹

460. Al-Sunan al-Kubra – related by Kathir b. Namir: “I was attending the Friday prayer and Ali (a.s.) was on the minbar, when a man rose and said, ‘La hukm illa li’llah (judgment belongs to Allah alone)!”

“Another person rose and said, ‘La hukm illa li’llah! Then the Khawarij stood up from around the mosque. Ali (a.s.) beckoned to them to sit down, [and said:] ‘Yes, judgment belongs to Allah alone; a true word that is intended for a false meaning! I look at you by the judgment of Allah. Let it be known that to me there are three manners for you: So long as you are with us, we will not repel you from the mosque where you utter the name of Allah; so long as your hands are in ours, we will not deprive you of the public assets; and we will not fight with you unless you fight against us.’ Then he went on with his sermon.”⁶⁰

461. Al-Amwal – related by Kathir b. Namir: “A man brought another man from Khawarij to Ali (a.s.) and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin! I saw this man cursing you.’

He said, ‘Curse him back, the same way as he cursed me.’

He said, ‘He threatened you!’

Ali (a.s.) said, ‘I will not kill the one who does not fight against me.’

Then he said, ‘They have three rights over us: not to prevent them from the mosques where they utter the name of Allah; not to deprive them of public assets so long as their hands are in ours; and not to fight with them so long as they do not fight against us.’”⁶¹

462. Al-Musannif – related by Kathir b. Namir: “A man brought another man from Khawarij to Ali (a.s.) and said he [and his band] threatened you and then ran away, and I caught this man.

The Imam said, ‘Should I kill the person who has not fought against me?’

The man said, ‘He cursed you!’

He said, ‘You curse him too, or let him go.’”⁶²

See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu’minin, VI, 390 (The Imam’s Patience for the Persecutions from the Khawarij and Tolerance towards them).

8.13 Exiling or Incarcerating the Plotters

463. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: “It is related that ‘Umran b. Husayn was one of those who had withdrawn

from Ali (a.s.) and Ali (a.s.) had exiled him to Mada'in for he had said, 'If Ali dies, I do not know how his death will come! And if he is to be killed – that I hope he will – I look forward to that!'" [63](#)

464. Al-Gharat – related by Sa'id Ash'ari: "When setting out for Nahrawan, Ali (a.s.) put a man from the Nakha' tribe by the name of Hani b. Hudha in his place. He wrote to Ali (a.s.) that 'the Ghani and Bahila (tribes) have revolted and prayed that your enemy gain victory [over you]'.

Ali (a.s.) wrote back, 'Deport them from Kufa and do not neglect any of them'." [64](#)

465. Tarikh al-Tabari – related by Mahall b. Khalifa: "A man from Bani Sadus tribe named 'Ayzar b. Akhnas who believed in Khawarij [sympathizing with them] set off a trip toward them. In the outskirts of Mada'in, he ran into 'Adi b. Hatam who was accompanied by Aswad b. Qays Muradi and Aswad b. Yazid Muradi."

"When encountered 'Adi, 'Ayzar asked him, 'Are you safely redeemed or tyrannically sinful?'"

"'Adi said, 'Safely redeemed.'"

"The two Muradis said, 'You did ask this only out of the evil you have in you. We know for sure that you harbor views of Khawarij. O 'Ayzar! You will not go away from us until we take you to Amir al-Mu'minin and report your state to him.'"

"A short while later Ali (a.s.) came and they reported to him, saying, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! He is in the same opinion as that of the Khawarij. We know him.'"

"He said, 'His shedding blood is not permissible to us; however, send him to prison.'"

"'Adi b. Hatam said, 'O Amir al-Mu'minin! Leave him with me and I ensure that no harm would come to you from him.'"

"Ali (a.s.) left him with 'Adi." [65](#)

[1.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5684, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 294/5253.

[2.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 131, Tadhkira al-Khawas: 120.

[3.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 131, Ibid., 145. Also see: Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/ 357.

[4.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 40.

[5.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/337, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/407/628.

[6.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 468.

[7.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 360, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/500/430, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 8/39.

[8.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf: 3/212.

[9.](#) Al-Mi'yar wa al-Muwazina: 131.

[10.](#) Al-Futuh: 3/78.

[11.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8230, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 445/7838.

[12.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8043.

[13.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7232.

[14.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1926.

- [15.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1517.
- [16.](#) Al-Khisal: 426/3, Bihar al-Anwar: 76/16/1.
- [17.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9784.
- [18.](#) Al-Qur'an, 41:34-35.
- [19.](#) Al-Khisal: 633/10, Bihar al-Anwar: 71/421/58.
- [20.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20321/680.
- [21.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10138, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 506/9288.
- [22.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9379, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 470/8579.
- [23.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Khasa's al-A'imma: 123, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/367.
- [24.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 62, Al-Gharat: 1/321.
- [25.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10301.
- [26.](#) Ibid., 10197.
- [27.](#) Ibid., 5781.
- [28.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/311/575.
- [29.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3258, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/343/947.
- [30.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7956.
- [31.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10298. Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) says: "When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.) came down to the region of Nahrawan, he asked about Jamil b. Bashiri, Anushirwan's scribe. They said he was still alive and having [his] daily sustenance. He ordered him to be summoned. When he arrived, he [Ali (a.s.)] he found him sound in his senses (except for his sight), clear-minded and highly talented. He asked him, 'O Jamil! How should man be?'

He said, 'He should have few friends and many enemies!'

The Imam said, 'You uttered a novel thing, O Jamil, as people are unanimous that it is better to have many friends.'

He said, 'It is not as they suppose; for when the friends are required to do something, they do not act as they should, as it is said, "The ship sank because of too many sailors".'

Amir al-Mu'minin said, 'I have tried this and it is true; but what benefit is there in having many enemies?'

He said, 'When there are too many enemies, man is always cautious and careful not to utter a word by which to get stuck [in trouble], or make a blunder to be reprimanded for. Therefore, he is always protected from erring. Amir al-Mu'minin approved this. (al-Da'wat: 297/65, Bihar al-Anwar: 34/345)

- [32.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10216.
- [33.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/282/231.
- [34.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/309/543.
- [35.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 6663.
- [36.](#) Ibid., 10198.
- [37.](#) Ibid., 2462.
- [38.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/317/634.
- [39.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8984.
- [40.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2347.
- [41.](#) Ibid., 10258.
- [42.](#) Kanz al-Fawa'id: 2/183, Bihar al-Anwar: 78/93/104.
- [43.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10306.
- [44.](#) Nathr al-Durar: 1/293.
- [45.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/283/244.
- [46.](#) Al-Jamal: 166.
- [47.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/131, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 3/148, Al-Gharat: 1/371.
- [48.](#) Al-Mufid, Al-Amali: 207/40, Bihar al-Anwar: 41/110/18.
- [49.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/333 & 335, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/407/628, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 3/129.

- [50.](#) Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 2/541/1927.
- [51.](#) Da‘a‘im al-Islam: 2/444/1551, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 10/148/588.
- [52.](#) Waq‘atu Siffin: 108, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 51, Al-Mi‘yar wa al-Mawazina: 122.
- [53.](#) Al-Gharat, 2/458, Al-Irshad: 1/322, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 2/306.
- [54.](#) Masnad Zayd: 335, Kashf al-Yaqin: 73/55, Dhakha‘ir al-Uqbi.
- [55.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 167, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/40/26.
- [56.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10418.
- [57.](#) Ibid., 560.
- [58.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/342/923.
- [59.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/72, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/398, Ansab al-Ashraf: 3/135.
- [60.](#) Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 8/319/16763, Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/73, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/398.
- [61.](#) Al-Amwal: 245/567, Kanz al-Ummal: 11/300/31569.
- [62.](#) Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar: 8/614/147, Kanz al-Ummal: 11/319/31616.
- [63.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 4/77.
- [64.](#) Al-Gharat: 1/18, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/356/588.
- [65.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 5/89.

Chapter Nine: Warfare Policies

9.1 Endeavors in Military Training

A. Training the Troops

466. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his commandments to Ziyad b. Nadr when he assigned him as the commander of his army in the battle of Siffin: “You should know that the vanguards are the harbingers, and the harbingers are the front. If you leave your country and approach your enemy, you should not feel weary from addressing the front to every side and to some of the defiles, woods, and secret places as well as every area so that your enemies will not raid or trap you.”

“Do not give the orders of directing the battalions and tribes from morning to evening unless there are covering powers beyond them.”

“If a matter occurs or a trouble befalls you, your camp should be on the heights, versants, or in rivers so that they will form fortresses for you and will prevent your enemies from reaching you. Your fighting should be in one or two faces. Order the harbingers to settle on the summits of mountains, heights, and on the edges of rivers. They should oversee for you so that the enemies will not attack you from an expected or secured place.”

“If you want to reside, you should reside collectively, and when you want to continue your march, you should continue collectively. When you reside at night, you should encompass your camp with spears and armors. The archers should protect the carriers of armors so that you will not be taken surprisingly

or inattentively.”

“Guard your army yourself. Beware, you should not sleep unbrokenly and should not pass a night with deep sleep. You should keep up this tradition until you meet your enemy.”

“You should be slow in fighting. You may hurry only when a good opportunity arises for you. Do not fight before the enemy attacks you or you receive my order. Peace and Allah’s Mercy be upon you.”[1](#)

467. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his commandments to Ma’qal b. Qays Riyahi when he was dispatched to Syria at the head of a vanguard contingent three thousand strong: “Fear Allah before Whom attendance is inevitable, and with other than Whom there is no meeting. Do not fight except with those who fight you. Travel in the two cool periods (i.e. morning and evening). Let the men have midday sleep. March easily and do not travel during the early night for Allah has made it for resting and has ordained it for staying, nor for journeying.

Therefore give rest to your body in the night and let your carrier-beasts also rest. When you are sure that morning has appeared and when dawn has dawned commence your journey with Allah’s blessings. If and when you face the enemy stand in the midst of your comrades. Do not get too near the foe, like the one who wants to commence the fighting, nor remain too distant like him who is afraid of action, till you receive my orders. Hatred for them should not lead you to fight before inviting them (to guidance) and exhausting your pleas before them.”[2](#)

468. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to some of his chiefs of army: “If they [the enemies] return to the umbrella of obedience, then this is all that we want. But if the condition of these people points out towards disruption and disobedience, then, taking with you those who obey you, rush upon those who disobey you. And while you have those with you who follow you do not worry about those who hold back from you, because the absence of a halfhearted man is better than his presence, and his sitting down is better than his rising up.”[3](#)

469. Imam Ali (a.s.): “If the enemy launches an assault upon you, then array your troops on the gates of the ditches for there exists nothing save swords; and stand firm on the ground after arraying the troops. Do not look at the enemies in the face and their number should not scare you, look to your own land [and front] instead. If they assault you, bend over on your horses and hide yourselves behind your shields like an impenetrable stronghold; and if they turn their back on you, launch an attack on them with your swords. If they stand still, and you stand still on the other side too. And if they run away, rush on them and catch them.”[4](#)

470. Imam Ali (a.s.): “If, God forbid, you happen to face a defeat, hold a gathering and remember Allah and remember how the deserters of the battlefield are promised [to be punished], and reproach the one whom you see turning his back on the enemy. Gather the banners and unite them. The roughriders must hasten to bring the fugitives back to the troops and the army; and anyone hiding in the hideaways is to come back to you. When the dispersed troops were gathered and your power was reclaimed and defeat

state left you, hand over the troops to the commanders, mobilize the forces and fight. Seek assistance from Allah and be patient, for there is great reward for perseverance at the time of defeat and for the brave man's surprise attack on the enemy."⁵

471. Tarikh Damishq – related by Ibn ‘Abbas: “Women fail to give birth to the like of Amir al-Mu’minin Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) any longer. By Allah, I neither see nor heard of any chief to be compared to him. I saw him at the battle of Siffin wearing a turban with the folds on both sides let down. His two eyes looked [glazing] like two fiery lights. He was standing before a small group and inciting them to fight until he reached me while I was standing amid the people.”

“Then he said, ‘O Gathering of the Muslims! Feel the fear of Allah, lower the voices, put on tranquility, wield your spears, and before drawing your sword give it a good shake. Wave your swords to the left and right, and strike them with their sharp edges. Coordinate your swords with your steps and your arrows with your spears. Certainly, you are in the sight of Allah and in the company of the Prophet’s cousin.”

“Launch your assaults consecutively and be ashamed of deserting, for it is a great shame that will remain in the groups and generations, and it is [turned into] fire on the Resurrection.”

“Keep yourselves lively and delighted, and step toward death readily and lightheartedly. Aim at the bulk of the [enemy’s] troop and the tent whose ropes are stretched around and aim at their hearts, for the Satan has mounted the unruly camel and has extended his arms, holding one hand forward to attack and a foot backward to run away. So stay firm and persevere, so as the Light of Allah may shine on you, as *(...and when you have the upper hand and Allah is with you, and He will not stint [the reward of] your works.)*⁶”⁷

472. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not let your banners bend down, nor leave it alone. Do not give it to anyone except the brave and the defenders of honor among you because they alone endure the befalling of troubles.... And know that the guardians are those who surround the banners and encircle them on both sides, their rear and their front, and do not let it be ruined. They do not separate from them lest they give them over to the enemy, nor they go ahead of them lest they leave them alone.”⁸

B. Arrangement the Troops

473. Da‘a’im al-Islam – about Ali (a.s.): “When preparing for combat, he would arrange the troops into the left, the right and the middle flanks, with himself stationing in the middle. He would appoint liaisons for them, would send forth harbingers and would order them to lower their voices, to pray, to be one in the heart, to draw their swords, to display their power. He would also order every group to be stationed in their own positions and that everyone who would make a raid should return to his position after the raid.”⁹

474. Da‘a’im al-Islam – about Ali (a.s.): “Verily, when he prepared to go on a battle, he would prepare

the battalions and separate among the tribes. He would appoint a person over every group, array the troops, and divide them into groups. Then he would set off for the battle.”^{[10](#)}

475. Imam Ali (a.s.) – on how to wage a war: “Send the infantry and the archers ahead to storm them [the enemy] with arrows, while the two flanks raid on them with spears. Set the riders and the elite forces as the support of the banner and the forerunners; and do not leave your positions for a rider from the enemy who has been left alone.”^{[11](#)}

476. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his commandment to the troops when dispatching them to confront the enemy: “When you proceed towards the enemy or he proceeds towards you, the position of your forces should be on the high ground or on the mountain slopes or the bends of rivers so that it may serve you as shelter and a place to return to and hindrance to the enemy. Your encounter should be from one side or two sides. Place watchers on the peaks of mountains and the raised sides of the high ground so that the enemy may not approach you from any place, whether of danger or safety. And know that the vanguard of an army serves as their eyes, and the eyes of the vanguard are their informers.”

“Beware of dispersal. When you halt do so together, and when you move you should move together. When night comes fix your spears in a circle and do not sleep except for dosing or napping.”^{[12](#)}

C. Enjoining to Get Hold of One's Weapon in Battles

477. Da'a'im al-Islam: “Verily, he [Ali (a.s.)] did not like a man to drop his weapon while in combat. When pointing out the ‘Prayer of Fear’, Allah said, (***The faithless are eager that you should be oblivious of your weapons and your baggage, so that they could assault you all at once.***)^{[13](#)}”

“So, the best thing for those who are in combat is not to separate their weapon from themselves by any means.”^{[14](#)} See The Encyclopedia of Amir al-Mu'minin, VII, 100, (Martyrdom of Muhammad b. Abi Bakr), and 104, (the sorrow of the Imam).

D. Exploiting the Opportunities

478. Imam Ali (a.s.) – about battling: “The one who notices a chance from the enemy should raid on him and take advantage of the opportunity – of course after strengthening his position – and when his goal is achieved he should return to his position.”^{[15](#)}

479. Waq'atu Siffin: [in the battle of Siffin], Ahnaf b. Qayth Sa'di addressed the people and said, “O people of Iraq! By Allah, You will not confront this issue with your necks more lowered than [you are] today. They lifted the veils of shame from before your eyes, and they do not fight for the religion nor do they resist except out of shamefulness. So, proceed!”

“They said, ‘If we proceed today, [it will be the same way as] we proceeded yesterday, too. O Amir al-Mu'minin! What do you say?’”

“The Imam said, ‘At the time of proceeding, do proceed; and at the time of withdrawal, withdraw. Proceed before they proceed toward you.”^{[16](#)}

E. Tactical Withdrawal

480. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Retreat at the right time is the same as victory in its time.”^{[17](#)}

481. Imam Ali (a.s.) – he would say to his companions at the time of battle: “The retreat after which return is intended and the withdrawal after which attack is in view should not make you unhappy.”^{[18](#)}

9.2 Forming Especial Forces

482. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): “The elite army included six thousand of Ali (a.s.)’s companions.”^{[19](#)}

483. Al-Ikhtisas – related by ‘Ali b. al-Hakam: “Amir al-Mu’minin’s companions were those to whom he said, ‘Swear [your] allegiance! I do swear allegiance to you by the Paradise, rather than by gold and silver. Our Prophet said in the past: Swear allegiance as I do not swear allegiance to you except by the Paradise’.”

“And they [Amir al-Mu’minin’s companions] included: Salman al-Farsi; Al-Miqdad; Abudhar al-Ghaffari; ‘Ammar b. Yasir; Abu Sasan and Abu ‘Amr al-Ansariyan; Sahl (Badri) and ‘Uthman, the sons to Hanif al-Ansari; and Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari.”

“And from among his companions were: ‘Amr b. al-Hamq al-Khaza’i, the Arab; Maytham al-Tammar – Maytham b. Yahya, the freed slave – Rushid al-Hijri; Habib b. Mazhar al-Asadi; and Muhammad b. Abi Bakr.”

“His friends included: Al-‘Im al-Azdi; Suwayd b. Ghafla al-Ja’fi; al-Harith b. ‘Abd Allah al-A‘ur al-Hamdani; Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Jadli, Abu Yahya Hakim b. Sa’d al-Hanafi.”

“His elite forces included: Abu al-Radi ‘abd Allah b. Yahya al-Khadrami; Salim b. Qays al-Hilali; and ‘Ubayda al-Salmani al-Muradi, the Arab.”

“The elect among his friends included: Tamim b. Hadhim al-Naji (who was killed as a martyr with Ali (a.s.)); Qanbar (a slave freed by Ali b. Abi Talib – a.s.); Abu Fakhta (freed slave by Bani Hashim); and ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Rafi’ (who was Ali (a.s.)’s secretary).”^{[20](#)}

484. Rijal al-Kashshi – related by Abu Jarud: “I said to Asbagh b. Nabata: What is the status of this man [Ali (a.s.)] among you?”

“He said, ‘I do not know what you say; but our swords were on our shoulders, whomever he beckoned we would strike by sword. Ali (a.s.) would say to us: Swear [your] allegiance! I do swear allegiance to you by the Paradise, rather than by gold and silver, and your allegiance is but for death. Certainly a

group of the ancients from the Bani Isra'il swore allegiance among themselves. None of them departed from the world except that he was a prophet to his folk or his village or himself; and you are like them, except that you are not prophets.”^{[21](#)}

485. Rijal al-Kashshi: “It is related from Amir al-Mu'minin that he told 'Abd Allah b. Yahya al-Hadrami in the battle of Jamal: Joyful tidings to you O son of Yahya! For you and your father are indeed among the elite forces. The Messenger of Allah informed me that you and your father are named among the elite forces. Allah through the Prophet's tongue called you the elite forces, and said 'Elite forces consist of six or five thousand people.’”^{[22](#)}

9.3 Paying Special Attention to the Armed Forces

486. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then inspect the affairs of the soldiers as parents inspect their own child. Never let anything through which you have strengthened them distress you, and disdain not a kindness you have undertaken for them, even if it were small, for it will invite them to counsel you sincerely and trust you. Do not leave aside the examination of their minor affairs while depending upon (the examination of) the great, for there is a place where they will profit from a trifling kindness, and an occasion in which they cannot do without the great.”

“Among the chiefs of your army favor most him who assists the soldiers with his aid and bestows upon them what is at his disposal to the extent that suffices both them and the members of their families left behind. Then their concern in battle with the enemy will be a single concern, for your kind inclination toward them will incline their hearts to you.

Verily the foremost delight of the eye for rulers is the establishment of justice in the land and the appearance of love for them among the subjects. But surely the subjects' love will not appear without the well-being of their breasts, and their sincerity (toward rulers) will not become free from blemishes unless they watch over their rulers, find their governments of little burden and cease to hope that their period (of rule) will soon come to an end.”

“Therefore let their hopes be expanded, and persist in praising them warmly and taking into account the (good) accomplishments of everyone among them who has accomplished, for frequent mention of their good deeds will encourage the bold and rouse the indolent, God willing.”

“Then recognize in every man that which he has accomplished, attribute not one man's accomplishment to another and fall not short (of attributing) to him the full extent of his accomplishment. Let not a man's eminence invite you to consider as great an accomplishment that was small, nor a man's lowliness to consider as small an accomplishment that was great.”^{[23](#)}

9.4 Caring for the Troops Morale

A. Encouragement

487. Al-Kafi – related by Abu Sadiq: “I heard Ali (a.s.) encouraged people [to war in] three places: Jamal, Siffin, and Nahrawan.”

“He would say, ‘O Servants of Allah! Be wary of Allah, cast down your eyes, lower your voices, cut down your words; and prepare yourselves for battle, conflict, confrontation, struggle, warfare, involvement, and tough combat; and be steadfast, (...**and remember Allah greatly so that you may be felicitous. And obey Allah and His Apostle, and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone. And be patient; indeed Allah will be with the patient.**)[24](#)[25](#)

Imam Ali (a.s.) – “Delivered in the Battle of Jamal when Amir al-Mu'minin gave the banner to his son Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya: “Mountains may move from their position but you should not move from yours. Grit your teeth. Lend to Allah your head (in fighting for Allah, give yourself to Allah). Plant your feet firmly on the ground. Have your eye on the remotest foe and close your eyes (to their numerical majority). And keep sure that succor is but from Allah, the Glorified.”[26](#)

489. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to his followers at the time of battle: “The retreat after which return is intended and the withdrawal after which attack is in view should not make you unhappy. Do justice with the swords (Allow your swords to do their duties). Keep ready a place for the falling of bodies (of your foe); prepare yourselves for hurling strong spears and striking swords with full force; and keep your voices down as that keeps off cowardice. By Him Who broke open the seed (for growing) and created living beings, they [the hypocrites] had not accepted Islam but they had secured safety (by verbally professing it) and had hidden their disbelief. Consequently, when they found helpers for their disbelief they disclosed it.”[27](#)

490. Imam Ali (a.s.) – exhorting his followers to fight: “Put the armored men forward and keep the unarmored ones behind. Grit your teeth because this will make the swords skip off the skull, and dodge on the sides of the spears for it changes the direction of their blades. Close the eyes because it strengthens the spirit and gives peace to the heart. Kill the voices because this will keep off spiritlessness. Do not let your banner bend down, nor leave it alone. Do not give it to anyone except the brave and the defenders of honor among you because they alone endure the befalling of troubles; they surround the banners and encircle them on both sides, their rear and their front. They do not separate from them lest they give them over (to the enemy). They do not go ahead of them lest they leave them alone. Everyone should deal with his adversary and also help his comrade by his own life, and should not leave the adversary to his comrade lest both his own adversary and his comrade join against him.”

“By Allah, even if you run away from the sword of today you would not remain safe from the sword of the world to come. You are the foremost among the Arabs and great figures. Certainly in running away there is the wrath of Allah, unceasing disgrace and lasting shame. And certainly a runner-away does not

lengthen his life, nor does any thing come to intervene between him and his day (of death). Who is there to go towards Allah like the thirsty going to the water? Paradise lies under the edges of spears. Today the reputations (about the valor of warriors) will be tested. By Allah! I am more eager to meet them (in combat) than they are for (returning to) their houses!”

“O my Allah! If they reject truth, disperse their group, divide their words (opinions) and destroy them on account of their sins. They will not budge from their stand till the continuous striking of spears causes piercing (of wounds) through which wind may pass, and the hitting of swords cuts through the skull, cleaves bones and breaks forearms and legs, till they are attacked by contingent after contingent and assaulted by detachments which are followed by reserves for support, till their cities are continuously assailed by force after force, and till the horses trample even the extreme ends of the lands, the tracks of their beast and their meadows.”[28](#)

491. Al-Kafi – related by Malik b. A‘yan: Amir al-Mu‘minin – May the blessings of Allah be upon him – exhorted people in Siffin and said, “Allah guided you to a transaction that will deliver you from painful torments and persuade you to the good and the faith in Allah. And He has set aside as rewards for this the forgiveness of your sins and agreeable abodes in the Garden of Eden. Allah, the Exalted said, **(Indeed Allah loves those who fight in His way in ranks, as if they were a compact structure.)**”[29](#)

“Then, put the armored men forward and keep the unarmored ones behind. Grit your teeth because this will make the swords skip off the skull, and dodge on the sides of the spears for it changes the direction of their blades. Close the eyes because it strengthens the spirit and gives peace to the heart. Kill the voices because this will keep off spiritlessness and is better for enhancing dignity.”[30](#)

492. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in the aphorisms attributed to him: “No one will practice forbearance in war and veraciously face it except three groups: Those who are insightful in religion; or those who are zealous over sanctities; or those to whom degradation is torturous.”[31](#)

B. Watchword

493. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Verily, the Messenger of Allah commanded to proclaiming watchwords before [launching] war and said, ‘Let there be one of Divine names in your watchwords.’”[32](#)

494. Waq‘atu Siffin – related by Asbaq b. Nabata: Ali (a.s.) never set out to fight except that he would cry “Kaf, Ha, Ya, ‘Ayn, Sad.”[33](#)

495. Al-Imam al-Sadiq: Our watchword is “O Muhammad, O Muhammad!”

And the watchword of the Muslims in the battle of Badr was “O Divine Triumph come nigh, come nigh!”

And the watchword of the Muslims in the battle of Uhud was “O Divine Triumph come nigh!”

And the watchword of the battle of Bani Nadir was “O Holy Ghost comfort!”

And the watchword of the battle of Bani Qaynaqa' was "O Our Lord! Never will they overpower You!"

And the watchword of the battle of Ta'if was, "O Ridwan (O Approver)!"

And the watchword of the battle of Hunayn was "O Sons of 'Abd Allah! O Sons of 'Abd Allah!"

And the watchword of the battle of Ahzab was "Ha, Mim, they do not see!"

And the watchword of the battle of Bani Qurayza was "O Salam! Keep them safe!"

And the watchword of the battle of Marisi', i.e., the battle of Bani Mustalaq was "Look, things return to Allah!"

And the watchword of the battle of Hudyabiya was "Look, may Allah's curse be on the unjust!"

And the watchword of the battle of Khaybar, i.e., the battle of al-Qamus³⁴ was "O Ali, forgive them out of dignity!"

And the watchword of the battle of Tabuk was "O Ahad (One)! O Samad (All-Embracing)!"

And the watchword of the battle of Bani Maluh was "Cause them to die! Cause them to die!"

And the watchword of the battle of Siffin was "O Divine triumph!"

And the watchword of Husayn (a.s.) was "O Muhammad!"

And our watchword was "O Muhammad!"³⁵

496. Sharh Nahj al-Balagha – related by Salam b. Suwayd from Imam Ali (a.s.) concerning the phrase 'Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest)!': "This is the sign of triumph."

[Salam says:] "Allahu Akbar" was Ali (a.s.)'s watchword that he uttered in battles and then launched his attacks. By Allah, he would lead whoever followed him or contested him to the fountainheads of death."³⁶

497. Waq'atu Siffin – related by Tamim: Whenever set out on a battle, Ali (a.s.) would utter the name of God when mounting.... Then he would say, "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar! La ilaha ill-Allah wa Allahu Akbar (There is no god except Allah and Allah is the greatest!) O Allah! O Ahad! O Samad! O Lord of Muhammad! In the Name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful!

There is no power and no strength save in Allah, the All-Exalted, the All-Supreme. (***All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, the Compassionate the Merciful, Master of the Day of Retribution. You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help.***³⁷) O Allah! Keep away from us the power and strength of the oppressors!" This was Ali (a.s.)'s watchword in the battle of Siffin.³⁸

498. Waq'atu Siffin: The sign of the people of Iraq in [the battle of] Siffin was a white piece of wool cloth worn over their heads and shoulders and their watchword was "O Allah! O Ahad! O Samad! O Lord of Muhammad! O Compassionate, O Merciful!"

And the sign of the people of Sham was piece of yellow cloth worn over their heads and shoulders and their watchword was "We are the slaves of Allah indeed, indeed; O Avengers for 'Uthman's blood!"³⁹

C. Inculcation of Victory

499. Al-Jamal – related from 'Amr b. Dinar: Amir al-Mu'minin siad to his son Muhammad, "Hold the banner and move on!" And Ali (a.s.) was following behind him. Then Ali (a.s.) called him, "O Abu al-Qasim!"

He replied, "Yes. O Father!"

He said, "My son! What you see should not frighten you. I carried the banner whereas I was smaller than you were and the enemy did not frighten me for I did not confront anyone except that I inculcated in myself that I would kill him. So, with the help of Allah implant in your mind that you will triumph over them; and do not let mistrust in yourself bring you to your knees, as it is the worst degradations."

[Muhammad said:] I said: "O Father! I hope I will be the way you like me to be. God willing!"⁴⁰

D. Warning against Escape from the Battleground

500. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Escape from battle is among the great sins."⁴¹

501. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Escape is one of degradations."⁴²

502. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Launch successive attacks, and feel ashamed of escape for it is disgrace among generations (to come) and (cause of awarding you) fire on the Day of Judgment. Give your lives (to Allah) willingly and walk towards death with ease."⁴³

503. Imam Ali (a.s.): "The escapee (from the battle) should know that he has infuriated Allah and is destroying himself. Verily, in escape there is enmity to Allah, perpetual degradation, eternal disgrace, and depravity of life. The escapee will not live long, nor will there come an interval between him and the day he is destined to die, nor will he please Allah. Man's dying in honesty and truthfulness before committing such practice [escape from battle] is better than involving in these practices and accepting them."⁴⁴

504. Al-Kafi – related by Malik b. A'yan: Amir al Mu'inin exhorted to [battle of] Siffin saying, "...May Allah have mercy on he who helps his brother and does not leave the adversary to his comrade lest both his own adversary and his comrade join against him. This way he will be condemned and will come to baseness; and why should it not be so when his brother fights with two people whereas he has given up

and left his adversary to his brother and while fleeing looks back at the enemy and his brother. Every one who does so, Allah will regard him as His enemy. Then, do not expose yourselves to enmity with Allah for you will certainly be moving toward Him.

Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, said, ***(Flight will not avail you should you flee from death of from being killed, and then you will be let to enjoy only for a little while.)***[45](#)

“By Allah, if you flee from the sword of the world, you will not be secure against the swords of the world to come. Take recourse in patience and truthfulness, for triumph would verily follow patience. And wage jihad for the sake of Allah, jihad which is worthy of Him; and there is no power and no strength save in Allah.”[46](#)

E. Hiding away whatever that Ruins the Troops' Morale

505. Waq'atu Siffin – related by Abu Rawq: Ziyad b. al-Nadr al-Harithi said to 'Abd Allah b. Badil b. Warqa': Certainly our day and theirs is so hard. No one will be patient with it except the one who is brave-hearted, well-intended and steadfast. By Allah, I do not suppose that today anyone would survive except the villainous.

'Abd Allah b. Badil said, “By Allah, I do think so, too.”

Ali (a.s.) said, “Let this word be hidden in your hearts. Do not express it, and nobody should hear it from you. Verily, Allah has destined some group to be killed and some to die; every one will receive his death as it is ordained. So, happy are those who fight in the way of Allah and those who are killed in obedience to Him.”[47](#)

9.5 Deception

506. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Whenever I relate a hadith from the Prophet, I swear by Allah, that it is more likeable to me to fall off [such a high place as] heaven than to pass a lie upon him; it is [also] true when I talk among you: Verily war is deception[48](#).”[49](#)

507. Imam al-Baqir (a.s.): Verily Ali (a.s.) would say, “I would like it more If the birds snatch me away than I pass a lie upon the messenger of Allah that he has not said. I heard from the Prophet saying on the day of [the battle of] Khandaq: ‘War is deception.’ He would say, ‘Speak in any way you wish’ [when in battle].”[50](#)

508. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in the aphorisms attributed to him: “In the battle trust your deceptions more than you trust your strength; [also] be more delighted at your vigilance than at your valor, for the war is the war of the fearless and to the advantage of the vigilant.”[51](#)

509. Al-Kafi – related from 'Adi b. Hatam: Indeed, when Amir al-Mu'minin confronted Mu'awiya in Siffin

he would raise his voice so that his companions hear him and say, “By Allah, I will kill Mu‘awiya and his companions!” Then, he would lower his voice and say, “God willing!”

I was near him and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu‘minin! You have truly sworn to do it. And then you said “God willing”. What did you mean by this?’

He said, “War is deception, and I am not a liar to the faithful. I wanted to incite my comrades against the enemy so as not to show weakness and to encourage them [to fight] against the enemy. Then in future the wisest of them will benefit from this word. God willing!”[52](#)

510. Tafsir al-Qummi – in the report about the battle of Khandaq: While trotting, Amir al Mu‘minin passed by...’Amr [b. ‘Abduwud] asked him who he was.

He said, “I am Ali b. Abi Talib, cousin to the Messenger of Allah and his son-in-law.”

‘Amr said, “By Allah, your father was an old friend of mine and I do not like to kill you. When your cousin sent you to me, wasn’t he afraid that I would snatch you up with my lance and leave you in the air, neither killed nor alive?!”

Amir al Mu‘minin told him, “My cousin knew that if you killed me I would enter paradise; but if I killed you, you would abide in the fire [of the hell] and I in the paradise.”

‘Amr said, “Both of them would be to your benefit, O Ali! And this is not a fair dividing!”

He said, “Leave it aside for now! I heard you say while holding on to the curtain of the Ka‘ba: ‘No one will presents three request to me in battle except that I would answer to one of them.’ And [now] I have three requests from you, and you answer to one of them.”

‘Amr said, “Say what they are O Ali!”

He said, “One is that you bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.”

‘Amr said, “Give it up and ask for the second one!”

He said, “That you go back and turn this army [of yours] away from [confronting] the Messenger of Allah. If he [the Prophet] is truthful, you will be honored too because of him; and if he is a liar, the Arab robbers and rascals will suffice [to kill] him.”

‘Amr said, “Wouldn’t the Quraysh women, then, say to each other and the poets [say] that I as afraid of battle and retreated? [In that case] I wouldn’t have assisted those who had selected me as their chief.”

Amir al-Mu‘minin said, “My third [request] is that you dismount [your horse] so that I would fight with you, as you are mounted and I am on foot.”

Then he dismounted his horse and hamstrung it and said, "This is a trait that I did not suppose any of the Arabs would have me do it. Then he started [the battle] and struck his sword at Ali (a.s.)'s head. Amir al-Mu'minin held his head behind his shield, but the sword rent the shield and hit his head.

Ali (a.s.) said to him, "O 'Amr! Is it not too much for you that I am fighting with you who are an Arab warrior, and you are being assisted?"

'Amr turned his face back and Amir al-Mu'minin delivered a swift blow on his both knees and cut them off. A huge cloud of dust rose around them. The hypocrites said Ali b. Abi Talib was killed.

Then the dust settled for them to see. At this moment, they saw Amir al-Mu'minin sitting on 'Amr's chest holding his beard and going to cut his head off. Then he cut off his head and took it to the Prophet, while his own head was bleeding due to the hit of 'Amr's sword and his sword was dripping with blood. Holding 'Amr's head in his hand, he began ranting:

"I am Ali, son of 'Abd al-Muttalib,

Death is better for the knight than flight."

Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah said, "Did you play a trick on him?"

He replied, "Yes. O Messenger of Allah! War is deception."[53](#)

9.6 Ethics of War

A. Avoidance of Initiating a Battle

511. Tarikh al-Tabari – related from Jundab al-Uzdi: Truly, whenever in the company of Ali (a.s.) we confronted the enemy, he would command us: "Do not fight them until they start; because you are, by the grace of Allah, in the right, and letting them initiate the fighting will be another point from your side against them. Then, whenever you fight with them and defeat them, do not kill the runner away, do not murder the wounded, do not slander, nor mutilate the dead.

When you reach the encampment of the enemy do not plunder nor enter a house without permission. Do not seize anything from them unless what you find in their military base. Do not inflict pain on women by persecuting them even if they attack your honor with filthy words and abuse your officers, as they [the women] are weak in power and lacking in willpower."[54](#)

512. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar after the battle of Siffin: "Beware of initiating war with this group unless they begin it, until you encounter them and hear their words. Their evils should not prompt you to fight before inviting them [to guidance] and repeatedly avert them from seeking pretexts."[55](#)

513. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to his army before confronting the enemy in Siffin: “

Do not fight them unless they initiate the fighting because, by the grace of Allah, you are in the right and to leave them till they begin fighting will be another point from your side against them. If, by the will of Allah, the enemy is defeated then do not kill the runner away, do not strike a helpless person, do not finish off the wounded.”[56](#)

B. Avoidance of Calling to Power

514. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to his son, Imam Hasan (a.s.): “Do not call out for fighting, but if you are called to it do respond, because the caller to fighting is a rebel and the rebel deserves destruction.”[57](#)

C. Diplomatic Immunity of Envoys

515. Imam Ali (a.s.): “If you triumph over a man of the enemy and he claimed to be an envoy to you, in case it proved to be true and he brought a witness to it, then do not do any harm to him until he delivers his message and return to his comrades; but if you find no witness to his claim, do not accept his assertion.” [58](#)

D. Raising an Argument before a Battle

516. Al-Sunan al-Kubra – related by Bara’ b. ‘Azib: ”Ali (a.s.) dispatched me to [fight against] Hawarij in Nahrawan. Before the battle I invited them [to guidance] thrice.”[59](#)

517. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to the people of San’a and Janad who were hostile and perfidious: “When my envoy comes to you, disperse and go to your residences, so that I grant you amnesty, forgive your ignorance, protect those of you who are away, and treat you by the ordinances of the Qur’an. But if you do not do so, be prepared to face a mighty army with a great number of cavalymen who will head for those who have rebelled and disobeyed, and you will be crushed as in a mill.”

(Whoever does good, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil it is to its detriment, and your Lord is not tyrannical to the servants[60](#)).[61](#)

E. Supplication before a Battle

518. Waq‘atu Siffin Indeed, when Amir al-Mu’minin set out for a battle, he would recite the following supplication:

“O Allah! Verily You showed a way of Your ways and set aside Your pleasure in it, and called Your friends to it and made it Your best of ways for reward, the noblest for returning [to You], and the most favorable to You as a conduct. Then, in this way you bought from them their souls and property for the paradise to fight in the way of Allah, to kill and to be killed; [and this is] a rightful promise from You.”

“So, make me one of those from whom You have bought his soul, and he fulfilled his commitment to Your dealing with him. He did not break a pact, nor violated or altered it; rather he made it a response to Your loving kindness and as approximation to You.”

“So, make it the end of my acting and ordain the end of my life in this way. Bestow upon me in it a martyrdom, which causes Your pleasure and removes my blunders. Place me among those who are living and provided for by the enemies and the rebels [through being martyred by them] under the banner of righteousness and guidance; as one who is moving along the path of triumph over them, who does not turn his back [on the fighting], and who does not create doubts.”

“O Allah! I seek refuge in You at this moment from cowardice in case of terrors, from indolence in the time of the champions’ assault, and from the sins that would ruin my actions. Then, [in that case] I would be enfeebled out of doubt, or pass on without certitude, [thereby] my attempts would be futile, and actions unaccepted.”[62](#)

519. Waq‘atu Siffin – related by Tamim: Whenever set out for the battle, he [Ali (a.s.)] would utter the name of God when mounting [his horse] and say, “Thanks Allah for His bounties to us and His immense Grace! (***Immaculate is He who has disposed this for us, and we [by ourselves] were no match for it. Indeed we shall return to our Lord.***)[63](#)”

Then, he would face the qibla, raise his hands towards heaven and say, “O Allah! The steps were taken toward You, the bodies tired out, the hearts inclined to You, the hands raised up and the eyes turned keen. (***Our Lord! Judge justly between us and our people, and you are the best of judges!***)[64](#)”

Then he would say, “Allah is the greatest! Allah is the greatest! There is no god apart from Allah! Allah is the greatest! O Allah! O Ahad! O Samad! O Lord of Muhammad! (***All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, Master of the Day of Retribution, You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we return for help.***)[65](#) O Lord! Prevent from us the oppression of the oppressors.”[66](#)

F. Starting the Battle in the Afternoon

520. Waq‘atu Siffin: Amir al-Mu‘minin, upon whom be blessings from Allah, would not start fighting except in the afternoon and would say, “At this time the doors of heaven open up, mercy is accepted and victory is won.”

And he would say, “This time [afternoon] is closer to the evening and it is more fitting for the killing to be decreased, the warriors to disengage [from] chasing the enemy], and the defeated to be saved.”[67](#)

G. Helping the Feeble

521. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to his companions on the battlefield in Siffin: “Whoever among you feels

spiritedness of heart during the action and finds any of his comrades feeling disheartened should ward off (the enemies) from him just as he would do from himself, because of the superiority he enjoys over the other, For if Allah had willed He would have made the former also like him.”[68](#)

522. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Whenever in the war you find any of your brothers wounded, or someone afflicted with an injury, or someone who has been targeted [to be attacked] by the enemy, strengthen him by your souls [spirit].”[69](#)

H. Good Conduct toward the Reminder of the Enemy Troop

523. Tarikh al-Ya‘qubi – related by Isma‘il b. ‘Ali: “The first person who learned how to fight with the people of qibla was Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). He would not kill the captives, would not chase after the defeated, and would not finish off the wounded.”[70](#)

524. Al-‘Aqd al-Farid – related by Abu al-Hasan – in the reports concerning the events of the battle of Siffin: “Ali (a.s.)’s herald would come out every day and call out: O People! Do not finish off the wounded; do not chase after those who have turned their back to the battlefield; do not rob the killed; and those who have laid down their weapons are [to be] secure.”[71](#)

525. Al-Kafi – related by ‘Abd Allah b. Sharik from his father: When the people (Kharijis) were defeated in the battle of Jamal, Amir al-Mu‘minin said, “Do not chase after those who have turned their back to the battlefield and do not finish off the wounded. The one who shuts his house door is secure.”

When the battle of Siffin took place, he killed the warriors as well as those who had turned their back on the battlefield, and finished off the wounded. Aban b. Taghlab said to ‘Abd Allah b. Sharik, “These two treatments of contradictory.”

He [Ali (a.s.)] said, “In the battle of Jamal, [their commanders] Talha and Zubayr were killed but [in Siffin] Mu‘awiya himself is standing up and commanding.”[72](#)

526. Al-Sunan al-Kubra – related by Abu Fakhta: In the battle of Siffin, a captive was brought to Ali (a.s.). He [the captive said], “Do not torture me to death.”

Ali (a.s.) said, “I will not torture you to death. Verily, I fear Allah the Lord of the worlds.” He let him go and then said, “Is there any good in you to swear allegiance?”[73](#)

527. Al-Musannif – related by Yazid b. Balal: I was in the company of Ali (a.s.) in Siffin. When a captive was brought to him he would say, “I will not torture you to death. Verily, I fear Allah the Lord of the worlds.” He would take his weapon and swear him not to fight against him [any longer]; and he would grant him four dirhams.”[74](#)

528. Al-Musannif – related by Abu Ja‘far: In the battle of Siffin, whenever a captive was brought to Ali (a.s.), he would take his mount and weapon and made him promise not to return. Then he would free

him.”⁷⁵

529. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to the army before confronting the enemy at Siffin, “Do not mutilate the dead; when you reach the encampment of the enemy do not plunder nor enter a house [without permission]. Do not seize anything from them unless what you find in their military base. Do not inflict pain on women by persecuting them even though they may attack your honor with filthy words and abuse your officers, because they are weak in character, mind, and intelligence. We have been ordered to desist from them although they may be unbelievers. [For] If a man struck a woman with a stone or a stick he was rebuked along with his posteriors after him.”⁷⁶

530. Tarikh al-Tabari – in the report on the battle of Jamal: Ahnaf b. Qays and the children of Sa’d rushed toward Ali (a.s.), while dissuading Harqus b. Zahir (they did not approve of fighting with Ali b. Abi Talib – a.s.).

Then he [Harqus] said, “O Ali! Our people in Basra presume that if you triumph over them tomorrow, you will kill their men and take their women captive!”

He said, “There should be no fear of the like of me for such matters. Will it be perpetrated by anyone except him who turns back [from the religion of Allah] and disbelieves? Have you not heard the word of Allah saying, **(And [you are] not a taskmaster over them, except him who turns back and disbelieves.)**”⁷⁷

531. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: There were four hundred wounded among the Kharijis. Ali (a.s.), then, ordered them to be taken inside Kufa and treated.”⁷⁸

¹. Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 191, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 11, Waq’atu Siffin: 123, Al-Akhbar al-Tawal: 166.

². Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 12.

³. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 4, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/67/46, Tadhkira al-Khawass: 166.

⁴. Da’a’im al-Islam: 1/373.

⁵. Da’a’im al-Islam: 1/373.

⁶. Al-Qur’an, 47:35.

⁷. Tarikh Damishq: 42/460, Muruj al-Dhahab: 2/389, ‘Uyun al-Akhbar: 1/110.

⁸. Al-Kafi: 5/39/4, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/563/468. Also, cf., Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 124.

⁹. Da’a’im al-Islam: 1/372.

¹⁰. Ibid.

¹¹. Ibid., 1/372.

¹². Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 11, Tuhaf al-’Uqul: 192, Waq’atu Siffin: 124, Al-Akhbar al-Tawal: 166.

¹³. Al-Qur’an, 4:102.

¹⁴. Da’a’im al-Islam: 1/371.

¹⁵. Ibid., 372.

¹⁶. Waq’atu Siffin: 406, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/511/437.

¹⁷. Ghurar al-Hikam: 2003.

¹⁸. Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 16, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa’iz: 530/964.

¹⁹. Al-Ikhtisas: 2.

²⁰. Al-Ikhtisas: 2, Ibn Nadim, Al-Fihrist: 223.

- [21.](#) Rijal al-Kashshi: 1/19/8, Bihar al-Anwar: 42/150/16.
- [22.](#) Rijal al-Kashshi: 1/24/10, Bihar al-Anwar: 42/151/18.
- [23.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 137, Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/361.
- [24.](#) Al-Qur'an, 8:45-46.
- [25.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/38/2, Al-Irshad: 1/265, Waq'atu Siffin: 204, Al-Mi'yar wa al-Mawazina: 158.
- [26.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 11, Manaqib Al al-Abi Talib: 3/155.
- [27.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 16, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 530/9644.
- [28.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: sermon 124. Also cf. Al-Irshad: 1/266, Waq'atu Siffin: 235.
- [29.](#) Al-Qur'an, 61:4.
- [30.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/39/4.
- [31.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/288/292.
- [32.](#) Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/370.
- [33.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 231, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/461/398 & 100/36/32.
- [34.](#) The name of a fortress of the Khaybar castles.
- [35.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/47/1, Bihar al-Anwar: 19/163/1.
- [36.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 5/177, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/461/400 & 100/37/35.
- [37.](#) Al-Qur'an, 1: 2-5.
- [38.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 230, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 5/176.
- [39.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 332, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/27/380, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 8/15.
- [40.](#) Al-Jamal: 368.
- [41.](#) Da'aim al-Islam: 1/370, Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar: 7/733/6.
- [42.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1663.
- [43.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 66, Tarikh Damishq: 42/460
- [44.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/41/4, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/472/411. Also cf. Al-Mi'yar wa'l Muwazina: 105.
- [45.](#) Al-Qur'an, 33: 16.
- [46.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/39/4, Waq'atu Siffin: 235, Tarikh Tabari: 5/16. Also cf. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 124.
- [47.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 111, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/403/369 – 373, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 3/18.
- [48.](#) In the Musnad of Ahmad b. Hanbal the above statement is related as follows: "When I relate something from someone other than the Prophet (S), I am indeed a man in battle." (Musnad of Ibn Hanbal: 1/177/216)
- [49.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari: 6/162/298, & 3/1322/3415, Sahih of Muslim: 2/746/1066.
- [50.](#) Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/162/298, Qurb al-Isnad: 133/466
- [51.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/312/588.
- [52.](#) Al-Kafi: 7/460/1, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/163/299, Tafsir al-Qummi: 2/60.
- [53.](#) Tafsir al-Qummi: 2/183, Bihar al-Anwar: 20/226.
- [54.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari: 10/5, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/370, Al-Futuh: 3/32.
- [55.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 153, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/414/374.
- [56.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 14, Waq'atu Siffin: 203.
- [57.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 233, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 527/9587, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/454/668.
- [58.](#) Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/367.
- [59.](#) Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 8/309/16739.
- [60.](#) Referring to Al-Qur'an, 41:46.
- [61.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 2/5.
- [62.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/46/1, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 3/81/237, Tafsir al-Najashi: 2/113/143.
- [63.](#) Al-Qur'an, 43: 13-14.
- [64.](#) Al-Qur'an, 7:89.
- [65.](#) Al-Qur'an, 1:2-5.
- [66.](#) Waq'atu Siffin: 230 & 231, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/460/397 & 100/21/8.
- [67.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/28/5, 'Ilal al-Sharaya': 603/70.

- [68.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 123, Al-Irshad: 1/253, Al-Jamal: 334.
- [69.](#) Al-Khisal: 617/10, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 107, Bihar al-Anwar: 100/21/8.
- [70.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi: 2/383.
- [71.](#) Al-'Aqd al-Farid: 3/333, Imam Ali (a.s.) enjoyed the same position toward the enemies in other battles too, cf., Waq'atu Siffin: 204, al-Kafi: 5/33/3, Al-Mustadrak 'Ala al-Sahihin: 2/167/2660, and had inspired it from the sira of the Prophet (S). Al-Kafi: 5/12/2, Tahdhib al-Ahkam: 6/137/230, Ibid.: 155/274.
- [72.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/33/5, Rijal Kishshi: 2/482/392, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/446/657.
- [73.](#) Al-Sunan al-Kubra: 8/315/16754, Kanz al-'Ummal: 11/348/31706.
- [74.](#) Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadith al-Athar: 8/725/25, Kanz al-'Ummal: 11/345/31703.
- [75.](#) Al-Musannif fi al-Ahadith al-Athar: 8/724/23, Kanz al-'Ummal: 11/345/31702.
- [76.](#) Al-Kafi: 5/39/4, Waq'atu Siffin: 204, Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 14, Bihar al-Anwar: 32/563/468.
- [77.](#) Al-Qur'an, 89:22-23. Tarikh al-Tabari: 4/496, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/334.
- [78.](#) Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh: 2/424, Ansab al-Ashraf: 3/248.

Chapter Ten: State Policies

10.1 Causes for Durability of Governments

a) Establishing Justice

532. Imam Ali (a.s.) – when asked which of the two is better, justice or generosity?: “Justice puts things in their places while generosity takes them out from their directions. Justice is the general caretaker, while generosity is a particular benefit. Consequently justice is superior and more distinguished of the two.”^{[1](#)}

533. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He whose actions are taken by justice, Allah will safeguard his kingdom.”^{[2](#)}

534. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do justice to [be able to] maintain your sovereignty.”^{[3](#)}

535. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do justice to [be able to] rule.”^{[4](#)}

536. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Nothing has safeguarded states like justice.”^{[5](#)}

537. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Nothing safeguards states like doing justice in them.”^{[6](#)}

538. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A just rule will endure.”^{[7](#)}

539. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do justice so that your authority may persevere.”^{[8](#)}

540. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Durability of a sovereignty is [dependant upon] justice.”^{[9](#)}

541. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Obedience is a shield for the ruled, and justice is a shield for the governments.”^{[10](#)}

542. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Durability of governments is [dependant upon] setting up just traditions.” [11](#)
543. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Doing justice is following Divine traditions and [grounds for] durability of the Governments.” [12](#)
544. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who does justice, will be in no need of companions.” [13](#)
545. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice is [the source of] stability for the ruled.” [14](#)
546. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice is [the source of] stability for the creatures.” [15](#)
547. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The good of justice is its organizing the creatures.” [16](#)
548. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice organizes the rule.” [17](#)
549. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Allah the Glorified made justice the stability of the subjects, purity from tyranny and sins, and the cause of the execution of [rules of] Islam.” [18](#)
550. Imam Ali (a.s.): “If the ruled fulfil the rights of the ruler and the ruler fulfils their rights, then right attains the position of honor among them, the ways of religion become established, signs of justice become fixed and the sunna gains currency. In this way, times will improve, the continuance of government will be expected, and the aims of the enemies will be frustrated.” [19](#)
551. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice is the strongest foundation.” [20](#)
552. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The world is like a garden whose wayfarer is the shari‘a (religious law); and the shari‘a is a king whose obedience is obligatory; and obedience is a way by which the ruler is established; and the ruler is a shepherd whom the troops help; and the troops are assistants whom the riches manage; and the riches are [means of] sustenance that the people gather; and the people are masses whom justice subjugates; and justice is a foundation on which the world is based.” [21](#)
553. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice is the best of policies.” [22](#)
554. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice is a sufficient policy.” [23](#)
555. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice is the touchstone for politics.” [24](#)
556. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The best of policies is [doing] justice.” [25](#)
557. Imam Ali (a.s.): “No mastery is like justice in politics.” [26](#)
558. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The beauty of politics is [doing] justice in ruling and forgiveness in the time of [enjoying] power.” [27](#)
559. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The ruled will not be rectified except by justice.” [28](#)

560. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Make religion your sanctuary and justice your sword so as to be safeguarded from any evil and gain victory over any enemy.”[29](#)
561. Imam Ali (a.s.): “If the government is based on justice and supported by wisdom, Allah will render His friends victorious and disdain His enemies.”[30](#)
562. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The hearts of the ruled are treasures of the rulers. Whatever of justice or injustice that they stores in them, they will find [the same].”[31](#)
563. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Cities will not flourish except through justice.”[32](#)
564. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Justice of the king is better than the abundance and fertility of the times.”[33](#)
565. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Under justice, bounties double.”[34](#)
566. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who does justice will gain power.”[35](#)
567. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who brings justice to cities, Allah will bestow His Mercy upon him.”[36](#)
568. Imam Ali (a.s.) – among the aphorisms attributed to him: “Those who treat the subordinate justly, will be treated justly by the senior.”[37](#)
569. Imam Ali (a.s.): “No reward is greater with Allah than the reward for the just ruler and the beneficent person.”[38](#)
570. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There are two things whose reward can not be fathomed: forgiveness and justice.”[39](#)
571. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Just politics consists of these three: lenience in prudence; investigation in justice; and justly practicing beneficent.”[40](#)
572. Imam Ali (a.s.): “In establishing justice, seek assistance from expressing goodwill toward people, little expectation, and plenty of piety.”[41](#)
- See Chapter Six, 6/1 (Establishing Justice).
- [b\) Good Management](#)**
573. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Statecraft is [indeed] politics.”[42](#)
574. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who follows a good politics would perpetuate his chairmanship.”[43](#)
575. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Good politics immortalizes chairmanship.”[44](#)
576. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Good politics is [the source of] steadfastness of the subjects.”[45](#)

577. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is obligatory to follow the one who practices good politics.”[46](#)

578. Imam Ali (a.s.): “In the light of good politics good breeding will ensue.”[47](#)

c) Good Behavior

579. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Good behavior is the beauty of power and a haven for the rulership.”[48](#)

580. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He whose good behavior increases, people agree on his superiority.”[49](#)

581. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who treats people nicely, will be treated likewise.”[50](#)

d) Vigilance in Taking Care of Affairs

582. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Vigilance in taking care of the affairs is a sign of [the endurance of] sovereignty.”[51](#)

583. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is sagacious to be vigilant in securing the rights of the subjects and to feign negligence of their offences against you.”[52](#)

584. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Little negligence is a sign of the [endurance of the] states.”[53](#)

10.2 Causes for the Decline of States

a) Tyranny

585. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The worst of the rulers are those who oppress their subjects.”[54](#)

586. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who does injustice to his subjects assists his adversaries.”[55](#)

587. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Injustice ruins the subjects.”[56](#)

588. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Injustice devastates the cities.”[57](#)

589. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who treats his subjects unjustly, Allah would destroy his sovereignty and expedite his overthrow.”[58](#)

590. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “See that justice is done towards God and justice is done towards the people by yourself, your own family, and those whom you favor among your subjects. For if you do not do so, you have worked wrong. And as for him who wrongs the servants of Allah, Allah is his adversary, not to speak of His servants. Allah renders null and void the argument of whosoever contends with Him. Such a one will be Allah’s enemy until he desists or repents. Nothing is more conducive to the removal of Allah’s blessing and the hastening of His vengeance than to continue in wrongdoing, for Allah listens to the call of the oppressed and He is ever on the watch against the wrongdoers.”[59](#)

591. Imam Ali (a.s.) – to Ziyad b. Abih: “Act on justice and keep aloof from violence and injustice because violence will lead them to forsake their abodes while injustice will prompt them to take up arms.”[60](#)

592. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There is no king to whom Allah bestows power and blessing and he employs them to oppress people, unless it is incumbent on Allah to take them back from him. Do you not see the words of Allah, *(Indeed Allah does not change a people's lot, unless they change what is in their souls.)*[61](#)?”[62](#)

593. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There is destruction for power in wrongdoing.” [63](#)

594. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who wrongs in his rule, his state will decline.”[64](#)

595. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Wrongdoing is the worst of policies.”[65](#)

596. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who wrongs in his statecraft, people will wish for his perishing.”[66](#)

597. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The wrongdoing of a wrongdoer would lead him to destruction.”[67](#)

598. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who commits wrong, his wrongdoing would destroy him.”[68](#)

599. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Wrongdoing is one of the destroyers.”[69](#)

600. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Wrongdoing causes the steps to stumble, brings about a cessation of blessings, and destroys communities.”[70](#)

601. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Outrage ruins power.”[71](#)

602. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who does not do justice towards the wronged against the wrongdoer, Allah will dispossess his power.”[72](#)

b) Unlawful Bloodshed

603. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Beware of blood and spilling it unlawfully, for nothing is more deserving of vengeance (from Allah), greater in its consequence or more likely to (bring about) a cessation of blessing and the cutting off of (one's appointed) term than shedding blood unjustly. Allah, the Glorified, on the Day of Resurrection will begin judgment among His servants over the blood they have spilt.”

“So never strengthen your rule by shedding unlawful blood, for that is among the factors which weaken and enfeeble it, nay, which overthrow and transfer it. You have no excuse before Allah and before me for intentional killing, for in that there is bodily retaliation. If you are stricken by error, and your whip, your sword or your hand should exceed their bounds in punishment – for in striking with the fists and all that exceeds it there is killing – never let the arrogance of your authority prevent you from paying the

relatives of the killed their rightfully due.”[73](#)

604. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The survivors of the sword (from getting killed) are larger in number and have a larger progeny.”[74](#)

c) Mismanagement

605. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Mismanagement causes destruction.”[75](#)

606. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who mismanages will hasten his destruction.”[76](#)

607. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There are for reasons [for the state] to fall off: mismanagement; the evil of extravagance; failing to take lessons; making too many apologies.”[77](#)

608. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who fails in politics will be belittled in chairmanship.”[78](#)

609. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Political feebleness is a pitfall for the leaders.”[79](#)

610. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He whose management falls behind [the community] his perishing will come forward.”[80](#)

611. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who mismanages his management will destroy him.”[81](#)

612. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the aphorisms attributed to him: “When the rule is expired for a group, their opinions enfeeble.”[82](#)

d) Arrogance

613. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the aphorisms attributed to him: “Arrogance arouses envy, envy brings about enmity, enmity causes disunity, disunity causes separation, separation causes feebleness, feebleness causes degradation, which [in turn] ruins the governments and destroys bounties.”[83](#)

414. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Then surely the ruler has favorites and intimates, among whom there is a certain arrogance, transgression and lack of equity in transactions. Remove the substance of these (qualities) by cutting off the means of obtaining these situations. Bestow no fiefs upon any of your entourage or relatives, nor let them covet from you the acquisition of a landed estate which would bring loss to the people bordering upon it in (terms of) a water supply or a common undertaking, the burden of which would be imposed upon them. Its benefit would be for those (who acquired the fiefs) and not for you, and its fault would be upon you in this world and the next.”

“Impose the right (al-haqq) upon whomsoever it is incumbent, whether he be related to you or not. Be patient in this and look to your (ultimate) account; however this may affect your relatives and favorites. Desire the ultimate end in that of it (imposing the right) which weighs heavily against you, for its outcome will be praiseworthy.”[84](#)

615. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “Beware of arrogating for yourself that in which men are equal; and of negligence in that which is of concern after it has become manifest to the eyes (of men), for these things will be held against you for (the benefit of) others; and (beware of negligence) of the fact that little remains until the coverings of affairs are lifted from you and justice is demanded from you for the wronged.”[85](#)

616. Imam Ali (a.s.) – concerning ‘Uthman: “I am putting before you his case. He ruled with arrogance, and did it badly. You protested against it and committed excess therein. With Allah lies the real verdict upon the arrogating and the protester.”[86](#)

e) Violation of the Principles

617. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There are for reasons for the state to fall off: violating the principles; clutching at the branches; employing the villainous; and putting aside the elite.”[87](#)

618. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Coming to power of the villainous and the newly-gained office is an indication of its [the state’s] dissolution and falling off.”[88](#)

619. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Decline of the states lies in employing the villainous.”[89](#)

10.3 Recommendations on Socio-Political Relations

Treating others as Treating Oneself

620. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to his son, al-Hasan (a.s.): “What wisely words are more exhaustive than [saying]: you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for others.”[90](#)

621. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is the duty of the ruler to choose for his subjects what he chooses for himself.”[91](#)

622. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his letter to Muhammad Abi Bakr: “Desire for your subjects whatever you desire for yourself and your household, and hate for them whatever you hate for yourself and your household.”[92](#)

623. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to his son, al-Hasan (a.s.): “Make yourself the measure (for dealings) between you and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress, as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others, as you would like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that (treatment) from others, which you would like others to accept from you.”[93](#)

624. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his instructions to his son Muhammad b. al-Hanafiya: “My son! Do good to all people as you like good to be done to you, and desire for others what you desire for yourself. Regard

bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Be amiable to all people so that when you are away from they would be looking forward to you and when you die they would weep for you and say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return." Do not be like those who when die people would say, "All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds."

625. Imam Ali (a.s.): "The most equitable treatment of people is that you deal with people as you like to be dealt with."

626. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from the aphorisms attributed to him: "Associate with people as you wish; they would associate with you the same way."

b) Self-Esteem

627. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Keep yourself away from every low thing even though they may take you to your desired aims, because you will not get any return for your own respect, which you spend."

628. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Keeping away from the low things would debase the enemy."

629. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Do not act in a way that ruins your esteem."

630. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Death, rather than lowering oneself with disgrace."

631. Imam Ali (a.s.): "O People! Certainly dying is more preferable to being disgraced; and being whipped is preferable to being humiliated."

632. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Let it be death but not humiliation. Let it be little but not through disgrace."

633. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Let there be lacking but not facing disgrace."

c) Avoidance of Enmity

634. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Avoid... malice in the heart, hatred in the chest, turning away (from each other's help) and withholding the hand from one another's assistance."

635. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Do not incur enmity towards each other as it is corrosive [of faith]."

636. Imam Ali (a.s.): "Utmost ignorance is enmity with people."

637. Imam Ali (a.s.): "It is among unseemly choices to seek dominance over one's peers and to incur enmity towards people."

638. Imam Ali (a.s.): "He who fights against people will be fought against."

639. Imam Ali (a.s.): "The world is incommensurable for those who are hostile to each other."

640. Imam Ali (a.s.): “To incur enmity towards people is the feature of the ignorant.” [110](#)

641. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is incumbent upon you to unite and coordinate with each other.” [111](#)

642. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Even one enemy is much too many.” [112](#)

643. Imam Ali (a.s.): “My children! Beware of hostility to people, since they are not out of two groups: the wise who would play trick on you; or the ignorant who would quickly retaliate. Statements are masculine and responses are feminine. Whenever the masculine and the feminine assemble, inevitably there will be some results.”

Then he recited the following poem:

“The honorable is he, who avoids responding,

And he who is tolerant to people will achieve his goal.

He who has respect for people, they will respect him too,

He who humiliates people, will receive no respect.” [113](#)

d) Fidelity in Agreements

644. Imam Ali (a.s.): “O People! Surely fidelity in agreements is the twin of truth. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realizes the reality of return (to the next world) never betrays. We are in a period when most of the people regard betrayal as wisdom. In these days the ignorant call it excellence of cunning.” [114](#)

645. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The best [feature in relation to] Islam is fidelity in agreements of one’s pledge.” [115](#)

646. Imam Ali (a.s.) – in his instructions to Malik al-Ashtar: “ If you bind an agreement between yourself and your enemy or clothe him in a protective covenant (dhimmah), guard your agreement in good faith and tend to your covenant with fidelity. Make of yourself a shield before what you have granted, for men do not unite more firmly in any of the obligations (imposed upon them) by God than in attaching importance to fidelity in agreements, despite the division among their sects and the diversity of their opinions.

The idolaters had already adhered to that (honoring agreement) among themselves before the Muslims, by reason of the evil consequences of treachery that they had seen. So never betray your protective covenant, never break your agreement and never deceive your enemy, for none is audacious before God but a wretched fool. God has made His agreement and His protective covenant a security, which He has spread among the servants by His Mercy and a sanctuary in whose impregnability they may rest and in whose proximity they may spread forth. Within it there is no corruption, treachery or deceit.”

“Make not an agreement in which you allow deficiencies and rely not upon ambiguity of language after confirmation and finalization (of the agreement). Let not the straitness of an affair in which an agreement before God is binding upon you invite you to seek its abrogation unjustly. For your patience in the straitness of an affair, hoping for its solution and the blessing of its outcome, is better than an act of treachery. You would fear the act's consequence and (you would fear) that a liability before God will encompass you, a liability from which you will not be exempted in this world or the next.” [116](#)

e) Discharging Obligations

647. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Discharge your obligation to the person who has trusted you, even though he would be murderer of the Prophet’s children.” [117](#)

648. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not betray the one who has regarded you as trustworthy, even though he has betrayed you; and do not disclose his secret, although he discloses it himself.” [118](#)

649. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to Ash‘ath b. Qayth: “Certainly, your assignment is not a morsel for you but it is a trust round your neck and you have been charged with protection (of people) on behalf of your superiors.” [119](#)

650. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from his letter to one of his tax collectors: “He whose hidden position is not different from his open position and whose action is not different from his words, has discharged his obligation and his worship is pure. I also order him that he should not harass them, should not be harsh on them and should not turn away from them because of superiority of official position over them, because they are brothers in faith and help in the recovery of levies.”

“Certainly you have a fixed share and a known right in this levy, and there are other sharers who are poor, weak and starving. We shall discharge your rights. So you should discharge their rights. If you do not do so, you will have the largest number of enemies on the Day of Judgement. How wretched is the man whose enemies in the view of Allah are the needy, the destitute, the beggars, the turned away, the indebted and (penniless) travelers.”

“He who treats the trust lightly and indulges in treachery and does not keep himself and his faith untarnished by it has certainly secured humiliation in this world, and his humiliation and disgrace in the next world will be greater. Surely, the greatest treachery is the treachery against the Muslim community and the ugliest deceit is the deceit towards the Muslim leaders. Wassalam!” [120](#)

f) Exploiting Other People’s Knowledge

651. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Learn the knowledge of every learned man, and teach your knowledge to anyone who does not know. Once you do this, Allah will teach you what you do not know, and you will benefit from what you know.” [121](#)

652. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Knowledge is a lost article of the believer. Therefore, get it even though from the polytheists. None of you should avoid learning wise sayings – from whomever you may hear it.” [122](#)

653. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Learn the wise saying wherever you find it. Certainly, a wise saying is a lost article of the believer.” [123](#)

654. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Seek it even though it is in possession of the evil-doers.” [124](#)

655. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Acquire a wise saying even though from the polytheists.” [125](#)

656. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Seize it even though from the mouth of the polytheists.” [126](#)

657. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Seek it even though from the polytheists; as you deserve it more and are qualified for it.” [127](#)

658. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Acquire it even though from the mouth of the hypocrites.” [128](#)

659. Imam Ali (a.s.): “A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Therefore, acquire wise sayings even though from people of hypocrisy.” [129](#)

660. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Acquire wise sayings from wherever they may be, because if a wise saying is in the bosom of a hypocrite it flutters in his bosom till it comes out and settles with others of its own category in the bosom of the believer.” [130](#)

g) Cultural Independence

661. Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is seldom that a man likens himself to a group and does not become as one of them.” [131](#)

662. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): “Amir al-Mu'minin would say: This umma will ever live with happiness as long as they would not wear the alien's clothing or eat the alien's foods. If they do so, however, Allah will inflict disgrace upon them.” [132](#)

h) Miscellaneous

663. Imam Ali (a.s.): “There will be no prosperity where a tyrant is ruling.” [133](#)

664. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Tyranny of a ruler is a misadventure to prosperity.” [134](#)

665. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Your turning away from him who inclines towards you is a loss of your share of advantage while your inclining towards him who turns away from you is humiliation for yourself.” [135](#)

666. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who does not incur enmity towards you, cares for you.” [136](#)
667. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The one who inclines towards you in time of your fortune will turn away from you in time of your misfortune.” [137](#)
668. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Have love for your friend up to a limit, for it is possible that he may turn into your enemy some day; and hate your enemy up to a limit for it is possible that he may turn into your friend some day.” [138](#)
669. Al-Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.): “Amir al-Mu’minin would say: There should gather in your heart need for people and independence from them. Your need for them should appear in you lenient words and affability; and your independence from them should appear in [maintaining] the integrity of your reputation and retainment of your esteem.” [139](#)
670. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do sacrifice all your friendship for your friend, but do not fully trust him. Help him by all means, but do not divulge all your secrets to him, so that you [both] pay wisdom its due and observe bonds of friendship.” [140](#)
671. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who does not tolerate those whom he has to tolerate is not wise.” [141](#)
672. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not trade with those from whom you cannot secure your rightful due.” [142](#)
673. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Beware of scaring your friends to the extent that it will force them to keep a distance and want to separate from you.” [143](#)
674. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He whose benefit lies in your loss will never be free from enmity to you.” [144](#)
675. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Be forgiving in power and do good in your good turn of fortune so as to perfect your supremacy.” [145](#)
676. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Put up with your friend’s blunders for the time of the enemy’s assault.” [146](#)
677. Imam Ali (a.s.): “People’s looking forward to your rewards is better than their fear of your punishment.” [147](#)
678. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Substitute [other people’s] interest in you with [their] respect for you.” [148](#)
679. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Let people hold on to their rites and customs and [act in a way that] that the innocent feel secure from you, and the evil-doers be scared of you; and attend to the borders and the outskirts of cities.” [149](#)
680. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The hardest of all policies is to transform habits.” [150](#)
681. Imam Ali (a.s.): “People will be in beneficence as long as they differ. Then, when they become alike

they will be ruined.” [151](#)

682. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who treats people with tolerance, will enjoy their company.” [152](#)

683. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Obeying the superior, respecting the peers, and being equitable to the subordinate is a sign of common sense.” [153](#)

484. Imam Ali (a.s.): “The means to secure high authority is breadth of chest (i.e. generosity).” [154](#)

485. Imam Ali (a.s.): “People’s delving into something is laying the ground for achieving it.” [155](#)

686. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Beware of doing something that makes an honorable person disgust you, or debases your status, or ushers evil towards you, or makes you suffer a penalty on the Resurrection.” [156](#)

687. Imam Ali (a.s.): “He who rises to a high position undeservedly will collapse unreasonably (without committing any crime).” [157](#)

688. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Measure people with their own scales.” [158](#)

689. Imam Ali (a.s.): “Common sense is that you do not dispute with your superior, do not debase your subordinate, do not offer [to do] what you are not capable [of doing]; that your tongue should not disagree your heart, and your words should not disprove your deeds, do not talk about what you have no knowledge, do not give up affairs when applicable and do not pursue them when inapplicable.” [159](#)

690. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “Treat the honorable people magnanimously, the average people interestedly and fearfully, and the lowly people contemptuously.” [160](#)

691. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “When you have a friend whose brotherhood and friendship you do not like, do not reveal it to the people, for such a friend is like a dull sword in one’s house that frighten the foes and they do not know whether it is sharp or dull.” [161](#)

692. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “Whenever a friend of yours does something good to you do not pay him back with full reward, but reserve some of it to be added to at the time when his benevolence adds up.” [162](#)

693. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “There are some people who cut down when you step up [your favor to them], and degrade you when you take them as your special friend. Their pleasure is not positioned so as you realize it, and their fury is not situated so as you avoid it. If you ever encounter with them, offer them your common friendship and deny them your deep friendship so as what you grant them may serve as a defense against their harms and what you deny them may keep their respect in check.” [163](#)

694. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “The person who heads a group is rationally forbidden to be drunk, for it is indecent for a guardian to need someone [else] to guard

him.” [164](#)

695. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not accept chairmanship over the people of your hometown since they would not be in agreement with you unless you overpass the status of an accomplished chairman.” [165](#)

696. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “Do not serve the chairman of whose indolence you are aware and whom the circumstances has raised [to a high position] and he knows that you are aware of his past. That is because although he would be pleased with your service, he knows how [disdainfully] you look at him, so he would be annoyed with you.” [166](#)

697. Imam Ali (a.s.); “Do not underestimate yourselves to be negligent as it would lead you to the way of the despots and, hence, destroying you. Once truth comes to you and you happen to realize it, do not be indolent about it, as you will be at a great loss.” [167](#)

698. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “The most detrimental to you is to infer to your chairman that that you excel over him in chairmanship.” [168](#)

699. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “The little that promotes towards abundance is better than the abundance that promotes towards little.” [169](#)

700. Imam Ali (a.s.) – from aphorisms attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.): “It is of no harm to you to find your friend with your foe, for if he brings you no profit he will not cause you any harm, either.” [170](#)

[1.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 437, Rawḍa al-Waʿizin: 511.

[2.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8722.

[3.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2253, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 82/1981.

[4.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2223, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 78/1886.

[5.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9574, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 476/8712.

[6.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7444, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 408/6904.

[7.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5110, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 249/4668.

[8.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2285, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 83/1998.

[9.](#) Al-Mawaʿiz al-ʿAdliya: 54.

[10.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1873.

[11.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4715, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 217/4263.

[12.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 6496, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 355/6023.

[13.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8669, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 441/7665, Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim: 1//222.

[14.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 30/466, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 30/466, Ibid.: 42/994.

[15.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2253, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz:

[16.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4819.

[17.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4789, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 42/982.

[18.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4789, ‘Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawaʿiz: 223/4355.

[19.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 216. Also cf., Al-Kafi: 8/353/550.

[20.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 863.

[21.](#) Bihar al-Anwar: 78/83/87.

[22.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1656.

- [23.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7031, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 386/6537.
- [24.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9714, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 486/8960.
- [25.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4948, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 237/4505
- [26.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10895, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 544/10115.
- [27.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4792, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 223/4356.
- [28.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1342 & 4215, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 303/5396.
- [29.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2433, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 77/1853.
- [30.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4118, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 132/2971.
- [31.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 6825, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 370/6243.
- [32.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9543, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 481/8864.
- [33.](#) Matalib al-Su'ul: 56.
- [34.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4211, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 188/3858.
- [35.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7711, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 428/7283.
- [36.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8638, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 460/8361.
- [37.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/308/535.
- [38.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7526, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 410/6976.
- [39.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5769, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 297/5298.
- [40.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5592, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 284/5141.
- [41.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2408, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 77/1860.
- [42.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 17, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 18/45.
- [43.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8438, Nazmu Durar al-Simtayn: 160.
- [44.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4820, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 229/4409.
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- [46.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8025, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 431/7403.
- [47.](#) Al-Kafi: 1/28/34.
- [48.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4847.
- [49.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8407, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 455/8218.
- [50.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8716, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 440/7633.
- [51.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9360, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 469/8558.
- [52.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9407, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 470/8597.
- [53.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9410, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 473/8668.
- [54.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5717, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 295/5283.
- [55.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7815, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 429/7299.
- [56.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 807, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 42/955.
- [57.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1068, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 43/1047.
- [58.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8740.
- [59.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhafat al-Uqul: 127. Also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/354.
- [60.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 476. Also cf., Rawḥ al-Wa'izin: 511.
- [61.](#) Al-Qur'an, 13: 11.
- [62.](#) Irshad al-Qulub: 68.
- [63.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 6512, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 355/6024.
- [64.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8365.
- [65.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4404, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 193/3970.
- [66.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8742, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 439/7606.
- [67.](#) Al-Mawa'iz al-'Adadiyya: 59.
- [68.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7836, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 452/8107.
- [69.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 16557.
- [70.](#) Ibid., 1734.

- [71.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 865, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 51/7261.
- [72.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7815, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 428/7261.
- [73.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 146.
- [74.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 84, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 196/4004.
- [75.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5571, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 281/5068.
- [76.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 7906.
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- [78.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8536, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 450/8011.
- [79.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3931, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 181/3703.
- [80.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8045 & 8346, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 432/7421.
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- [82.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/303/465.
- [83.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 345/961.
- [84.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 144, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 100/2296.
- [85.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 147,
- [86.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 30.
- [87.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10956, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 550/10157.
- [88.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 4523, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 202/4095.
- [89.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5486, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 275/4998.
- [90.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 81, Bihar al-Anwar: 77/208/1.
- [91.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9335, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 469/8562.
- [92.](#) Al-Amali of al-Mufid: 269/3, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 180, Al-Amali of al-Tusi: 30/31, Al-Gharat: 1/249.
- [93.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 31, Kashf al-Mahajja: 226.
- [94.](#) Man laYahdarahu al-Faqih: 4/387/5834, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 79/1914.
- [95.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3170, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 116/2580.
- [96.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/309/539.
- [97.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 31, Ghurar al-Hikam: 2428, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 85/2056.
- [98.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9774, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 485/8954.
- [99.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10231, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 518/9395.
- [100.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 361, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 33/621.
- [101.](#) Al-Kafh: 8/21/4, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 207.
- [102.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 360 & 362, Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 396, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 3/620.
- [103.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9802, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 488/9044.
- [104.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 192, Ghurar al-Hikam: 4544, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 200/4046.
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- [109.](#) Al-Mawa'iz al-Adadiya: 58.
- [110.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9785.
- [111.](#) Ibid., 6152.
- [112.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1149, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 45/1107.
- [113.](#) Al-Khisal: 72/111, Rawdat al-Wa'izin: 412.
- [114.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 41, Khassa's al-A'imma: 98, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 152/3334.
- [115.](#) 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 471/8614.
- [116.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 53, Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 145. Also cf., Da'a'im al-Islam: 1/368.
- [117.](#) Al-Khisal: 614/10, Bihar al-Anwar: 75/115/8.
- [118.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 81, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 519/9426, Bihar al-Anwar: 77/208/1.

- [119.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Letter 5, Jawahir al-Matalib: 2/26.
- [120.](#) Nahj al Balagha: Letter 26, Bihar al-Anwar: 33/528/719.
- [121.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1133.
- [122.](#) Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm: 1/10/.
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- [128.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 1829, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 22/145.
- [129.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 80, Khasa's al-A'imma: 94.
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- [132.](#) Al-Mahasin: 2/178/1504 & 222/1669, Bihar al-Anwar: 66/323/6.
- [133.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10791, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 540/10022.
- [134.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 3954, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 181/3717.
- [135.](#) Nahj al-Balagha: Aphorism 451, Bihar al-Anwar: 164/74, Yanabi' al-Mawadda: 2/252/707.
- [136.](#) Al-Mawa'iz al-'Adadiyya: 61.
- [137.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8878.
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- [142.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10184, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 518/940.
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- [150.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 10184, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 118/2649.
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- [153.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9422, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 473/8646.
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- [155.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 5067, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 242/4612.
- [156.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 2727, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 100/291.
- [157.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 8613.
- [158.](#) Al-Mawa'iz al-'Adadiyya: 57. Apparently meaning to measure people according to their own capacities and circumstances.
- [159.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam: 9450, 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'iz: 473/8681.
- [160.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/311/574.
- [161.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 309/550.
- [162.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/331/798.
- [163.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/320/673.
- [164.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 338/871.
- [165.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 282/232.

[166.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 337/865.

[167.](#) Tuhaf al-'Uqul: 150. Also cf., Al-Kafi: 1/45/6, Al-Mufid, Al-Amali: 206/38.

[168.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/320/863.

[169.](#) Sharh Nahj al-Balagha: 20/344/953.

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