

NAHJUL BALAGHA

Sermons, Letters & Sayings

Of

Imam Ali

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*In the name of Allah
The Most Beneficent
The Most Merciful*

Preface

Allah, the Glorious and the most High, sent hundreds of thousands of representatives to guide mankind and to teach us that Allah alone is worthy of worship. The Final Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) completed the message of Allah through both his sayings and his actions. He showed mankind the answers to all its predicaments, such that Allah pronounced him the seal of prophethood.

The Holy Prophet's loyal cousin, trusted companion and unmatched student Ali (a.s) introduces himself as the one who ***“never disobeyed Allah or His Prophet at all, and by virtue of courage with which Allah honoured me I supported him with my life on occasions when even the brave turn away and feet remain behind (instead of proceeding forward). When the Prophet died his head was on my chest, and his last breath blew over my palms when I made it pass over my face.”*** (Nahjul Balagha: Sermon 195)

Ali (a.s) continued to preach the final message of Allah and His prophet. He guided the people to the right path in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet, and thus he embodied the hadith of the Prophet in which he said: ‘Ali is with the Quran, and the Quran is with Ali’.

Ali (a.s) in his wisdom and vast knowledge, which encompassed the secrets of the universe, showed us how to reach the revered position of the servant of Allah. Ameerul Momineen said: ***“A group of people worshipped Allah out of desire for reward; this is the worship of traders. Another group worshipped out of fear; this is the worship of slaves. Still another group worshipped Allah out of gratefulness; this is the worship of free men.”*** (Nahjul Balagha: Short Saying 234)

The origins of Nahjul Balagha root from a collation of Imam Ali's sermons, writings and short sayings by the famous Shia Scholar Syed Razi, his main focus being the eloquence of the Arabic language.

Nahjul Balagha is a key to attaining nearness to Ali (a.s) and thus to our Holy Prophet (s.a.w) and subsequently to Allah. It gives us a precious insight into the creator of these words and to the thoughts

of Imam Ali (a.s). We are also introduced to those who were the beloved of Imam Ali (a.s) such as Abu Zarr, Amaar or Malik and we can study how they achieved that status.

Nahjul Balagha gives an opportunity to the followers of Imam Ali to study the best way of conducting oneself in all walks and fields of life. It is a treasure that permits us to feel as though we are in the blessed presence of Imam Ali (a.s) and seeking knowledge directly from him. We are fortunate enough to then be able to pass this valuable knowledge to those who are most in need of it.

Nahjul Balagha demonstrates different aspects of Imam Ali (a.s). He can be seen in a battlefield bearing his flag and sword with a valour that causes the bravest of enemies to tremble in fear. On the other hand, he himself can be found deep in prayer, trembling and weeping from fear of Almighty Allah.

The lessons that we learn from the gem that is Nahjul Balagha, have been the subject of countless books. Although we are unable to summarise Nahjul Balagha and its teachings in this preface, our aim is to help and encourage you to contemplate over its lessons, and in turn encourage others to benefit from it.

Islamic Thought has always tried to make the followers of the Ahlubayt aware of the rich literary means of knowledge provided by books such as the Nahjul Balagha and inform the community of the undying efforts of our scholars. We are able to proudly claim that Shiaan-e-Ali have unmatched sources of knowledge.

We are hopeful that our English-speaking youngsters will recognise the importance of their youth, and devote their time to studying the Quran, sayings of the Prophet and the Nahjul Balagha and shape their lives accordingly.

In composing this edition of the Nahjul Balagha, we mainly used the translation of Syed Ali Reza with some input from the translation of Syed Mohammad Askari and other online sources to whom we wish to show our gratitude. We want to thank all those who helped us in publishing the Nahjul Balagha, especially the efforts of K. Z. Alavi, and those who supported Islamic Thought in any aspect. We pray for Allah to reward them amply.

May Allah give us the opportunity to benefit from the words of Imam Ali (a.s.) and make it a means of success in this world and salvation for the hereafter. Together we will try to fulfil Imam Ali's (a.s.) desire when he proclaims:

“..... in the hope that some group may join me, find guidance through me and see my light with their weak eyes.” (Nahjul Balagha: Sermon 55)

Wasalaam,
Maqbool Hussain Alavi
Chairman, Islamic Thought UK

SERMONS

Sermon 1

In this sermon he recalls the creation of the Earth and the Sky and the birth of Adam.

Praise is due to Allah whose worth cannot be described by speakers, whose bounties cannot be counted by calculators and whose claim (to obedience) cannot be satisfied by those who attempt to do so, whom the height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate, and the divings of understanding cannot reach; He for whose description no limit has been laid down, no eulogy exists, no time is ordained and no duration is fixed. He brought forth creation through His Omnipotence, dispersed winds through His Compassion, and made firm the shaking earth with rocks.

The foremost in religion is the acknowledgement of Him, the perfection of acknowledging Him is to testify Him, the perfection of testifying Him is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him Pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something is attributed is different from the attribute. Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognises His like, and who recognises His like regards Him two; and who regards Him two recognises parts for Him; and who recognises parts for Him mistook Him; and who mistook Him pointed at Him; and who pointed at Him admitted limitations for Him; and who admitted limitations for Him numbered Him.

Whoever said in what is He, held that He is contained; and whoever said on what is He held He is not on something else. He is a Being but not through phenomenon of coming into being. He exists but not from non-existence. He is with everything but not in physical nearness. He is different from everything but not in physical separation. He acts but without connotation of movements and instruments. He sees even when there is none to be looked at from among His creation. He is only One, such that there is none with whom He may keep company or whom He may miss in his absence.

He initiated creation most initially and commenced it originally, without undergoing reflection, without making use of any experiment, without innovating any movement, and without experiencing any aspiration of mind. He allotted all things their times, put together their variations gave them their properties, and determined their features knowing them before creating them, realising fully their limits and confines and appreciating their propensities and intricacies.

When Almighty created the openings of atmosphere, expanse of firmament and strata of winds, He flowed into it water whose waves were stormy and whose surges leapt one over the other. He loaded it on dashing wind and breaking typhoons, ordered them to shed it back (as rain), gave the wind control over the vigour of the rain, and acquainted it with its limitations. The wind blew under it while water flowed furiously over it.

Then Almighty created forth wind and made its movement sterile, perpetuated its position, intensified its motion and spread it far and wide. Then He ordered the wind to raise up deep waters and to intensify the waves of the oceans. So the wind churned it like the churning of curd and pushed it fiercely into the firmament throwing its front position on the rear and the stationary on the flowing till its level was raised and the surface was full of foam. Then Almighty raised the foam on to the open wind and vast firmament and made there from the seven skies and made the lower one as a stationary surge and the upper one as protective ceiling and a high edifice without any pole to support it or nail to hold it together. Then He decorated them with stars and the light of meteors and hung in it the shining sun and effulgent moon under the revolving sky, moving ceiling and rotating firmament.

Then He created the openings between high skies and filled them with all classes of His angels. Some of them are in prostration and do not kneel up. Others in kneeling position and do not stand up. Some of them are in array and do not leave their position. Others are extolling Allah and do not get tired. The sleep of the eye or the slip of wit or languor of the body or the effect of forgetfulness does not affect them.

Among them are those who work as trusted bearers of His message, those who serve as speaking tongues for His prophets and those who carry to and fro His orders and injunctions. Among them are the protectors of His creatures and guards of the doors of the gardens of Paradise. Among them are those also whose steps are fixed on earth but their necks are protruding into the skies, their limbs are getting out on all sides, their shoulders are in accord with the columns of the Divine Throne, their eyes are downcast before it, they have spread down their wings under it and they have rendered between themselves and all else curtains of honour and screens of power. They do not think of their Creator through image, do not impute to Him attributes of the created, do not confine Him within abodes and do not point at Him through illustrations.

Allah collected from hard, soft, sweet and sour earth, clay which He dripped in water till it got pure, and kneaded it with moisture till it became gluey. From it He carved an image with curves, joints, limbs and segments. He solidified it till it dried up for a fixed time and a known duration. Then He blew into it out of His Spirit whereupon it took the pattern of a human being with mind that governs him, intelligence which he makes use of, limbs that serve him, organs that change his position, sagacity that differentiates between truth and untruth, tastes and smells, colours and species. He is a mixture of clays of different colours, cohesive materials, divergent contradictories and differing properties like heat, cold, softness and hardness.

Then Allah asked the angels to fulfil His promise with them and to accomplish the pledge of His injunction to them by acknowledging Him through prostration to Him and submission to His honoured position. So Allah said:

"Be prostrate towards Adam and they prostrated except Iblis

(Satan)." (Quran, 2:34; 7:11; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116)

Self-importance withheld him and vice overcame him. So that he took pride in his own creation with fire and treated contemptuously the creation of clay. So Allah allowed him time in order to let him fully deserve His wrath, and to complete (man's) test and to fulfil the promise (to Satan) . Thus, He said:

"Verily you have been allowed time till the known Day." (Quran, 15:38)

Thereafter, Allah inhabited Adam (pbuh.) in a house where He made his life pleasant and his stay safe, and He cautioned him of Iblis and his enmity. Then his enemy (Iblis) envied his abiding in Paradise and his contacts with the virtuous. So he changed his conviction into wavering and determination into weakness. He thus converted his happiness into fear and his prestige into shame. Then Allah offered to Adam (pbuh) the chance to repent, taught him words of His Mercy, promised him return to His Paradise and sent him down to the place of trial and procreation of progeny.

From his progeny Allah chose prophets and took their pledge for his revelation and for carrying His message as their trust. In course of time many people perverted Allah's trust with them and ignored His position and took compeers along with Him. Satan turned them away from knowing Him and kept them aloof from His worship. Then Allah sent His Messengers and series of His prophets towards them to get them to fulfil the pledges of His creation, to recall to them His bounties, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom and show them the signs of His Omnipotence namely the sky which is raised over them, the earth that is placed beneath them, means of living that sustain them, deaths that make them die, ailments that turn them old and incidents that successively betake them.

Allah never allowed His creation to remain without a Prophet deputised by Him, or a book sent down from Him or a binding argument or a standing plea. These Messengers were such that they did not feel little because of smallness of their number or of largeness of the number of their falsifiers. Among them was either a predecessor who would name the one to follow or the follower who had been introduced by the predecessor.

In this way ages passed by and times rolled on, fathers passed away while sons took their places till Allah deputised Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His Prophet, in fulfilment of His promise and in completion of His Prophethood. His pledge had been taken from the Prophets, his traits of character were well reputed and his birth was honourable. The people of the earth at this time were divided in different parties, their aims were separate and ways were diverse. They either likened Allah with His creation or twisted His Names or turned to else than Him. Through Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) Allah guided them out of wrong and with his efforts took them out of ignorance.

Then Allah chose for Muhammad, peace be upon him and on his progeny, to meet Him, selected him for His own nearness, regarded him too dignified to remain in this world and decided to remove him from this place of trial. So

He drew him towards Himself with honour. Allah may shower His blessing on him, and his progeny.

But the Prophet left among you the same which other Prophets left among their peoples, because Prophets do not leave them untended (in dark) without a clear path and a standing ensign, namely the Book of your Creator clarifying its permission and prohibitions, its obligations and discretion, its repealing injunctions and the repealed ones, its permissible matters and compulsory ones, its particulars and the general ones, its lessons and illustrations, its long and the short ones, its clear and obscure ones, detailing its abbreviations and clarifying its obscurities.

In it there are some verses whose knowledge is obligatory and others whose ignorance by the people is permissible. It also contains what appears to be obligatory according to the Book but its repeal is signified by the Prophet's action or that which appears compulsory according to the Prophet's action but the Book allows not following it. Or there are those which are obligatory in a given time but not so after that time. Its prohibitions also differ. Some are major regarding which there exists the threat of fire and others are minor for which there are prospects of forgiveness. There are also those of which a small portion is also acceptable but they are capable of being expanded.

In this very sermon he spoke about Hajj: Allah has made obligatory upon you the pilgrimage to His sacred House which is the turning point for the people who go to it as beasts or pigeons go towards spring water. Allah the glorified made it a sign of their supplication before His Greatness and their acknowledgement of His Dignity. He selected from among His creation those who on listening to His call responded to it and testified His word. They stood in the position of His Prophets and resembled His angels who surround the Divine Throne securing all the benefits of performing His worship and hastening towards His promised forgiveness. Allah the glorified made it (His sacred House) an emblem for Islam and an object of respect for those who turn to it. He made obligatory its pilgrimage and laid down its claim for which He held you responsible to discharge it. Thus, Allah the glorified said:

" . . . And (purely) for Allah, is incumbent upon mankind, the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can afford to journey thither. And whoever denied then verily, Allah is Self-sufficiently independent of the worlds" (Quran, 3:96).

Sermon 2

Delivered on return from Siffeen

I praise Allah seeking completion of His Blessing, submitting to His Glory and expecting safety from committing His sins. I invoke His help being in need of His Sufficiency (of protection). He whom He guides does not get astray, He with whom He is hostile gets no protection. He whom He supports does not remain needy. Praise is most weighty of all that is weighed and the most valuable of all that is treasured.

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah the One. He has no like. My testimony has been tested in its frankness, and its essence is our belief. We shall cling to it for ever till we live and shall store it facing the tribulations that overtake us because it is the foundation stone of Belief (*iman*) and the first step towards good actions and Divine pleasure. It is the means to keep Satan away.

I also stand witness that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His slave and His Prophet. Allah sent him with the illustrious religion, effective emblem, written Book, effulgent light, sparkling gleam and decisive injunction in order to dispel doubts, present clear proofs, administer warning through signs and to warn of punishments. At that time people had fallen in vices whereby the rope of religion had been broken, the pillars of belief had been shaken, principles had been sacrilegied, system had become topsy turvy, openings were narrow, passage was dark, guidance was unknown and darkness prevailed.

Allah was being disobeyed, Satan was given support and Belief had been forsaken. As a result the pillars of religion fell down, its traces could not be discerned, its passages had been destroyed and its streets had fallen into decay. People obeyed Satan and treaded his paths. They sought water from his watering places. Through them Satan's emblems got flying and his standard was raised in vices which trampled the people under their hoofs, and treaded upon them with their feet. The vices stood on their toes and the people immersed in them were strayed, perplexed, ignorant and seduced as though in a good house with bad neighbours. Instead of sleep they had wakefulness and for antimony they had tears in the eyes. They were in a land where the learned were in bridle (with mouths shut) while the ignorant were honoured.

About Ahlulbayt: They are the trustees of His secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, centre of His wisdom, valleys for His books and mountains of His religion. With them Allah straightened the bend of religion's back and removed the trembling of its limbs.

About other people: They sowed vices, watered them with deception and harvested destruction. None in the Islamic community can be taken at par with the Progeny of the Prophet (pbuh). One who was under their obligation cannot be matched with them. They are the foundation of religion and pillar of Belief. The forward runner has to turn back to them while the follower has to overtake them. They possess the chief characteristics for vicegerency. In their favour exists the will and succession (of the Prophet). This is the time when right has returned to its owner and diverted to its centre of return.

Sermon 3

Known as the Sermon of Shiqshiqayya

Beware! By Allah the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr) dressed himself with it (the caliphate) and he certainly knew that my position in relation to it was

the same as the position of the axis in relation to the hand-mill. The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly upto me. I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it.

Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are made feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on his death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat. I watched the plundering of my inheritance till the first one went his way but handed over the Caliphate to Ibn al-Khattab after himself.

Then he quoted A'sha's verse: "My days are now passed on the camel's back (in difficulty) while there were days (of ease) when I enjoyed the company of Jabir's brother Hayyan."

It is strange that during his lifetime he wished to be released from caliphate but confirmed it for the other after his death. No doubt these two shared its udders strictly among themselves. This one put the Caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough. Mistakes were plenty and so also the excuses therefore. One in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein the very nostril would be slit, but if he let it loose he would be thrown. Consequently by Allah people got involved in recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation.

Nevertheless, I remained patient despite length of period and stiffness of trial, till when he went his way (of death) he put the matter (of Caliphate) in a group and regarded me to be one of them. But good Heavens! What had I to do with this "consultation"? Where was any doubt about me with regard to the first of them that I was now considered akin to these ones? But I remained low when they were low and flew high when they flew high. One of them turned against me because of his hatred and the other got inclined the other way due to his in-law relationship and this thing and that thing, till the third man of these people stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder. With him his children of his grand-father, (Umayyah) also stood up swallowing up Allah's wealth like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, till his rope broke down, his actions finished him and his gluttony brought him down prostrate.

At that moment, 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 Hassan and Hussain were getting crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They collected around me like the herd of sheep and goats. When I took up the reins of government one party broke away and another turned disobedient while the rest began acting wrongfully as if they had not heard the word of Allah saying:

"That abode in the hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor (to make) mischief (therein); and the end is (best)

for the pious ones.” (Quran, 28:83)

Yes, by Allah, they had heard it and understood it but the world appeared glittering in their eyes and its embellishments seduced them. Behold, by Him who split the grain 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.

Sermon 4

Through us you got guidance in the darkness and secured high position, and through us you got out of the gloomy night. The ears which do not listen to the cries may become deaf. How can one who remained deaf to the loud cries (of the Quran and the Prophet) listen to (my) feeble voice. The heart that has ever palpitated (with fear of Allah) may get peace.

I always apprehended from you consequences of treachery and I had seen you through in the garb of the deceitful. The curtain of religion had kept me hidden from you but the truth of my intentions disclosed you to me. I stood for you on the path of truth among misleading tracks where you met each other but there was no leader and you dug but got no water.

Today I am making these dumb things speak to you (i.e. my suggestive ideas and deep musings etc.) which are full of descriptive power. The opinion of the person who abandons me may get astray. I have never doubted in the truth since it has been shown to me. Musa (Moses) did not entertain fear for his own self. Rather he apprehended mastery of the ignorant and away of deviation. Today we stand on the cross-roads of truth and untruth. The one who is sure of getting water feels no thirst.

Sermon 5

Delivered when the Prophet (a.s.) died and Abbas and Abu Sufian bin Harb offered to pay allegiance to Ameerul Momineen for the Caliphate

O' People! Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance, turn away from the path of dissension and put off the crowns of pride. Prosperous is one who rises with wings (power) or else he remains peaceful and others enjoy ease. It (aspiration for Caliphate) is like turbid water or like a morsel that would suffocate the person who swallows it. One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another's field.

If I speak out they would call me greedy towards power but if I keep quiet they would say I was afraid of death. It is a pity that after all the ups and downs (I have been through). By Allah the son of Abu Talib is more familiar

with death than an infant with the breast of its mother. I have hidden knowledge, if I disclose it you will start trembling like ropes in deep wells.

Sermon 6

Delivered on being advised not to chase Talha and Zubair for fighting

By Allah I shall not be like the badger, which feigns sleep on continuous (sound of) stone-throwing till he who is in search of it finds it or he who is on the look out for it overpowers it. Rather, I shall ever strike the deviators from truth with the help of those who advance towards it, and the sinners and doubters with the help of those who listen to me and obey, till my day (of death) comes. By Allah I have been continually deprived of my right from the day the Prophet died till today.

Sermon 7

About the hypocrites

They have made Satan the master of their affairs, and he has taken them as partners. He has laid eggs and hatched them in their bosoms. He creeps and crawls in their laps. He sees through their eyes, and speaks with their tongues. In this way he has led them to sinfulness and adorned for them foul things like the action of one whom Satan has made partner in his domain and speaks untruth through his tongue.

Sermon 8

Said about Zubair at a time for which it was appropriate

He asserts that he swore allegiance to me with his hand but did not swear with his heart. So he does admit allegiance. As regards his claiming it otherwise than with his heart he should come forward with a clear argument for it. Otherwise, he should return to wherefrom he has gone out.

Sermon 9

They thunder like clouds and shone like lightning but despite these things they exhibited cowardice, while we do not thunder till we pounce upon the foe nor do we show flow (of words) until we have not virtually rained.

Sermon 10

Beware! Satan has collected his group and assembled his horsemen and foot soldiers. Surely, with me is my sagacity. I have neither deceived myself nor ever been deceived. By Allah I shall fill to the brim for them a cistern from

which I alone would draw water. They can neither turn away from it nor return to it.

Sermon 11

Delivered when in the Battle of Jamal, Imam gave the standard to his son Muhammed bin Hanifah.

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 succour is but from Allah, the Glorified.

Sermon 12

When Allah gave him victory over the enemy at Jamal one of his comrades said on that occasion if such and such brother had been present, then he too would have seen what success and victory Allah had given, whereupon Imam said:

"Did your brother hold me friend?" *He said: "Yes," Then Ameerul Momineen said:* In that case he was with us. Rather in this army of ours even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and wombs of women. Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them.

Sermon 13

Condemning the people of Basra

You were the army of a woman and in the command of a quadruped. When it grumbled you responded, and when it was wounded (hamstrung) you fled away. Your character is low and your pledge is broken. Your faith is hypocrisy. Your water is brackish. He who stays with you is laden with sins and he who forsakes you secures Allah's mercy. As though I see your mosque prominent, resembling the surface of a boat, while Allah has sent chastisement from above and from below it and every one who is on it is drowned.

Another version: By Allah, your city would certainly be drowned so much so that as though I see its mosque like the upper part of a boat or a sitting ostrich. Like the bosom of a bird in deep sea.

Another version: Your city is the most stinking of all the cities as regards its clay, the nearest to water and remotest from the sky. It contains nine tenths of evil. He who enters it is surrounded with his sins and he who is out of it enjoys Allah's forgiveness. It seems as though I look at this habitation of yours that water has so engulfed it that nothing can be seen of it except the highest part of mosque appearing like the bosom of a bird in deep sea.

Sermon 14

This also is in condemnation of the people of Basra

Your earth is close to the sea and away from the sky. Your wits have become light and your minds are full of folly. You are the aim of the archer, a morsel for the eater and an easy prey for the hunter.

Sermon 15

After resuming the land grants made by Uthman ibn `Affan, he said

By Allah, even if I had found that by such money women have been married or slave-maids have been purchased I would have resumed it 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.

Sermon 16

Delivered when allegiance was sworn to him at Medina

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 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 in 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 attain forward positions and those who were forward 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 reins 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 Heaven. There is right and wrong and there are followers for each. If wrong dominates, it has 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.

Same sermon: He who has heaven and hell in his view has no other aim. He who attempts and acts quickly, succeeds, while the seeker who is slow may also entertain hope, and he who falls short of action faces destruction in Hell. On right and left there are misleading paths. Only the middle way is the (right) path which is the Everlasting Book and the traditions of the Prophet. From it the *sunnah* has spread out and towards it is the eventual return.

He who claims (otherwise) is ruined and he who concocts falsehood is disappointed. He who opposes right with his face gets destruction. It is enough

ignorance for a man not to know himself. He who is strong rooted in piety does not get destruction, and the plantation of a people based on piety never remains without water. Hide yourselves in your houses and reform yourselves. Repentance is at your back. One should praise only Allah and condemn only his own self.

Sermon 17

About those who sit for dispensation of justice among people but are not fit for it

Among all the people the most detested before Allah are two persons. One is he who is devoted to his self. So he is deviated from the true path and loves speaking about (foul) innovations and inviting towards wrong path. He is therefore a nuisance for those who are enamoured of him, is himself misled from the guidance of those preceding him, misleads those who follow him in his life or after his death, carries the weight of others' sins and is entangled in his own misdeeds.

The other man is he who has picked up ignorance. He moves among the ignorant, is senseless in the thick of mischief and is blind to the advantages of peace. Those resembling like men have named him scholar but he is not so. He goes out early morning to collect things whose deficiency 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. If an ambiguous problem is presented before him he manages shabby argument about it of his own accord and passes judgement 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. If he is right he fears lest he erred, while if he is wrong he hopes he is right. He is ignorant, wandering astray in ignorance and riding on carriages aimlessly moving in darkness. He did not try to find reality of knowledge. He scatters the traditions as the wind scatters the dry leaves.

By Allah, he is not capable of solving the problems that come to him nor is fit for the position assigned to him. Whatever he does not know he does not regard it worth knowing. He does not realise that what is beyond his reach is within the reach of others. If anything is not clear to him he keeps quiet over it because he knows his own ignorance. Lost lives are crying against his unjust verdicts, and properties (wrongly disposed) are grumbling against him.

I complain to Allah about persons who live ignorant and die misguided. For them nothing is more worthless than Quran if it is recited as it should be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Quran if its verses are removed from their places, nor anything more vicious than virtue nor more virtuous than vice.

Sermon 18

Imam said in disparagement of the differences of view among the theologians.

When a problem is put before anyone of them he passes judgement 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 , their Prophet is one , their Book is one .

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 neglected anything in the Book “ (Quran, 6:38)

And says that one part of the Quran verifies another part and that there is no divergence in it as He says:

“And if it had been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found in it much discrepancy. (Quran, 4 :82)

Certainly the outside of the Quran is wonderful and its inside is deep (in meaning). Its wonders will never disappear, its amazements will never pass away and its intricacies cannot be cleared except through itself.

Sermon 19

Imam was delivering a lecture on the pulpit when Ash`ath ibn Qays objected and said, "O' Ameerul Mumineen this thing is not in your favour but against you." Imam looked at him with anger and said:

How do you know what is for me and what is against me? ! Curse of Allah and others be on you. You are a weaver and son of a weaver. You are the son of an unbeliever and yourself a hypocrite. You were arrested once by the Unbelievers and once by the Muslims, but your wealth and birth could not save you from either. The man who contrives for his own people to be put to sword and invites death and destruction for them does deserve that the near ones should hate him and the remote ones should not trust him.

Sermon 20

If you could see that has been seen by those of you who have died, you

would be puzzled and troubled. Then you would have listened and obeyed; but what they have seen is yet curtained off from you. Shortly, the curtain would be thrown off. You have been shown, provided you see and you have been made to listen provided you listen, and you have been guided if you accept guidance. I spoke unto you with truth. You have been called aloud by (instructive) examples and warned through items full of warnings. After the heavenly messengers (angels), only man can convey message from Allah. (So what I am conveying is from Allah).

Sermon 21

Your aim (reward or punishment) is before you. Behind your back is the hour (of death) which is driving you on. Keep (yourself) light and overtake (the forward ones). Your last ones are being awaited by the first ones (who have preceded).

Sermon 22

Beware! Satan has certainly started instigating his forces and has collected his army in order that oppression may reach its extreme ends and wrong may come back to its position. By Allah they have not put a correct blame on me, nor have they done justice between me and themselves.

They are demanding of me a right which they have abandoned, and a blood that they have themselves shed. If I were a partner with them in it then they too have their share of it. But if they did it without me they alone have to face the consequences. Their biggest argument (against me) is (really) against themselves. They are suckling from a mother who is already dry, and bringing into life innovation that is already dead. How disappointing is this challenger (to battle)? Who is this challenger and for what is he being responded to? I am happy that the reasoning of Allah has been exhausted before them and He knows (all) about them.

If they refuse (to obey) I will offer them the edge of the sword which is enough a curer of wrong and supporter of Right. It is strange they send me word to proceed to them for spear-fighting and to keep ready for fighting with swords. May the mourning women mourn over them. I have ever been so that I was never frightened by fighting nor threatened by clashing. I enjoy full certainty of belief from my Allah and have no doubt in my faith.

Sermon 23

Now then, verily Divine orders descend from heaven to earth like drops of rain, bringing to every one what is destined for him whether plenty or paucity. So if any one of you observes for his brother plenty of progeny or of wealth or of self, it should not be a worry for him. So long as a Muslim does not commit such an act that if it is disclosed he has to bend his eyes (in

shame) and by which low people are emboldened, he is like the gambler who expects that the first draw of his arrow would secure him gain and also cover up the previous loss.

Similarly, the Muslim who is free from dishonesty expects one of the two good things: either call from Allah and in that case whatever is with Allah is the best for him, or the livelihood of Allah. He has already children and property while his faith and respect are with him. Certainly, wealth and children are the plantations of this world while virtuous deed is the plantation of the next world. Sometimes Allah joins all these in some groups.

Beware of Allah against what He has cautioned you and keep afraid of Him to the extent that no excuse be needed for it. Act without show or intention of being heard, for if a man acts for some one else then Allah makes him over to that one. We ask Allah (to grant us) the positions of the martyrs, company of the virtuous and friendship of the prophets.

O' people! surely no one can do without his kinsmen, and their support by hands or tongues. They alone are his support from rear and can ward off from him his troubles, and they are the most kind to him when tribulations befall him. The good memory of a man that Allah retains among people is better than the property which others inherit from him.

In the same sermon: Behold! If any one of you finds your near ones in want or starvation, he should not desist from helping them with that which will not increase if this help is not extended, nor decrease by thus spending it. Whoever holds up his hand from (helping) his kinsmen, he holds only one hand, but at the time of his need many hands remain held up from helping him. One who is sweet tempered can retain the love of his people for good.

Sermon 24

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). Tread on the path He has laid down for you and stand by what He has enjoined upon you. In that case `Ali would stand surety for your success (salvation) eventually even though you may not get it immediately.

Sermon 25

When Ameerul Mumineen received successive news that Muawiyah's men were occupying cities and his own officers in Yemen namely Ubaydullah ibn Abbas and Said ibn Nimran came to him retreating after being overpowered by Busr ibn Abi Artat, he was much disturbed by the slackness of his own men in jihad and their difference with his opinion. Proceeding on to the pulpit he said:

Nothing (is left to me) but Kufah which I can hold and extend (which is in my hand to play with). (O' Kufah) if this is your condition that whirlwinds continue blowing through you then Allah may destroy you.

Then he illustrated with the verse of a poet: O' `Amr! By your good father's life. I have received only a small bit of fat from this pot (fat that remains sticking to it after it has been emptied).

I have been informed that Busr has overpowered Yemen. 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), and separation, your disobedience of your Imam in matters of right and their obedience to their leader in matters of wrong, their fulfilment of the trust in favour of their master and your betrayal, their good work in their cities and your mischief. Even if I give you charge of a wooden bowl I fear you would run away with its handle.

O' my Allah they are disgusted of me and I am disgusted of them. They are weary of me and I am weary of them. Change them for me with better ones and change me for them with worse one. O' my Allah melt their hearts as salt melts in water. By Allah I wish I had only a thousand horsemen of Banu Firas ibn Ghanm (as the poet says): "If you call them the horsemen would come to you like the summer cloud."

Sermon 26

Allah sent Muhammad (S.A.) as a warner for all the worlds and a trustee of His revelation, while you people of Arabia were following the worst religion and you resided among rough stones and venomous serpents. You drank dirty water and ate filthy food. You shed blood of each other and cared not for relationship. Idols are fixed among you and sins are clinging to you.

Part of the same sermon: I looked and found that there is no supporter for me except family, so I refrained from thrusting them unto death. I kept my eyes closed despite motes in them. I drank despite choking of throat. I exercised patience despite trouble in breathing and despite having to take sour colocynth as food.

Part of the same sermon: He did not swear allegiance till he got him to agree that he would pay him its price. The hand of this purchaser (of allegiance) may not be successful and the contract of the seller may face disgrace. Now you should take up arms for war and arrange equipment for it. Its flames have grown high and its brightness has increased. Clothe yourself with patience for it is the best to victory.

Sermon 27

Now then, surely *jihad* is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has

opened for His chief friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armour of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing *jihad*. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him.

Beware! I called you (insistently) to fight these people night and day, secretly and openly and exhorted you to attack them before they attacked you, because by Allah, no people have been attacked in the hearts of their houses but they suffered disgrace; but you put it off to others and forsook it till destruction befell you and your cities were occupied. The horsemen of Banu Ghamid have reached al-Anbar and killed Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri. They have removed your horsemen from the garrison.

I have come to know that every one of them entered upon Muslim women and other women under protection of Islam and took away their ornaments from legs, arms, necks and ears and no woman could resist it except by pronouncing the verse, "*We are for Allah and to Him we shall return.*" Then they got back laden with wealth without any wound or loss of life. If any Muslim dies of grief after all this he is not to be blamed but rather there is justification for him before me.

How strange! How strange! By Allah my heart sinks to see the unity of these people on their wrong and your dispersion from your right. Woe and grief befall you. You have become the target at which arrows are shot. You are being killed and you do not kill. You are being attacked but you do not attack. Allah is being disobeyed and you remain agreeable to it. When I ask you to move against them in summer you say it is hot weather. Spare us till heat subsides from us. When I order you to march in winter you say it is severely cold; give us time till cold clears from us. These are just excuses for evading heat and cold because if you run away from heat and cold, you would be, by Allah, running away (in a greater degree) from sword (war).

O' you semblance of men, not men, your intelligence is that of children and your wit that of women. I wish I had not seen you nor known you. By Allah, this acquaintance has brought about shame and resulted in repentance. May Allah fight you! You have filled my heart with pus and loaded my bosom with rage. You made me drink mouthful of grief one after the other. You shattered my counsel by disobeying and leaving me so much so that Quraysh started saying that the son of Abi Talib is brave but does not know (tactics of) war. Allah bless them ! Is any one of them more fierce in war and more older in it than I am? I rose for it although yet within twenties, and here I am, have crossed over sixty, but one who is not obeyed can have no opinion.

Sermon 28

So now, surely this world has turned its back and announced its departure

while the next world has appeared forward and proclaimed its approach. Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Is there no one to offer repentance over his faults before his death? Or is there no one to perform virtuous acts before the day of trial?

Beware, surely you are in the days of hopes behind which stands death. Whoever acts during the days of his hope before approach of his death, his action would benefit him and his death would not harm him. But he who fails to act during the period of hope before the approach of death his action is a loss and his death is a harm to him. Beware, and act during a period of attraction just as you act during a period of dread. Beware, surely I have not seen a coveter for Paradise asleep nor a dreader from Hell to be asleep. Beware, he whom right does not benefit must suffer the harm of the wrong, and he whom guidance does not keep firm will be led away by misguidance towards destruction.

Beware, you have been ordered insistently to march and been guided how to provide for the journey. Surely the most frightening thing which I am afraid of about you is to follow desires and to widen the hopes. Provide for yourself from this world what would save you tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

Sermon 29

O' people, your bodies are together but your desires are divergent. Your talk softens the hard stones and your action attracts your enemy towards you. You claim in your sittings that you would do this and that, but when fighting approaches, you say (to war), "turn thou away" (i.e. flee away). If one calls you (for help) the call receives no heed. And he who deals hardly with you his heart has no solace. The excuses are amiss like that of a debtor unwilling to pay. The ignoble can not ward off oppression. Right cannot be achieved without effort. Which is the house besides this one to protect? And with which leader (Imam) would you go for fighting after me?

By Allah! deceived is one whom you have deceived while, by Allah! he who is successful with you receives only useless arrows. You are like broken arrows thrown over the enemy. By Allah! I am now in the position that I neither confirm your views nor hope for your support, nor challenge the enemy through you. What is the matter with you? What is your ailment? What is your cure? The other party is also men of your shape (but they are so different in character). Will there be talk without action, carelessness without piety and greed in things not right?

Sermon 30

Disclosing real facts about assassination of Uthman , Imam said:

If I had ordered his assassination I should have been his killer, but if I had refrained others from killing him I would have been his helper. The position was that he who helped him cannot now say that he is better than the one who deserted him while he who deserted him cannot say that he is better than the one who helped him. I am putting before you his case. He appropriated and did it badly. You protested against it and committed excess therein. With Allah lies the real verdict between the appropriator and the protester.

Sermon 31

When before the commencement of the Battle of Jamal Imam sent ibn `Abbas to Zubair with the purpose that he should advise him back to obedience, he said to him on that occasion:

Do not meet Talha. If you meet him you will find him like an unruly bull whose horns are turned towards its ears. He rides a ferocious riding beast and says it has been tamed. But you meet Zubair because he is soft-tempered. Tell him that your maternal cousin says that, "It looks as if in the Hijaz you knew me, but on coming here to Iraq you have turned into a complete stranger. After all, what is the cause for all this?"

Sermon 32

O' people! we have been borne in such a wrongful and thankless period wherein the virtuous is deemed vicious and the oppressor goes on advancing in his excess. We do not make use of what we know and do not discover what we do not know. We do not fear calamity till it befalls.

People are of four categories. Among them is one who is prevented from mischief only by his low position, lack of means and paucity of wealth. Then there is he who has drawn his sword, openly commits mischief, has collected his horsemen and foot-men and has devoted himself to securing wealth, leading troops, rising on the pulpit and has allowed his faith to perish. How bad is the transaction that you allow (enjoyment of) this world to be a price for yourself as an alternative for what there is with Allah for you.

And among them is he who seeks (benefits of) this world through actions meant for the next world, but does not seek (good of) the next world through actions of this world. He keeps his body calm (in dignity), raises small steps, holds up his clothes, embellishes his body for appearance of trust-worthiness and uses the position of Allah's connivance as a means of committing sins. Then there is one whose weakness and lack of means have held him back from conquest of lands. This keeps down his position and he has named it contentment and he clothes himself with the robe of renunciation although he has never had any connection with these qualities.

Then there remain a few people in whose case the remembrance of their return (to Allah on Doomsday) keeps their eyes bent, and the fear of resurrec-

tion moves their tears. Some of them are scared away (from the world) and dispersed; some are frightened and subdued; some are quiet as if muzzled; some are praying sincerely, some are grief-stricken and pain-ridden whom fear has confined to namelessness and disgrace has shrouded them, so they are in (the sea of) bitter water, their mouths are closed and their hearts are bruised. They preached till they were tired, they were oppressed till they were disgraced and they were killed till they remained few in number.

The world in your eyes should be smaller than the bark of acacia and the clippings of wool. Seek instruction from those who preceded you before those who follow you take instruction from you, and keep aloof from it realising its evil because it cuts off even from those who were more attached to it than you.

Sermon 33

Abdullah ibn Abbas says when Ameerul Momineen set out for war with the people of Basrah he came to his audience at Dhiqar and saw that he was stitching his shoe. Then Amir al mu'minin said to me, "What is the price of this shoe?" I said: "It has no value now." He then said, "By Allah, it should have been more dear to me than ruling over you but for the fact that I may establish right and ward off wrong." Then he came out and spoke:

Verily, Allah sent Muhammad (S.A.) when none among the Arabs read a book or claimed prophethood. He guided the people till he took them to their (correct) position and their salvation. So their spears (i.e. officers) became straight and their conditions settled down.

By Allah, surely I was in their lead till it took shape with its walls. I did not show weakness or cowardice. My existing march is also like that. I shall certainly pierce the wrong till right comes out of its side. What (cause of conflict) is there between me and the Quraysh? By Allah, I have fought them when they were unbelievers and I shall fight them when they have been misled. I shall be the same for them today as I was for them yesterday.

Sermon 34

To prepare the people for fighting with the people of Syria Ameerul Momineen said:

Woe to you. I am tired of rebuking you. Do you accept this worldly life in place of the next life? Or disgrace in place of dignity? When I invite you to fight your enemy your eyes revolve as though you are in the clutches of death, and in the senselessness of last moments. My pleadings are not understood by you and you remain stunned. It is as though your hearts are affected with madness so that you do not understand. You have lost my confidence for good. Neither are you a support for me to lean upon, nor a means to honour and victory. Your example is that of the camels whose protector has disap-

peared, so that if they are collected from one side they disperse away from the other side.

By Allah, how bad are you for igniting flames of war. You are intrigued against but do not intrigue (against the enemy). Your boundaries are decreasing but you do not get enraged over it. Those against you do not sleep but you are unmindful. By Allah, those who leave matters one for the other are subdued. By Allah, I believed about you that if battle rages and death hovers around you, you will cut away from the son of Abi Talib like the severing of head from the trunk.

By Allah, he who makes it possible for his adversary to so overpower him as to remove the flesh (from his bones), crush his bones and cut his skin into pieces, then it means that his helplessness is great and his heart surrounded within the sides of his chest is weak. You may become like this if you wish. But for me, before I allow it I shall use my sharp edged swords of al-Mushrafiyyah which would cut as under the bones of the head and fly away arms and feet. Thereafter, Allah will do whatever He wills.

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 behaviourism that you may act upon. As for my right over you, it is fulfilment of (the obligation of) allegiance, well-wishing in presence or in absence, response when I call you and obedience when I order you.

Sermon 35

Ameerul Momineen said after Arbitration:

All praise is due to Allah even though time has brought (for us) crushing calamity and great occurrence. And I stand witness that there is no god but Allah the One, there is no partner for Him nor is there with Him any god other than Himself, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet (S.A.)

So now, certainly the disobedience of sympathetic counsellor who has knowledge as well as experience brings about disappointment and result in repentance. I had given you my orders about this arbitration and put before you my hidden view, if Qasir's orders were fulfilled but you rejected it like rough opponents and disobedient insurgents till the counsellor himself fell in doubt about his counsel and the flint (of his wit) ceased to give flame. Consequently, mine and your position became as the poet of Hawazin says: "*I gave you my orders at Muna'raj-ul-Liva but you did not see the good of my counsel till the noon of next day (when it was too late).*"

Sermon 36

Warning the people of Nahrawan of their fate:

I am warning you that you will be killed on the bend of this canal and on the

level of this low area while you will have no clear excuse before Allah nor any open authority with you. You have come out of your houses and then divine decree entangled you. I had advised you against this arbitration but you rejected my advice like adversaries and opponents till I turned my ideas in the direction of your wishes. You are a group whose heads are devoid of wit and intelligence. May you have no father! (Allah's woe be to you!) I have not put you in any calamity nor wished you harm.

Sermon 37

Ameerul Momineen's utterance which runs like a Sermon:

I discharged duties when others lost courage (to do so), and I came forward when others hid themselves. I spoke when others remained mum. I stroked with Divine light when others remained standing. I was the quietest of them in voice but the highest in going forward. I cleaved to its rein and applied myself solely to its pledge, like the mountain which neither sweeping wind could move nor storm could shake. No one could find fault with me nor could any speaker speak ill of me.

The low is in my view worthy of honour till I secure his right for him while the strong is in my view weak till I take other's rights from him. We are happy with the destiny ordained by Allah and have submitted to the command of Allah. Do you think I would speak lie about the Prophet of Allah? By Allah, I am surely the first to testify him, so I will not be the first to falsify him. I looked at my affairs and found that my obedience should have precedence over my allegiance while my pledge with him is a burden on my neck.

Sermon 38

Doubt is named doubt because it resembles truth. As for lovers of Allah, their conviction serves them as light and the direction of the right path serves as their guide; while the enemies of Allah, in time of doubt call to misguidance in the darkness of doubt and their guide is blindness. One who fears death cannot escape it nor can one who fears for eternal life secure it.

Sermon 39

I am faced with men who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call them. May you have no father! (Woe!) What are you waiting for to rise for the cause of Allah? Does not faith join you together, or sense of shame rouse you? I stand among you shouting and I am calling you for help, but you do not listen to my word, and do not obey my orders, till circumstances show out their bad consequences. No blood can be avenged through you and no purpose can be achieved with you. I called you for help of your brethren but made noises like the camel having pain in stomach, and became loose like the camel of thin back. Then a wavering weak contingent came to me from

amongst you: as if they are being led to death and they are only watching.

Sermon 40

When Imam heard the cry of Kharijites that "Verdict is only that of Allah" he said:

The sentence is right but what (they think) it means, is wrong. It is true that verdict lies but with Allah, but these people say that governance is only for Allah. The fact is that there is no escape for men from ruler good or bad. The faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. 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.

Another version: When Imam heard the cry of the Kharijites on the said verdict he said: I am expecting the verdict (destiny) of Allah on you. Then he continued: As for good government the pious man performs good acts in it, while in a bad government the wicked person enjoys till his time is over and death overtakes him.

Sermon 41

Surely fulfilment of pledge is the twin of truth. I do not know a better shield (against the assaults of sin) than it. One who realises 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. What is the matter with them? Allah may destroy them. One who has been through thick and thin of life finds the excuses to be preventing him from orders and prohibitions of Allah but he disregards them despite capability (to succumb to them and follows the commands of Allah), while one who has no restraints of religion seizes the opportunity (and accepts the excuses for not following the commands of Allah).

Sermon 42

O people what I fear most about you are two things - acting according to desires and extending of hopes. As regards acting according to desires, this prevents from truth; and as regards extending of hopes, it makes one forget the next world. You should know this world is moving rapidly and nothing has remained out of it except last particles like the dregs of a vessel which has been emptied by someone. Beware, the next world is advancing, and either of them has sons i.e. followers. You should become sons of the next world and not become sons of this world because on the Day of Judgement every son would cling to his mother. Today is the Day of action and there is no reckoning while tomorrow is the Day of reckoning but there would be no (opportunity for) action.

Sermon 43

After Ameerul Momineen had sent Jarir ibn `Abdillah al-Bajali to Mu`awiyah (for securing his allegiance) some of his companions suggested preparation to fight with him then he said:

My preparation for war with the people of Syria (ash-Sham) while Jarir ibn `Abdillah al-Bajali is still there would be closing the door for Syria and prevention of its people from good action (i.e. allegiance) if they intend doing it. However, I have fixed a time limit for Jarir after which he would not stay without either deception or in disobedience. My opinion is in favour of patience, so wait a while. (In the meantime) I do not dislike your getting ready.

I have observed this matter thoroughly from all sides but I do not find any way except war or heresy. Certainly, there was over the people a ruler who brought about new things and compelled the people to speak out. So they did speak, then rose up and thereafter changed the whole system.

Sermon 44

When Masqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybani fled to Mu`awiyah because he had purchased some prisoners of Banu Najiyah from an executive of Ameerul Momineen, but when he demanded the price the latter avoided and ran to Syria, Ameerul Momineen said:

Allah may be bad to Masqalah. He acted like the noble but fled away like a slave. Before his admirer could speak (about him) he silenced him and before his eulogist could testify to his good deeds he closed his mouth. If he had stayed behind we would have taken from him what he could easily pay and waited for the balance till his money increased.

Sermon 45

Praise is due to Allah from Whose mercy no one loses hope, from Whose bounty no one is deprived, from Whose forgiveness no one is disappointed and for Whose worship no one is too high. His mercy never ceases and His bounty is never missed.

This world is a place for which destruction is ordained and for its inhabitants departure from here is destined. It is sweet and green. It hastens towards its seeker and attaches to the heart of the viewer. So depart from here with the best of provision available with you and do not ask herein more than what is enough and do not demand from it more than subsistence.

Sermon 46

When Imam decided to march towards Syria he spoke these words:

My Allah, I seek Your protection from the hardships of journey, from the

grief of returning and from the scene of devastation of property and men. O' Allah, You are the companion in journey and You are One who is left behind for (protection of the) family. None except You can join these two because one who is left behind cannot be a companion in journey nor one who is in company on a journey can at the same time be left behind.

Sermon 47

O Kufa, as though I see you being drawn like the tanned leather of Ukkaz (a market near Mecca in the pre-Islamic age), you are being scraped by calamities and ridden by severe troubles. I certainly know that if any tyrant intends evil for you Allah will afflict him with worry and send someone to kill him.

Sermon 48

Delivered at the time of marching towards Syria:

Praise is due to Allah when night spreads and darkens, and praise be to Allah whenever the star shines and sets. And praise be to Allah whose bounty never misses and whose favours cannot be repaid. Well, I have sent forward my vanguard and have ordered them to remain in camp on this bank of the River till my order reaches them. My intention is that I should cross this water over to the small habitation of people residing on the sides of the Tigris and rouse them to march with you towards the enemy and keep them as auxiliary force for you.

Sermon 49

Praise be to Allah Who lies inside all hidden things, and towards Whom all open things guide. He cannot be seen by the eye of an onlooker, but the eye which does not see Him cannot deny Him while the mind that proves His existence cannot perceive Him. He is so high in sublimity that nothing can be more sublime than He, while in nearness, He is so near that no one can be nearer than He. But his sublimity does not put Him at a distance from anything of His creation, nor does His nearness bring them on equal level to Him. He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing essential knowledge of Him. So he is such that all signs of existence stand witness for Him till the denying mind also believes in Him. Allah is sublime beyond what is described by those who liken Him to things or those who deny Him.

Sermon 50

The basis of the occurrence of evils are those desires which are acted upon and the orders that are innovated. They are against the Book of Allah. People co-operate with each other about them even though it is against the Religion of Allah. If wrong had been pure and unmixed it would not be hidden from

those who are in search of it. And if right had been pure without admixture of wrong those who bear hatred towards it would have been silenced. What is, however, done is that something is taken from here and something from there and the two are mixed! At this stage Satan overpowers his friends and they alone escape for whom virtue has been allocated by Allah from before.

Sermon 51

When in Siffeen the men of Muawiya overpowered the men of Ameerul Momineen (A.S.) and occupied the bank of River Euphrates and denied taking its water, Imam said:

They are asking you morsels of battle. So either you remain in ignominy and the lowest position or drench your swords with blood and quench your thirst with water. Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying as subjugators. Beware, Muawiya is leading a small group of insurgents and has kept them in dark about the true facts with the result that they have made their bosoms the targets of death.

Sermon 52

Beware, the world is wrapping itself up and has announced its departure. Its known things have become strangers and it is speedily moving backward. It is advancing its inhabitants towards destruction and driving its neighbours towards death. Its sweet things (enjoyments) have become sour, and its clear things have become polluted. Consequently, what has remained of it is just like the remaining water in a vessel or a mouthful of water in the measure. If a thirsty person drinks it his thirst is not quenched.

O' creatures of Allah get ready to go out of this world for whose inhabitants decay is ordained, and (beware) heart's wishes should overpower you, nor should you take your stay (in life) to be long. By Allah, if you cry like the she-camel that has lost its young one, call out like the cooing of pigeons, make noise like devoted recluses and turn to Allah leaving your wealth and children as a means to secure His nearness and high position with Him or the forgiveness of sins which have been covered by His books and recorded by His angels it would be less than His reward that I expect for you or His retribution that I fear about you.

By Allah, if your hearts melt down thoroughly and your eyes shed tears of blood either in hope for Him or for fear from Him and you are also allowed to live in this world all the time that it lasts even then your actions cannot pay for His great bounties over you and His having guided you towards faith.

Sermon 53

Description of the Day of Sacrifice (Eidul Qurban) and qualities of the animal for sacrifice:

For an animal to be fully fit for sacrifice it is necessary that both its ears should be raised upwards and its eyes should be healthy. If the ears and the

eyes are sound the animal of sacrifice is sound and perfect, even though its horn be broken or it drags its feet to the place of sacrifice.

Sermon 54

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. I thought over this matter in and out to the extent that it prevented me from sleeping. But I found no way except to fight them or else to reject whatever has been brought by Muhammad (pbuh). I found that to face war was easier for me than to face the retribution, and the hardships of this world were easier than the hardships of the next world.

Sermon 55

When Imam's men showed impatience on his delay in giving them permission to fight in Siffeen, he said:

Well, as for your idea whether this (delay) is due to my unwillingness for death, then by Allah I do not care whether I proceed towards death or death advances towards me. As for your impression that it may be due to my misgivings about the people of Syria, well 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 and see my light with their weak eyes. This is dearer to me than to kill them in the state of their misguidance although they would be bearing their own sins.

Sermon 56

In the company of the Prophet of Allah we used to fight our parents, sons, brothers and uncles, and this continued us in our faith, in submission, in our following the right path, in endurance over the pangs of pain and in our fight against the enemy. A man from our side and one from the enemy would pounce upon each other like energetic men contesting as to who would kill the other; sometime our man got over his adversary and sometime the enemy's man got over ours.

When Allah had observed our truth He sent ignominy to our foe and sent His succour to us till Islam got established (like the camel) with neck on the ground and resting in its place. By my life, if we had also behaved like you, no pillar of (our) religion could have been raised, nor the tree of faith could have borne leaves. By Allah, certainly you will now milk our blood (instead of milk) and eventually you will face shame.

Sermon 57

Ameerul Momineen said to his companions:

Soon after me there would be put on you a man with a broad mouth and a big belly. He would swallow whatever he gets and would crave for what he does not get. You should kill him but you would not kill him. He would command you to abuse me and to renounce me. As for abusing, you do abuse me because that would mean purification for me and salvation for you. As regards renunciation, you should not renounce me because I have been born on the natural religion and was foremost in accepting it as well as in Hijra.

Sermon 58

Addressing the Kharijites, Ameerul Momineen said:

Storm may overtake you while there may be none to prick you (for reforms). Shall I be witness to my becoming heretic after acceptance of Faith and fighting in the company of the Prophet?! "In that case I shall be misguided and I shall not be on the right path. So you should return to your evil places, and get back on the traces of your heels. Beware! Certainly you will meet, after me, overwhelming disgrace and sharp sword and tradition that will be adopted by the oppressors as a norm towards you.

Sermon 59

When Ameerul Momineen showed his intention to fight the Kharijites he was told that they had crossed the bridge of Nahrawan and gone over to the other side. Imam said:

Their falling place is on this side of the river. By Allah, not even ten of them will survive while from your side not even ten will be killed.

When Ameerul Momineen was told that the Kharijites had been totally killed, he said: By Allah, no, not yet. They still exist in the loins of men and wombs of women. Whenever a chief would appear from among them, he would be cut down till the last of them would turn thieves and robbers. Imam also said: Do not fight the Kharijites after me, because one who seeks right but does not find it, is not like one who seeks wrong and finds it.

Sermon 60

When Ameerul Momineen was warned of being killed by deceit, he said:

Surely, there is a strong shield of Allah over me. When my day would come it would get away from me and hand me over to death. At that time neither an arrow would go amiss nor a wound would heal up.

Sermon 61

Beware! Surely this world is a place from which protection cannot be sought except while one is in it. The action which is performed only for this world cannot secure salvation. People are tested in it through calamities. Those who have taken worldly pleasures here will be taken out from them (by death) and will be questioned about them. And whatever (good actions) they have achieved for the other world, they will get them there and stay in them. For the intelligent this world is like the shade - one moment it is spread out and extended but soon it shrinks and contracts.

Sermon 62

O creatures of Allah! Fear Allah and anticipate your death by good actions. Purchase everlasting joy by paying transitory things - pleasures of this world. Get ready for the journey, for you are being driven, and prepare yourselves for death, since it is hovering over you. Be a people who wake up when called, and who know that this world is not their abode, and so have it changed (with the next).

Certainly, Allah has not created you aimlessly nor left you as useless. There is nothing between anyone of you and Paradise or Hell except death that must befall him. The life that is being shortened every moment and being dismantled every hour must be regarded very short. The hidden thing namely death which is being driven (to you) by two over new phenomena, the day and the night, is certainly quick of approach. The traveller which is approaching with success or failure (namely death) deserves the best of provision. So acquire such provision from this world while you are here with which you may shield yourself tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

So everyone should fear Allah, should admonish himself, should send forward his repentance and should overpower his desire, because his death is hidden from him, his desires deceive him and Satan is posted on him and he beautifies for him sin so that he may commit it and prompts him to delay repentance till his desires make him the most negligent. Pity is for the negligent person whose life itself would be a proof against him and his own days (passed in sin) would lead him to punishment.

We ask Allah, the Glorified, that He may make us and you like one whom bounty does not mislead, whom nothing can stop from obedience of Allah and whom shame and grief do not befall after death.

Sermon 63

Praise be to Allah for Whom one condition does not proceed another so that He may be the First before being the Last or He may be Manifest before being Hidden. Everyone called one (alone) save Him is by virtue of being small (in number); and everyone enjoying honour other than Him is humble. Every

powerful person other than Him is weak. Every master (owner) other than Him is slave (owned).

Every knower other than Him is seeker of knowledge. Every controller other than Him is sometimes imbued with control and sometimes with disability. Every listener other than Him is deaf to light voices while loud voices make him deaf and distant voices also get away from him. Every onlooker other than Him is blind to hidden colours and delicate bodies. Every manifest thing other than Him is hidden, but every hidden thing other than Him is incapable of becoming manifest.

He did not create what He created to fortify His authority nor for fear of the consequences of time, nor to seek help against the attack of an equal or a boastful partner or a hateful opponent. On the other hand all the creatures are reared by him and are His humbled slaves. He is not conditioned in anything so that it be said that He exists therein, nor is He separated from anything so as to be said that He is away from it. The creation of what He initiated or the administration of what He controls did not fatigue Him. No disability overtook Him against what He created. No misgiving ever occurred to Him in what He ordained and resolved. But His verdict is certain, His knowledge is definite, His governance is overwhelming. He is wished for at time of distress and He is feared even in bounty.

Sermon 64

In some of the days of Siffin Ameerul Momineen said to his followers

O crowd of Muslims! Make fear of Allah the routine of your life. Cover yourselves with peace of mind and clinch your teeth because this makes the sword slip off from the skull. Complete your armour and shake your swords in their sheathes before showing them out. Have your eyes on the enemy.

Use your spears on both sides and strike with swords. Keep in mind that you are before Allah and in the company of the Prophet's cousin. Repeat your attacks and feel ashamed of running away, because it is a shame for posterity and fire on the Day of Judgement. Give your lives willingly and walk towards death with ease. Beware of this great majority, and the pitched tent and aim at its centre because Satan is hiding in its corner. He has extended his hand for assault and has kept back his foot for running away. Keep one enduring till the light of Truth dawns upon you.

While ye have the upper hand, and Allah is with you, and never will He deprecate your deeds. (Qur'an, 47:35)

Sermon 65

When after the death of the Prophet news reached Ameerul Momineen about the happening in Saqifah ,he enquired what the Ansars said. People said that they were asking for one chief from among them and one from the others, Ameerul Momineen said:

Why did you not argue against them (*Ansar*) that the Prophet had left his will that whoever is good among Ansar should be treated well and whoever is bad he should be forgiven.

People said: "What is there against them in it?" *Imam said:* "If the Government was for them there should have been no will in their favour." *Then he said:* "What did the Quraysh plead?" *People said:* "They argued that they belong to the lineal tree of the Prophet. *Then Imam said:* "They argued with the tree but spoiled the fruits."

Sermon 66

When Ameerul Momineen appointed Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr Governor of Egypt and he was overpowered and killed, Ameerul Momineen said:

I had intended to send Hashim ibn `Utbah to Egypt and had I done so he would have made way for the opponents nor given them time (to get hold of him). This is without reproach to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr as I loved him and had brought him up.

Sermon 67

Admonishing his companions about careless behaviour Imam said:

How long shall I accord you consideration that is accorded to camels with hollow hump, or to worn clothes which when stitched on one side give way on the other. Whenever a vanguard force of Syria hovers over you, everyone of you shuts his door and hides himself like the lizard in its hole or a badger in its den. By Allah, he whom people like you support must suffer disgrace and he who throws arrows with your support is as if he throws arrows that are broken both at head and tail.

By Allah, within the courtyard you are quite numerous but under the banner you are only a few. Certainly, I know what can improve you and how your crookedness can be straightened. But I shall not improve your condition by marring myself. Allah may disgrace your faces and destroy you. You do not understand the right as you understand the wrong and do not crush the wrong as you crush the right.

Sermon 68

Spoken on the morning of the day when Imam was fatally struck with sword:

I was sitting when sleep overtook me. I saw the Prophet of Allah appear before me, and I said: "O' Prophet of Allah ! what crookedness and enmity I

had to face from the people. " The prophet of Allah said: "Invoke (Allah) evil upon them," but I said, "Allah may change them for me with better ones and change me for them with a worse one.

Sermon 69

In condemnation of the people of Iraq :

Now then, O people of Iraq! You are like pregnant woman who on completion of the period of pregnancy delivers a dead child and her husband is also dead and her period of widowhood is long while only remote relation inherits her. By Allah, I did not come to you of my own accord. I came to you by force of circumstances. I have come to know that you say `Ali speaks lie. May Allah fight you! Against whom do I speak lie? Whether against Allah?

But I am the first to have believed in him. Whether against His Prophet? But I am the first who testified to him. Certainly not. By Allah it was a way of expression which you failed to appreciate, and you were not capable of it. Woe to you. I am giving out these measures of nice expression free of any cost. I wish there were vessels good enough to hold them. Certainly, you will understand it after some time.

Sermon 70

Herein Imam tells people how to pronounce salawat (invoking Divine Supplication) on the Prophet.

My Allah, the Spreader of the surfaces (of earth) and Keeper of all skies, Creator of hearts on good and evil nature, send Your choicest blessings and growing favours on Muhammad Your servant and Your Prophet who is the last of those who preceded (him) and an opener for what is closed, proclaimer of truth with truth, repulser of the forces of wrong and crusher of the onslaughts of misguidance. As he was burdened (with responsibility of prophethood) so he bore it standing by Your commands, advancing towards Your will, without shrinking of steps of weakness of determination, listening to Your revelation, preserving Your testament, proceeding forward in the spreading of Your commands till he lit fire for its seeker and lighted the path for the proper in the dark.

Hearts achieved guidance through him after being ridden with troubles. He introduced clearly guiding signs and shining injunctions. He is Your trusted trustee, the treasurer of Your treasured knowledge, Your witness on the Day of Judgement, Your envoy of truth and Your Messenger towards the people. My Allah, prepare a large place for him under Your shade and award him multiplying good by Your bounty.

My Allah, give height to his construction above all other constructions, heighten his position with You, grant perfection to his effulgence and perfect for him his light. In reward for his discharging Your prophethip, grant him

that his testimony be admitted and his speech be liked for his speech is just, and his judgements are clear-cut. My Allah, put us and him together in the pleasures of life, continuance of bounty, satisfaction of desires, enjoyment of pleasures, ease of living, peace of mind and gifts of honour.

Sermon 71

Imam said about Marwan ibn al-Hakam at Basrah. When Marwan was taken on the day of Jamal, he asked Hassan and Hussain (p.b.u.t.) to intercede on his behalf before Imam. So they spoke to Imam about him and he released him. Then they said, "O' Imam he desires to swear you allegiance" Whereupon Imam said:

Did he not swear me allegiance after the killing of `Uthman? Now I do not need his allegiance, because his is the hand of a Jew. If he swears me allegiance with his hand he would violate it after a short while. Well, he is to get power for so long as a dog licks his nose., and his four sons will also rule. The people will face days through him and his sons.

Sermon 72

When the people decided to swear allegiance to Uthman, Ameerul Momineen said:

You have certainly known that I am most rightful of all others for the Caliphate. By Allah, so long as the affairs of Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression in it save on myself I shall keep quiet seeking reward for it and keeping aloof from its attractions and allurements for which you aspire.

Sermon 73

When Imam learnt that the Umayyads blamed him for killing Uthman, he said:

Umayyads's knowledge about me did not desist them from accusing me, nor did my precedence (in accepting Islam) keep off these ignorant people from blaming me. Allah's admonitions are more eloquent than my tongue. I am the contester against those who break away from Faith and the opposer of those who entertain doubts. Uncertainties should be placed before Qur'an, the Book of Allah (for clarification). Certainly, people will be recompensed according to what they have in their hearts.

Sermon 74

Allah may bless him who listens to a point of wisdom and retains it, when he is invited to the right path he approaches it, he follows a leader (by catching his waist band) and finds salvation, keeps Allah before his eyes and fears his sins, performs actions sincerely and acts virtuously, earns treasure of heavenly rewards, avoids vice, aims at (good) objectives and reaps recompense, faces his desires and rejects (fake) hopes, makes endurance the means to his salvation and piety the provision for his death, rides on the path of honour

and sticks to the highway of truth, makes good use of his time and hastens towards the end and takes with him the provision of (good) actions.

Sermon 75

The Banu Umayyah are allowing me the inheritance of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) bit (by bit). By Allah, if I live I would throw them away as the butcher removes the dust from the dust-covered piece of flesh.

Sermon 76

Supplications of Ameerul Momineen

O' my Allah! Forgive me what Thou knowest about me more than I do. If I return (to the sins) Thou return to forgiveness. My Allah forgive me what I had promised to myself but Thou didst not find its fulfilment with me. My Allah forgive me that with what I sought nearness to Thee with my tongue but my heart opposed and did not perform it. My Allah forgive me winkings of the eye, vile utterances, desires of the heart and errors of speech.

Sermon 77

Before the battle with the Kharijites someone said, "If you set out at this moment then according to astrology I fear you will not be successful in your aim," whereupon he said:

Do you think you can tell the hour when a man goes out and no evil befall him or can warn of the time at which if one goes out harm will accrue? Whoever testifies to this falsifies the Qur'an and becomes unmindful of Allah in achieving his desired objective and in warding off the undesirable. You cherish saying this so that he who acts on what you say should praise you rather than Allah because according to your misconception you have guided him about the hour in which he would secure benefit and avoid harm.

Then Ameerul Momineen advanced towards the people and said: O' People! Beware of learning the science of stars except that with which guidance is sought on land or sea, because it leads to divining and an astrologer is a diviner, while the diviner is like the sorcerer, the sorcerer is like the unbeliever and the unbeliever would be in Hell. Go forward in the name of Allah.

Sermon 78

After the Battle of Jamal, Imam said concerning women and their shortcomings:

O people! Women are deficient in Faith, deficient in shares and deficient in intelligence. As regards the deficiency in their Faith, it is their abstention from prayers and fasting during their menstrual period. As regards deficiency in their intelligence it is because the evidence of two women is equal to that of one man. As for the deficiency of their shares that is because of their share in inheritance being half of men. So beware of the evils of women. Be on your guard even from those of them who are (reportedly) good. Do not obey them even in good things so that they may not attract you to evils.

Sermon 79

O' people! Abstinence is to shorten desires, to thank for bounties and to keep off prohibitions. If this is possible then (at least) the prohibitions should not overpower your patience. Allah has exhausted the excuse before you through clear, shining arguments and open, bright books.

Sermon 80

In what way shall I describe this world whose beginning is grief and whose end is destruction? The lawful actions performed here have to be accounted for, while for the forbidden ones there is punishment. Whoever is rich here faces mischief and whoever is poor gets grief. One who hankers after it does not get it. If one keeps away from it then it advances towards him. If one sees through it, it would bestow him sight, but if one has his eye on it then it would blind him.

Sermon 81

This sermon is called the Gharra and it is one of the most wonderful sermons of Imam.

Praise be to Allah who is High above all else, and is Near (the creation) through His bounty. He is the Giver of all reward and distinction, and Dispeller of all calamities and hardships. I praise Him for His continuous mercy and His copious bounties.

I believe in Him as He is the First of all and He is Manifest. I seek guidance from Him as He is Near and is the Guide. I seek His succour as He is Mighty and Subduer. I depend upon Him as He is Sufficer and Supporter. And I stand witness that Muhammad (pbuh.) is His slave and His Prophet. He sent him for enforcement of His commands, for exhausting His pleas and for presenting warnings (against eternal punishment).

O creatures of Allah I advise you to have fear of Allah Who has furnished illustrations and Who has timed for you your lives. He has given you covering of dress and He has scattered for you livelihood. He has surrounded you with His knowledge. He has ordained rewards. He has bestowed upon you vast bounties and extensive gifts. He has warned you through far reaching arguments, and He has counted you by numbers. He has fixed for you ages (to live) in this place of test and house of instruction. You are on test in this world and have to render account about it.

Certainly this world is a dirty watering place and a muddy source of drinking. Its appearance is attractive and its inside is destructive. It is a deception, a vanishing reflection and a bent pillar. When its despiser begins to like it and he who is not acquainted with it feels satisfied with it, then it raises and puts down its feet (in joy), entraps him in its trap, makes him the target of its ar-

rows and puts round his neck the rope of death taking him to the narrow grave and fearful abode in order to show him his place of stay and the recompense of his acts. This goes on from generation to generation. Neither death stops from cutting them asunder nor do the survivors keep aloof from committing of sins.

They are copying each other and proceeding in groups towards the final objective and the meeting of death, till when matters come to a close, the world dies and resurrection draws near. Allah would take them out from the corners of the graves, the nests of birds, the dens of beasts and the centres of death. They hasten towards Him command and run towards the place fixed for their final return group by group, quiet, standing and arrayed in rows. They will be within Allah's sight and will hear every one who would call them.

They would be having the dress of helplessness and covering of submission and indignity. (At this time) contrivances would disappear, desires would be cut, hearts would sink quietly, voices would be curbed down, sweat would choke the throat, fear would increase and ears would resound with the thundering voice of the announcer calling towards the final judgement, award of recompense, striking of punishment and paying of reward.

People have been created as a proof of (His) power, have been brought up with authority, they are made to die through pangs, and placed in graves where they turn into crumbs. Then they would be resurrected one by one, awarded their recompense and would have to account for their actions, each one separately. They had been allowed time to seek deliverance, had been shown the right path and had been allowed to live and seek favours, the darkness of doubts had been removed, and they had been let free in this period of life as a training place in order to make preparation for the race on the Day of Judgement, to search for the objective with thoughtfulness, to get time necessary to secure benefits and provide for the next place of stay.

How appropriate are these illustrations and effective admonitions provided they are received by pure hearts, open ears, firm views and sharp wits. Fear Allah like him who listened and bowed before it, when he committed sin he admitted it, when he felt fear he acted virtuously, when he apprehended he hastened, when he believed he performed virtuous acts, when he was asked to take lesson (from happenings of this world) he did take the lesson, when he was asked to desist he abstained (from evil), when he responded to the call he leaned, when he turned back (to evil) he repented, when he followed he almost imitated and when he was shown (the right path) he saw it.

Such a man was busy in search of truth and got rid (of the worldly evils) by running away. He collected provision (of good acts) for himself, purified his inner self, built for the next world, and took with himself provision for the day of his departure, keeping in view his journey, his requirement and the position of his need. He sent ahead of him for the abode of his stay (in the next world). O' creatures of Allah, fear Allah keeping in view the reason why He created you and be afraid of Him to the extent He has advised you to do.

Make yourself deserve what He has promised you, by having confidence in the truth of His promise and entertaining fear for the Day of Judgement.

A part of the same sermon: He has made for you ears to preserve what is important, eyes to have sight in place of blindness and limbs which consist of many parts, whose curves are in proportion with the moulding of their shapes and lengths of their ages, and also bodies that are sustaining themselves and hearts that are busy in search of their food, besides other big bounties, obliging bestowings and fortresses of safety. He has fixed for you ages that are not known to you. He has retained for you remains of the past people for your instruction. Those people enjoyed themselves fully and were completely unhampered. Death overtook them before (satisfying) their desires, from which the hands of death separated them. They did not provide for themselves during health of their bodies, and did not take lesson during their youth.

Are these people who are in youth waiting for the back-bending old age, and those enjoying fresh health waiting for ailments, and these living persons looking for the hour of death? When the hour of departure would be close and the journey at hand, with pangs of grief and trouble, suffering of sorrows and suffocation of saliva, and the time would arrive for calling relations and friends for help and changing sides on the bed. Could then the near ones stop death, or the mourning women do any good? He would rather be left alone in the graveyard confined to the narrow corner of his grave.

His skin has been pierced all over by reptiles, and his freshness has been destroyed by these tribulations. Storms have removed his traces and calamities have obliterated even his signs. Fresh bodies have turned thin and withered and bones have become rotten. The spirits are burdened with the weight of sins and have become conscious of the unknown things. But now neither the good acts can be added to nor evil acts can be atoned for by repentance. Are you not sons, fathers, brothers and relations of these dead and are not to follow their footsteps and pass by their paths? But hearts are still unmoved, heedless of guidance and moving on wrong lines, as though the addressee is someone else, and as though the correct way is to amass worldly gains.

And know that you have to pass over the pathway (of sirat) where steps waver, feet slip away and there are fearful dangers at every step. O' creatures of Allah, fear Allah, like the fearing of wise man whom the thought (of next world) has turned away from other matters, fear (of Allah) has afflicted his body with trouble and pain, his engagement in the night prayer has turned even his short sleep into awakening, hope (of eternal recompense) keeps him thirsty in the day, abstention has curbed his desires, and remembrance of Allah is ever moving his tongue. He entertains fear before dangers. He avoids uneven ways in favour of clear ones. He follows the shortest route to secure his purpose, wishfulness does not twist his thinking and ambiguities do not blind his eyes. He enjoys deep sleep and passes his day happily because of the happiness of good tidings and pleasure of (eternal bounties).

He passes the pathway of this world in praiseworthy manner. He reaches the

next world with virtues. He hastens (towards good) out of fear. He moves briskly during the short time. He devotes himself in seeking (good), he runs away from evil. During today he is mindful of tomorrow, and keeps the future in his view. Certainly Paradise is the best reward and achievement, which hell is appropriate punishment and suffering. Allah is the best Avenger and Helper and the Quran is the best argument and confronter.

I enjoin upon you fear of Allah Who has left no excuse against what He has warned, has exhausted argument (of guidance) about the (right) path He has shown. He has warned you of the enemy that steals into hearts and stealthily speaks into ears, and thereby misguides and brings about destruction, makes (false) promises and keeps under wrong impression, he represents evil sins in attractive shape, and shows as light even serious crimes. When he has deceived his comrades and exhausted the pledge he begins to find fault with what he presented as good, and considers serious what he had shown as light, and threatens from what he had shown as safe.

Part of the same sermon: Or look at man whom Allah has created in the dark wombs and layers of curtains from what was overflowing semen, then shapeless clot, then embryo, then suckling infant, then child and then fully grown up young man. Then He gave him heart with memory, tongue to talk and eye to see with, in order that he may take lesson (from whatever is around him) and understand it and follow the admonition and abstain from evil.

When he attained the normal growth and his structure gained its average development he fell in self-conceit and got perplexed. He drew bucketfuls of his desires, got immersed in fulfilling his wishes for pleasures of the world and his (sordid) aims. He did not fear any evil nor got frightened of any apprehension. He died infatuated with his vices. He spent his short life in rubbish pursuits. He earned no reward nor did he fulfil any obligation. Fatal illness overtook him while he was still in his enjoyments and perplexed him. He passed the night in wakefulness in the hardships of grief and pricking of pains and ailments in the presence of real brother, loving father, wailing mother, crying sister, while he himself was under maddening uneasiness, serious senselessness, fearful cries, suffocating pains, anguish of suffocating sufferings and the pangs of death.

Thereafter he was clad in the shroud while he remained quiet and thoroughly submissive to others. Then he was placed on planks in such a state that he had been down-trodden by hardships and thinned by ailments. The crowd of young men and helping brothers carried him to his house of loneliness where all connections of visitors are severed. Thereafter those who accompanied him went away and those who were wailing for him returned and then he was made to sit in his grave for terrifying questioning and slippery examination. The great calamity of that place is the hot water and entry into Hell, flames of eternal Fire and intensity of blazes. There is no resting period, no gap for ease, no power to intervene, no death to bring about solace and no sleep to make him forget pain. He rather lies under several kinds of deaths and moment-to-moment punishment. We seek refuge with Allah.

O' creatures of Allah! where are those who were allowed (long) ages to live and they enjoyed bounty. They were taught and they learnt; they were given time and they passed it in vain; they were kept healthy and they forgot (their duty). They were allowed long period (of life), were handsomely provided, were warned of grievous punishment and were promised big rewards. You should avoid sins that lead to destruction and vices that attract wrath.

O' people who possess eyes and ears and health and wealth! Is there any place of protection, any shelter of safety, or asylum or haven, or occasion to run away or to come back (to this world)? If not, how are you then turned away and wither are you averting? By what things have you been deceived? Certainly, the share of every one of you from this earth is just a piece of land equal to his own stature and size where he would lie on his cheeks covered with dust. The present is an opportune moment for acting.

O' creatures of Allah, since the neck is free from the loop, and spirit is also unfettered, now you have time for seeking guidance: you are in ease of body; you can assemble in crowds, the rest of life is before you; you have opportunity of acting by will; there is opportunity for repentance, and peaceful circumstances. (But you should act) before you are overtaken by narrow circumstances and distress, or fear and weakness, before the approach of the awaited death and before seizure by the Almighty, the Powerful.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: It is related that when Imam delivered this sermon people began to tremble, tears flowed from their eyes and their hearts were frightened. Some people call this sermon the Brilliant Sermon

Sermon 82

About Amr bim A'as

I am surprised at the son of Nabegha that he says about me among the people of Syria that I am a jester and that I am engaged in frolics and fun. He said wrong and spoke sinfully. Beware, the worst speech is what is untrue. He speaks and lies. He promises and breaks the promise. He begs and sticks, but when someone begs from him he withholds miserly. He betrays the pledge and ignores kinship.

When in a battle, he commands and admonishes but only until the swords do not come into action. When such a moment arrives his great trick is to turn naked before his adversary. By Allah, surely the remembrance of death has kept me away from fun and play while obliviousness about the next world has prevented him from speaking truth. He has not sworn allegiance to Mu'awiyah without purpose; but has beforehand got him to agree that he will have to pay its price, and gave him an award for forsaking religion.

Sermon 83

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah, He is One and there is no part-

ner with Him. He is the First, such that nothing was before Him. He is the Last, such that there is not limit for Him. Imagination cannot catch any of His qualities. Hearts cannot entertain belief about His nature. Analysis and division cannot be applied to Him. Eyes and hearts cannot compare Him.

A part of the same sermon: O' creatures of Allah! take lesson from useful items of instruction and shining indications. Be cautioned by effective items of warning. Get benefit from preaching and admonition. It is as though the claws of death are pressed in you, the connection of hope and desires has been cut asunder, hard affairs have befallen you and your march is towards the place where everyone has to go, namely death. Hence, with every person there is a driver and a witness. The driver drives him towards resurrection while the witness furnishes evidence about his deeds.

A part of the same sermon: In Paradise there are high classes and different places of stay. Its boundary never ends. He who stays in it will never depart from it. He who is endowed with everlasting abode in it will not get old, and its resident will not face want.

Sermon 84

Allah knows hidden matters and is aware of inner feelings. He encompasses everything. He has control over everything and power over everything. Everyone of you should do whatever he has to do during his days of life before the approach of death, in his leisure before his occupation, and during the breathing of his breath before it is overtaken by suffocation, should provide for himself and his journey and should collect provision from his place of halt for his place of stay.

So remember Allah, O' people, about what He has asked you in His Book to take care of, and about His rights that He has entrusted to you. Verily, Allah has not created you in vain nor left you unbridled nor left you alone in ignorance and gloom. He has defined what you should leave behind, taught you your acts, ordained your death, sent down to you the Book explaining everything and made His Prophet live among you for a long time till He completed for him and for you the message sent through the Qur'an namely the religion liked by Him, and clarified through him His good acts and evil acts, His prohibitions and His commands.

He placed before you His arguments and exhausted his excuses upon you. He put forth to you His promises and warned you of severe retribution. You should therefore make full atonement during your remaining days and let yourselves practice endurance in these days. These days are fewer as against the many days during which you have shown obliviousness and heedlessness towards admonition. Do not allow time to yourselves because it will put you

on the path of wrong-doers and do not be easy-going because this will push you towards sinfulness.

O' creatures of Allah! the best adviser for himself is he who is the most obedient to Allah, and the most deceiving for himself is he who is the most disobedient to Allah. Deceived is he who deceived his own self. Envious is he whose Faith is safe. Fortunate is he who takes lesson from others, while unfortunate is he who fell victim to his desires. You should know that even the smallest hypocrisy is like believing in more than one God, and keeping company of people who follow their desires is the key to obliviousness from religion, and is the seat of Satan.

Be on your guard against falsehood because it is contrary to Faith. A truthful person is on the height of salvation and dignity, while the liar is on the edge of ignominy and degradation. Do not be jealous because jealousy eats away Faith just as fire eats away dried wood. Do not bear malice because, it is a scraper (of virtues). And know that desires make wit forgetful and make memory oblivious. You should falsify desire because it is a deception, and he who has desires is in deceit.

Sermon 85

O creatures of Allah! the most beloved of Allah is he whom Allah has given power to act against his passions, so that his inner side is submerged in grief and the outer side is covered with fear. The lamp of guidance is burning in his heart. He has provided entertainment for the day that is to befall him. He regards what is distant to be near himself and takes the hard to be light. He looks at and perceives; he remembers Allah and enhances his actions. He drinks sweet water to whose source his way has been made easy. So he drinks to satisfaction and takes the level path. He puts off clothes of desires and got rid of worries except one worry peculiar to him. He is safe from misguidance and the company of people who follow their passions. He has become the key to the doors of guidance, and the lock for doors of destruction.

He has seen his way and is walking on it. He knows his pillar (of guidance) and has crossed over his deep water. He has caught hold of the most reliable supports and the strongest ropes. He is on that level of conviction which is like the brightness of the sun. He has set himself for Allah, the Glorified, for performance of the most sublime acts of facing all that befalls him and taking every step needed for it. He is the lamp in darkness. He is the dispeller of all blindness, key to the obscure, remover of complexities, and a guide in vast deserts. When he speaks he makes you understand whereas when he remains silent then it is safe to do so. He did everything only for Allah and so Allah also made him His own. Consequently, he is like the mines of His faith and as a stump in His earth. He has enjoined upon himself (to follow) justice.

The first step of his justice is the rejection of desires from his heart. He describes right and acts according to it. There is no good which he has not aimed at nor any likely place (of virtue) of the Quran. Therefore the Quran is

his guide and leader. He gets down when the Quran puts down his weight and he settles where the Quran settles him down.

While the other (kind of) man is he who calls himself learned but he is not so. He has gleaned ignorance from the ignorant and misguidance from the misguided. He has set for the people a trap (made) of the ropes of deceit and untrue speech. He takes the Quran according to his own views and right after his passions. He makes people feel safe from big sins and takes light the serious crimes. He says that he is waiting for (clarification of) doubts but he remains plunged therein, and that he keeps aloof from innovations but actually he is immersed in them. His shape is that of a man, but his heart is that of a beast. He does not know the door of guidance to follow nor the door of misguidance to keep aloof from. These are living dead bodies.

So where are you moving to and wither are you being driven? Ensigns (of guidance) are standing, indications (of virtue) are clear, and the minarets (of light) have been fixed. Where are you being taken astray and how are you groping while you have among you the descendants of the Prophet? They are the reins of Right, ensigns of Faith and tongues of truth. Accord to them the same good position as you accord to the Quran, and come to them (desiring guidance) as the thirsty camels approach the water spring.

O people take this saying of the last of the Prophets that he who dies from among us is not dead, and he who decays (after dying) from among us does not really decay. Do not say what you do not understand, because most of the Right is in what you deny. Accept the argument of one against whom you have no argument. It is I. Did I not act before you on the Quran and did I not retain among you the descendants of the Prophet. fixed among you the standard of faith, and I taught you the limits of lawful and unlawful. I clothed you with the garments of safety with my justice and spread for you (the carpet of) virtue by my word and deed. I showed you high manners through myself. Do not exercise your imagination about what the eye cannot see or the mind cannot conceive.

A part of the same sermon: Till people begin thinking that the world is attached to the Umayyads, would be showering its benefits on them, and lead them to its clear spring for watering, and that their whip and sword will not be removed from the people. Whoever thinks so is wrong. There are rather a few drops from the joys of life which they would suck for a while and then vomit out the whole of it.

Sermon 86

So certainly, Allah did not break the neck of any unruly tyrant in this world except after allowing him time and opportunity and did not join the broken bone of any people until He did not inflict calamity and distress upon them. Even less than what sufferings and misfortunes have yet to fall upon you or have already befallen you are enough for giving lessons. Every man with a

heart is not intelligent, every ear does not listen and every eye does not see.

I wonder, and there is no reason why I should not wonder, about the faults of these groups who have introduced alterations in their religious pleas, who do not move on the footsteps of their Prophet nor follow the actions of the vicegerent. They do not believe in the unknown and do not avoid the evil. They act on the doubts and tread in (the way of) their passions. For them good is whatever they consider good and evil is whatever they consider evil. Their reliance for resolving distresses is on themselves. Their confidence in regard to dubious matters is on their own opinions as if every one of them is the Leader (Imam) of himself. Whatever he has decided himself he considers it to have been taken through reliable sources and strong factors.

Sermon 87

Allah sent the Prophet when the mission of other Prophets had stopped and the peoples were in slumber for a long time. Evils were raising heads, all matters were under disruption and in flames of wars, while the world was devoid of brightness, and full of open deceitfulness. Its leaves had turned yellow and there was absence of hope about its fruits. While water had gone underground. The minarets of guidance had disappeared and signs of destruction had appeared. It was stern to its people and frowned in the face of its seeker. Its fruit was vice and its food was carcass. Its inner dress was fear and outer cover was sword.

So take lesson, O' creatures of Allah, and recall that (evil doing) with which your fathers and brothers are entangled, and for which they have to account. By my life, your time is not much behind theirs, nor have long periods or centuries lapsed between you and them, nor are you much distant from when you were in their loins.

By Allah, whatever the Prophet told them, I am here telling you the same and whatever you hear today is not different from what they heard yesterday. The eyes that were opened for them and the hearts that were made for them at that time, just the same have been given to you at this time. By Allah, you have not been told anything that they did not know and you have not been given anything which they were deprived. Certainly you have been afflicted by a calamity (which is like a she-camel) whose nose-string is moving about and whose strap is loose So in whatever condition these deceitful people are should not deceive you, because it is just a long shadow whose term is fixed.

Sermon 88

Praise be to Allah who is well-known without being seen, Who creates without pondering over, Who has ever been existent when there was no sky with domes, nor curtains with lofty doors, nor gloomy night, nor peaceful ocean, nor mountains with broad pathways, nor curved mountain roads, nor earth of spread floors, nor self-reliant creatures. He is the Originator of creation and their Master. He is the God of the creation and its feeder. The sun and the

moon are steadily moving in pursuit of His will. They make every fresh thing old and every distant thing near.

He distributed their sustenance and has counted their deeds and acts, the number of their breaths, their concealed looks, and whatever is hidden in their bosoms. He knows their places of stay and places of last resort in the loins and wombs till they reach their end.

His punishment on enemies is harsh despite the extent of His Mercy, and His love on His friends is vast despite His harsh punishment. He overpowers one who wants to overcome Him, and destroys one who clashes with Him. He disgraces one who opposes Him and gains sway over one who bears Him hostility. He is sufficient for one who relies on Him. He gives one who asks Him. He repays one who lends to Him. He rewards one who thanks Him.

O' creatures of Allah, weigh yourselves before you are weighed and assess yourselves before you are assessed. Breathe before suffocation of the throat. Be submissive before you are harshly driven. Know that if one does not help himself in acting as his own adviser and warner then no one else can (effectively) be his adviser or warner.

Sermon 89

This sermon is known as the Sermon of Skeletons (Khutba-e-Ashbah) and it is one of the high ranking sermons of Imam. He delivered it in reply to someone who asked him to describe Allah in such a way as though to see Him with eyes. Imam got angry at this and then said:

Praise be to Allah whom refusal to give away and stinginess do not make rich and Whom munificence and generosity do not make poor, although everyone who gives away loses (to that extent) except He, and every miser is blamed for his niggardliness. He obliges through beneficial bounties and plentiful gifts and grants. The whole creation is His dependants (in sustenance). He has guaranteed their livelihood and ordained their sustenance. He has prepared the way for those who turn to Him and those who seek what is with Him. He is as generous about what He is asked as He is about that for which He is not asked. He is the First for whom there was no 'before' so that there could be anything before Him. He is the Last for whom there is no 'after' so that there could be anything after Him. He prevents the pupils of the eyes from seeing Him or perceiving Him. Time does not change over Him, so as to admit of any change of condition about Him. He is not in any place so as to allow Him movement (from one place to another).

If He gives away all that mines of the mountains emit out or the gold, silver, pearls and cuttings of coral which the shells of the ocean vomit out, it would not affect his munificence, nor diminish the extent of what He has. He would still have such treasures of bounty as would not decrease by the demands of the creatures, because He is that generous Being Whom begging of beggars cannot make poor nor the pertinacity of beseechers make miser.

Then look on questioner, be confined to those of His attributes which the Qur'an had described and seek light from the effulgence of its guidance. Leave to Allah that knowledge which Satan has prompted you to seek and which neither the Qur'an enjoins you to seek nor is there any trace of it in the actions or sayings of the Prophet and other leaders (*A'immah*) of guidance. This is the extreme limit of Allah's claim upon you. Know that firm in knowledge are those who refrain from opening the curtains that lie against the unknown, and their acknowledgement of ignorance about the details of the hidden unknown prevents them from further probe. Allah praises them for their admission that they are unable to get knowledge not allowed to them. They do not go deep into the discussion of what is not enjoined upon them about knowing Him and they call it firmness. Be content with this and do not limit the Greatness of Allah after the measure of your own intelligence, of else you would be among the destroyed ones.

He is Powerful, such that when imagination shoots its arrows to comprehend the extremity of His power, and mind, making itself free of the dangers of evil thoughts, tries to find Him in the depth of His realm, and hearts long to grasp realities of His attributes and openings of intelligence penetrate beyond description in order to secure knowledge about His Being, crossing the dark pitfalls of the unknown and concentrating towards Him He would turn them back. They would return defeated admitting that the reality of His knowledge cannot be comprehended by such random efforts, nor can an iota of the sublimity of His Honour enter the understanding of thinkers.

He began creation without any example which He could follow and without any specimen prepared by any known creator that was before Him. He showed us the realm of His Might, and such wonders which speak of His Wisdom. The confession of the created things that their existence owes itself to Him made us realise that argument has been furnished about knowing Him (with no excuse). The signs of His creative power and standard of His wisdom are fixed in the wonderful things He has created. Whatever He has created is an argument in His favour and a guide towards Him. Even a silent thing is a guide towards Him as though it speaks, and its guidance towards the Creator is clear.

(O' Allah) I stand witness that he who likens You with the separateness of the limbs or with the joining of the extremities of his body did not acquaint his inner self with knowledge about You, and his heart did not secure conviction to the effect that there is no partner for You. It is as though he has no heard the (wrongful) followers disclaiming their false gods by sayings "*By Allah, we were certainly in manifest error when we equalled you with the Lord of the worlds.*" (Quran, 26:97-98). They are wrong who liken You to their idols, and dress Thee with apparel of the creatures by their imagination, attribute to You parts of body by their own thinking and consider You after the creatures of various types, through the working of their intelligence. I stand witness that whoever equated You with anything out of Your creation took a match for You, and whoever takes a match for You is an unbeliever, according to

what is stated in Your unambiguous verses and indicated by the evidence of Your clear arguments. (I also stand witness that) You are that Allah who cannot be confined in (the fetters of) intelligence so as to admit change of condition by entering its imagination nor in the shackles of mind so as to become limited and an object of alterations.

A part of the same sermon: He has fixed limits for every thing He has created and made the limits firm, and He has fixed its working and made the working delicate. He has fixed its direction and it does not transgress the limits of its position nor fall short of reaching the end of its aim. It did not disobey when it was commanded to move at His will; and how could it do so when all matters are governed by His will. He is the Producer of varieties of things without exercise of imagination, without the urge of an impulse, hidden in Him, without any experiment taken from the vicissitudes of time and without any partner who might have assisted Him in creating wonderful things.

Thus the creation was completed by His order and it bowed to His obedience and responded to His call. The laziness of any slug or the inertness of any excuse-finder did not prevent it from doing so. So He straightened the curves of the things and fixed their limits. With His power He created coherence in their contradictory parts and joined together the factors of similarity. Then He separated them in varieties which differ in limits, quantities, properties and shapes. All this is new creation. He made them firm and shaped them according as He wished and invented them.

A part of the same sermon: He has arranged the depressions and elevations of the openings of the sky. He has joined the breadths of its breaches, and has joined them with one another. He has made easy the approach to its heights for those (angels) who come down with His commands and those (angels) who go up with the deeds of the creatures. He called it when it was yet (in the form of) vapour. At once the links of its joints joined up. Then Allah opened up its closed door and put the sentinels of meteors at its holes, and held them with His hands (i.e. power) from falling into the vastness of air.

He commanded it to remain stationary in obedience to His commands. He made its sun the bright indication for its day, and moon the gloomy indication for its night. He then put them in motion in their orbits and ordained their movement in the stages of their paths in order to distinguish with their help between night and day, and in order that the reckoning of years and calculations may be known by their fixed movements. Then He hung in its vastness its sky and put therein its decoration consisting of small bright pearls and lamp-like stars. He shot at the over-hearers arrows of bright meteors. He put them in motion on their appointed routine and made them into fixed stars, moving stars, descending stars, ascending stars, ominous stars and lucky stars.

A part of the same sermon: Then Allah, the Glorified, created for inhabiting of His skies and populating the higher strata of his realm new (variety of) creatures namely the angels. With them He filled the openings of its cavities and popu-

lated with them the vastness of its circumference. In between the openings of these cavities there resounds the voices of angels glorifying Him in the enclosures of sublimity, (behind) curtains of concealment and in veils of His Greatness. And behind this resounding which deafens the ears there is the effulgence of light which defies the approach of sight to it, and consequently the sight stands, disappointed at its limitation.

He created them in different shapes and with diverse characteristics. They have wings. They glorify the sublimity of His Honour. They do not appropriate to themselves His skill that shows itself in creation. Nor do they claim they create anything in which He is unparalleled. But they are rather honoured creatures who do not take precedence over Him in uttering anything, and they act according to His command. He has made them the trustees of His revelation and sent them to Prophets as holders of His injunctions and prohibitions. He has immunised them against the waviness of doubts. Consequently no one among them goes astray from the path of His will. He has helped them with the benefits of succour and has covered their hearts with humility and peace. He has opened for them doors of submission to His Glories. He has fixed for them bright minarets as signs of His Oneness. The weights of sins do not burden them and the rotation of nights and days does not make them move. Doubts do not attack with arrows the firmness of their faith. Misgivings do not assault the bases of their beliefs. The spark of malice does not ignite among them. Amazement does not tarnish what knowledge of Him their hearts possess, or His greatness and awe of His glory that resides in their bosoms. Evil thoughts do not lean towards them to affect their imagination with their own rust.

Among them are those who are in the frame of heavy clouds, or in the height of lofty mountains, or in the gloom of over-powering darkness. And there are those whose feet have pierced the lowest boundaries of the earth. These feet are like white ensigns which have gone forth into the vast expanse of wind. Under them blows the light wind which retains them upto its last end.

Occupation in His worship has made them carefree, and realities of Faith have served as a link between them and His knowledge. Their belief in Him has made them concentrate on Him. They long for Him not from others. They have tasted the sweetness of His knowledge and have drunk from the satiating cup of His love. The roots of His fear have been implanted in the depth of their hearts. Consequently they have bent their straight backs through His worship. The length of the humility, and extreme nearness has not removed from them the rope of their fear.

They do not entertain pride so as to make much of their acts. Their humility before the glory of Allah does not allow them to esteem their own virtues. Languor does not affect them despite their long affliction. Their longings (for Him) do not lessen so that they might turn away from hope in their Sustainer. The tips of their tongues do not get dry by constant prayers (to Allah). Engagements do not betake them so as to turn their (loud) voices for Him into faint ones. Their shoulders do not get displaced in the postures of worship.

They do not move their necks (this and that way) for comfort in disobedience of His command. Follies of negligence do not act against their determination to strive, and the deceptions of desires do not overcome their courage.

They regard the Master of the Throne as the store for the day of their need. Because of their love they turn to Him even when others turn to the creatures. They do not reach the ending limit of His worship. Their passionate fondness for His worship does not turn them except to the springs of their own hearts, springs which are never devoid of His hope and His fear. Fear (of Allah) never leaves them so that they might slacken in their efforts, nor have temptations entrapped them so that they might prefer this light search over their (serious) effort.

They do not consider their past (virtuous) deeds as big, for if they had considered them big then fear would have wiped away hopes from their hearts. They did not differ (among themselves) about their Sustainer as a result of Satan's control over them. The vice of separation from one another did not disperse them. Rancour and mutual malice did not overpower them. Ways of wavering did not divide them. Differences of degree of courage did not render them into divisions. Thus they are devotees of faith. Neither crookedness (of mind), nor excess, nor lethargy nor languor breaks them from its rope. There is not the thinnest point in the skies but there is an angel over it in prostration (before Allah) or (busy) in quick performance (of His commands). By long worship of their Sustainer they increase their knowledge, and the honour of their Sustainer increases in their hearts.

A part of the same sermon: Allah spread the earth on stormy and tumultuous waves and the depths of swollen seas, where waves clashed with each other and high surges leapt over one another. They emitted foam like the he-camel at the time of sexual excitement. So the tumult of the stormy water was subdued by the weight of the earth, when the earth pressed it with its chest its shooting agitation eased, and when the earth rolled on it with its shoulder bones the water meekly submitted. Thus after the tumult of its surges it became tame and overpowered, and an obedient prisoner of the shackles of disgrace, while the earth spread itself and became solid in the stormy depth of this water. The earth put an end to the pride, self conceit, high position and superiority of the water, and muzzled the intrepidity of its flow. Consequently it stopped after its stormy flow and settled down after its tumult.

When the excitement of water subsided under the earth's sides and under the weight of the high and lofty mountains placed on its shoulders, Allah flowed springs of water from its high tops and distributed them through plains and low places and moderated their movement by fixed rocks and high mountain tops. Then its trembling came to a standstill because of the penetration of mountains in (various) parts of its surface and their being fixed in its deep areas, and their standing on its plains. Then Allah created vastness between the earth and firmament, and provided blowing wind for its inhabitants. Then He directed its inhabitants to spread all over its convenient places. Thereafter He did not leave alone the barren tracts of the earth where high portions

lacked in water-springs and where rivers could not find their way, but created floating clouds which enliven the unproductive areas and grow vegetation.

He made a big cloud by collecting together small clouds and when water collected in it and lightning began to flash on its sides and the flash continued under the white clouds as well as the heavy ones He sent it raining heavily. The cloud was hanging towards the earth and southerly winds were squeezing it into shedding its water like a she-camel bending down for milking. When the cloud prostrated itself on the ground and delivered all the water it carried on itself Allah grew vegetation on the plain earth and herbage on dry mountains. As a result, the earth felt pleased at being decorated with its gardens and wondered at her dress of soft vegetation and the ornaments of its blossoms. Allah made all this the means of sustenance for the people and feed for the beasts. He has opened up highways in its expanse and has established minarets (of guidance) for those who tread on its highways.

When He has spread out the earth and enforced His commands He chose Adam (pbuh) as the best in His creation and made him the first of all creation. He made him to reside in Paradise and arranged for his eating in it, and also indicated from what He had prohibited him. He told him that proceeding towards it meant His disobedience and endangering his own position. But Adam did what he had been refrained from, just as Allah already knew beforehand. Consequently, Allah sent him down after his repentance, to populate His earth with his progeny and to serve as a proof and plea for Him among his creatures.

Even when He made Adam die He did not leave them without one who would serve among them as proof and plea for His Godhead, and serve as the link between them and His knowledge, but He provided to them the proofs through His chosen Messengers and bearers of the trust of His Message, age after age till the process came to end with our Prophet Muhammad - Allah bless him and his descendants - and His pleas and warnings reached finality.

He ordained livelihoods with plenty and with paucity. He distributed them narrowly as well as profusely. He did it with justice to test whomever He desired, with prosperity or with destitution, and to test through it the gratefulness or endurance of the rich and the poor. Then He coupled plenty with misfortunes of destitution, safety with the distresses of calamities and pleasures of enjoyment with pangs of grief. He created fixed ages and made them long or short and earlier or later, and ended them up with death. He had made death capable of pulling up the ropes of ages and cutting them asunder.

He knows the secrets of those who conceal them, the secret conversation of those who engage in it, the inner feelings of those who indulge in guesses, the established certainties, the inklings of the eyes, the inner contents of hearts and depths of the unknown. He also knows what can be heard only by bending the holes of the ears, the summer resorts of ants and winter abodes of the insects, resounding of the cries of wailing women and the sound of steps. He also knows the spots in the inner sheaths of leaves where fruits grow, the

hiding places of beasts namely caves in mountains and valleys, the hiding holes of mosquitoes on the trunks of trees and their herbage, the sprouting points of leaves in the branches, the dripping points of semen passing through passages of loins, small rising clouds and the big giant ones, the drops of rain in the thick clouds, the particles of dust scattered by whirlwinds through their skirts, the lines erased by rain floods, the movements of insects on sand-dunes, the nests of winged creatures on the cliffs of mountains and the singing of chattering birds in the gloom of their brooding places.

And He knows whatever has been treasured by mother-of-pearls, and covered under the waves of oceans, all that which is concealed under the darkness of night and all that on which the light of day is shining, as well as all that on which sometimes darkness prevails and sometimes light shines, the trace of every footstep, the feel of every movement, the echo of every sound, the motion of every lip, the abode of every living being, the weight of every particle, the sobs of every sobbing heart, and whatever is there on the earth like fruits of trees or falling leaf, or the settling place of semen, or the congealing of blood or clot and the developing of life and embryo.

On all this He suffers no trouble, and no impediment hampers Him in the preservation of what he created nor any languor or grief hinders Him from the enforcement of commands and management of the creatures. His knowledge penetrates through them and they are within His counting. His justice extends to all of them and His bounty encompasses them despite their falling short of what is due to Him.

O' my Allah! You deserve handsome description and the highest esteem. If wish is directed towards You, You are the best to be wished for. If hope is reposed in You, You are the Most Honoured to be hoped from. O' my Allah! You have bestowed on me such power that I do not praise any one other than You, and I do not eulogise any one save You. I do not direct my praise towards others who are sources of disappointment and centres of misgivings. You have kept away my tongue from the praises of human beings and eulogies of the created and the sustained. O Allah! Every praiser has on whom he praises the right of reward and recompense. Certainly, I have turned to You with my eye at the treasures of Your Mercy and stores of forgiveness.

O' my Allah! Here stands one who has singled You with Oneness that is Your due and has not regarded any one deserving of these praises and eulogies except You. My want towards You is such that nothing except Your generosity can cure its destitution, nor provide for its need except Your obligation and Your generosity. So do grant us in this place Your will and make us free from stretching hands to anyone other than You. Certainly, You are powerful over everything.

Sermon 90

When people chose to swear allegiance at Imam's hand after the murder of Uthman, he said:

Leave me and seek someone else. We are facing a matter with (several) faces and colours, which neither hearts can stand nor intelligence can accept. Clouds are hovering over the sky, and faces are not discernible. 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 counsellor than as chief.

Sermon 91

So now, praise and eulogy be to Allah, O' people, I have put out the eye of revolt . No one except me advanced towards it when its gloom was swelling and its madness was intense. Ask me before you miss me because, by Allah, who has my life in His hands, if you ask me anything between now and the Day of Judgement or about the group who would guide a hundred people and also misguide a hundred people I would tell you who is announcing its march, who is driving it in the front and who is driving it at the rear, the stages where its riding animals would stop for rest and the final place of stay, and who among them would be killed and who would die a natural death.

When I am dead, hard circumstances and distressing events would befall you, many persons in the position of asking questions would remain silent with cast down eye, while those in the position of replying would lose courage. This would be at a time when wars would descend upon you with all hardship and days would be so hard on you that you would feel them prolonged because of hardship till Allah would give victory to those remaining virtuous among you.

When mischief comes they confuse (right with wrong) and when they clear away they leave a warning. They cannot be known at the time of approach but are recognised at the time of return. They blow like the blowing of winds, striking some cities and missing others.

Beware that the worst mischief for you in my view is the mischief of Banu Umayyah, because it is blind and also creates darkness. Its sway is general but its ill effects are for particular people. He who remains clear-sighted in it would be affected by distress, and he who remains blind in it would avoid the distress. By Allah. you will find Banu Umayyah after me worst people for yourselves, like the old unruly she-camel who bites with its mouth, beats with its fore-legs, kicks with its hind legs and refuses to be milked. They would remain over you till they would leave among you only those who benefit them or those who do not harm them. Their calamity would continue till your seeking help from them would become like the seeking of help by the slave from his master or of the follower from the leader.

Their mischief would come to you like evil eyed fear and pre-Islamic fragments, wherein there would be no minaret of guidance nor any sign (of salvation) to be seen. We, the Ahlulbayt, are free from this mischief and we are

not among those who would engender it. Thereafter, Allah would dispel it from you like the removal of the skin (from flesh) through him who would humble them, drag them by necks, make them drink full cups (of hardships), not extend them anything but sword and not clothe them save with fear. At that time Quraysh would wish at the cost of the world and all its contents to find me even only once and just for the duration of the slaughter of a camel in order that I may accept from them (the whole of) that of which at present I am asking them only a part but they are not giving me.

Sermon 92

Exalted is Allah Whom heights of daring cannot approach and fineness of intelligence cannot find. He is such First that there is no extremity for Him so He be contained within it, nor is there an end for Him where would cease.

A part of the same sermon: Allah kept the Prophets in deposit in the best place of deposit and made them stay in the best place of stay. He moved them in succession from distinguished fore-fathers to chaste wombs. Whenever a predecessor from among them died the follower stood up for the cause of the religion of Allah.

Until this distinction of Allah, the Glorified, reached Muhammad - (S.A.). Allah brought him out from the most distinguished sources of origin and the most honourable places of planting, namely from the same (lineal) tree from which He brought forth other Prophets and from which He selected His trustees. Muhammad's descendants are the best descendants, his kinsmen the best of kin and his lineal tree the best of trees. It grew in esteem and rose in distinction. It has tall branches and unapproachable fruits.

He is the leader (Imam) of all who exercise fear (of Allah) and a light for those who seek guidance. He is a lamp whose flame is burning, a meteor whose light is shining and a flint whose spark is bright. His conduct is upright, his behaviour is guiding, his speech is decisive and his decision is just. Allah sent him after an interval from the previous Prophets when people had fallen into errors of action and ignorance. Allah may have mercy on you.

May Allah shower His mercy on you ! Do act according to the clear signs, because the way is straight and leads to the house of safety while you are in the place of seeking Allah's favour, and have time and opportunity. The books (of your doings) are open and pens (of angels) are busy (to record your actions) while your bodies are healthy, tongues are free, repentance is accepted and deeds are accorded recognition.

Sermon 93

Allah sent the Prophet at a time when the people were going astray in perplexity and were moving here and there in mischief. Desires had deflected them and self-conceit had swerved them. Extreme ignorance had made them

foolish. They were confounded by the unsteadiness of matters and the evils of ignorance. Then the Prophet - blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - did his best in giving them sincere advice, himself trod on the right path and called (them) towards wisdom and good counsel.

Sermon 94

Praise be to Allah who is such First that nothing is before Him and such Last that there is nothing after Him. He is such Manifest that there is nothing above Him and such Hidden that there is nothing nearer than He.

A part of the same sermon: His place of stay is the best of all places and his origin noblest of all origins in the mines of honour and the cradles of safety. Hearts of virtuous persons have been inclined towards him and the reins of eyes have been turned towards him. Through him Allah buried mutual rancour and put off the flames of revolt. Through him He gave them affection like brothers and separated those who were together (through unbelief). Through him He gave honour to the low and degraded honour (of unbelief). His speaking is clear and his silence is (indicative) like tongue.

Sermon 95

Although Allah gives time to the oppressor, His catch would not spare him Allah watches him on the passage of his way and the position of that which suffocates the throats. By Allah in Whose power my life lies, these people (Muawiyah and his men) will overcome you not because they have a better right than you but because of their hastening towards the wrong with their leader and your slowness about my right (to be followed). People are afraid of the oppression of their rulers while I fear the oppression of my subjects.

I called you for war but you did not come. I warned you but you did not listen. I called you secretly as well as openly, but you did not respond. I gave you sincere counsel, but you did not accept it. Are you present like the absent, and slaves like masters? I recite before you points of wisdom but you turn away from them, and I advise you with far reaching advice but you disperse away from it. I rouse you for *jihad* against the people of revolt but before I come to the end of my speech, I see you disperse like the sons of Saba. You return to your places and deceive one another by your counsel. I straighten you in the morning but you are back to me in the evening as curved as the back of a bow. The straightener has become weary while those to be straightened have become hopeless.

O' those whose bodies are present but wits are absent, and whose wishes are scattered. Their rulers are on trial. Your leader obeys Allah but you disobeyed him while the leader of the people of Syria disobeys Allah but they obey him. By Allah, I wish Muawiyah exchanges with me like Dinars with Dirhams, so that he takes from me ten of you and gives me one from them.

O' people of Kufa, 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 nor dependable brothers in distress. Your hands may be soiled with earth. O' examples of those camels whose herdsman has disappeared, if they are collected together from one side they disperse from the other. By Allah, I see you in my imagination that if war becomes intense and action is in full swing you would run away from the son of Abi Talib like the woman who becomes naked in the front. I am certainly on clear guidance from my Lord and on the path of my Prophet and I am on the right path which I adhere to regularly.

Look at the people of the Prophet's family. Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they would never let you out of guidance, and never throw you into destruction. If they sit down, you sit down, and if they rise up you rise up. Do not go ahead of them, as you would thereby go astray and go not lag behind of them as you would thereby be ruined.

I have seen the companions of the Prophet but I do not find anyone resembling them. They began the day with dust on the hair and face (in hardship of life) and passed the night in prostration and standing in prayers. Sometimes they put down their foreheads and sometimes their cheeks. With the recollection of their resurrection it seemed as though they stood on live coal. It seemed that in between their eyes there were signs like knees of goats, resulting from long prostrations. When Allah was mentioned their eyes flowed freely till their shirt collars were drenched. They trembled for fear of punishment and hope of reward as the tree trembles on the day of stormy wind.

Sermon 96

By Allah, they would continue like this till there would be left no unlawful act before Allah but they would make it lawful and no pledge but they would break it, and till there would remain no house of bricks or of woollen tents but their oppression would enter it. Their bad dealings would make them wretched, till two groups of crying complainants would rise, one would cry for his religion and the other for this world and the help of one of you to one of them would be like the help of a slave to his master, namely when he is present he obeys him, but when the master is away he backbites him. The highest among you in distress would be he who bear best belief about Allah. If Allah grants you safety accept it, and if you are put in trouble endure it, because surely (good) result is for the God-fearing.

Sermon 97

We praise Allah for what has happened and seek His succour in our affairs for what is yet to happen, and we beg Him for safety in the faith just as we beg Him for safety in our bodies. O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to keep away from this world which is to leave you even though you do not like its

departure, and which would make your bodies old even though you would like to keep them fresh. Your example and its example is like the travellers who travel some distance and then as though they traverse it quickly or they aimed at a sign and reached it at once. How short is the distance to the aim if one heads towards it and reaches it. And how short is the stage of one who has only a day which he cannot exceed while a swift driver is driving him in this world till he departs from it.

So do not hanker after worldly honour and its pride, and do not feel happy over its beauties and bounties nor wail over its damages and misfortune because its honour and pride would end while its beauty and bounty would perish, and its damages and misfortunes would pass away. Every period in it has an end and every living being in it is to die. Is not there for you a warning in the relics of the predecessors and an eye opener and lesson in your forefathers, provided you understand?

Do you not see that your predecessors do not come back and the surviving followers do not remain? Do you not observe that the people of the world pass mornings and evenings in different conditions? Thus, (somewhere) the dead is wept for, someone is being condoled, someone is prostrate in distress, someone is enquiring about the sick, someone is passing his last breath, someone is hankering after the world while death is looking for him, someone is forgetful but he is not forgotten (by death), and on the footsteps of the predecessors walk the survivors.

Beware! At the time of committing evil deeds remember the destroyer of joys, the spoiler of pleasures, and the killer of desires (namely death). Seek assistance of Allah for fulfilment of His obligatory rights, and for (thanking Him) for His countless bounties and obligations.

Sermon 98

Praise be to Allah Who spreads His bounty throughout the creation, and extends His hand of generosity among them. We praise Him in all His affairs and seek His assistance for fulfilment of His rights. We stand witness that there is no god except He and that Muhammad (pbuh) is His slave and Prophet. He sent him to manifest His commands and speak about His remembrance. Consequently, he fulfilled it with trustworthiness, and he passed away while on the right path.

He left among us the standard of right. Whoever goes further from it goes out of Faith, whoever lags behind it is ruined. Whoever sticks to it would join (right). Its guide is short of speech, slow of steps, and quick when he rises. When you have bent your necks before him and pointed towards him with your fingers his death would occur and would take him away. They would live after him as long as Allah wills, till Allah brings out for you one who would collect you together and fuse you after diffusion. Do not place expectations in one who does not come forward and do not lose hope in one who is

veiled, because it is possible that one of the two feet of the veiled one may slip while the other may remain sticking, till both return to position and stick. Beware! The example of the descendants of Muhammad (pbuh) is like that of stars in the sky. When one star sets another one rises. So you are in a position that Allah's blessings on you have been perfected and He has shown you what you used to wish for.

Sermon 99

He (Allah) is the First before every first and the Last after every last. His Firstness necessitates that there is no first before Him and His Lastness necessitates that there is no other last after Him. I do stand witness that there is no god but Allah both openly as well as secretly, with heart as well as with tongue. O' people, do not commit the crime of opposing me, do not be seduced into disobeying me and do not wink at each other with eyes when you hear me. By Allah, Who germinates the seed and blows the wind, whatever I convey to you is from the Prophet. Neither the conveyor (of Allah's message, i.e. the Prophet) lied nor the hearer misunderstood.

Well, it is as though I see a misguided man who is shouting in Syria and has put his banners in the outskirts of Kufa. When his mouth would be fully opened, his recalcitrance would become intense and his steps on earth would become heavy (and tyrannical) then the disorder (so created) would cut the people with its teeth and war would rage with its waves, days would become severe and night full of toil. So when the crops grows and stands on stalks, its foam shoots forth and its lightning shines, the banners of misguiding rebellion would fire up and shoot forth like darkening night and surging sea. This and how many other storms would rend Kufa and gales would sweep over it, and shortly heads would clash with heads, the standing crop would be harvested and the harvest would be smashed.

Sermon 100

Sayings on the lies of a sermon

That day would be such that Allah would collect on it the anteriors and the posteriors, to stand in obedience for exaction of accounts and for award of recompense for deeds. Sweat would flow upto their mouths like reins while the earth would be trembling under them. In the best condition among them would be he who has found a resting place for both his feet and an open place for his breath.

A part of the same sermon: The troubles are like a dark night. Horses would not stand for (facing) them nor would their banners turn back. They would approach in full reins and ready with saddles. Their leader would be driving them and the rider would be exerting (them). The trouble-mongers are a people whose attacks are severe. Those who would fight them for the sake of Allah would be a people who are low in the estimation of the proud, un-

known in the earth but well known on the sky. Woe to you O' Basrah, when an army of Allah's infliction would face upon you without (raising) dust of cries. Your inhabitants would then face bloody death and dire hunger.

Sermon 101

Look at the world like those who abstain from it, and turn away from it. By Allah, it would shortly turn out its inhabitants and cause grief to the happy and the safe. That which turns and goes away from it never returns and that which is likely to come about is not known or anticipated. Its joy is mingled with grief. Herein men's firmness inclines towards weakness and languidness. The majority of what pleases you here should not mislead you because that which would help you would be little.

Allah may shower His mercy on him who ponders and takes lesson thereby, and when he takes lesson he achieves enlightenment. Whatever is present in this world would shortly not exist, while whatever is to exist in the next world is already in existence. Every countable thing would pass away. Every anticipation should be taken to be coming up and every thing that is to come up should be taken as just near.

A part of the same sermon: Learned is he who knows his worth. It is enough for a man to remain ignorant if he knows not his worth. Certainly, the most hated man with Allah is he whom Allah has left for his own self. He goes astray from the right path, and moves without a guide. If he is called to the plantation of this world he is active, but if he is called to the plantation of the next world he is slow. As though what he is active for is obligatory upon him whereas in whatever he is slow was not required of him.

A part of the same sermon: There would be a time wherein only a sleeping believer would be safe (such that) if he is present he is not recognised but if he is absent he is not sought after. These are the lamps of guidance and banners of night journeys. They do not spread calumnies nor divulge secrets, nor slander. They are those for whom Allah would open the doors of His mercy and keeps off from them the hardships of His chastisement.

O' people! a time will come to you when Islam would be capsized as a pot is capsized with all its contents. O' people, Allah has protected you from that He might be hard on you but He has not spared you from being put on trial. Allah the Sublimest of all speakers has said:

Verily in this are signs and We do only try (the people). (Qur'an, 23:30)

Sermon 102

This sermon has been quoted before, however with a different narration

So now, certainly Allah deputised Muhammad (S.A.) as the Prophet while no one among the Arabs read the Book nor claimed prophethood or revelation. He had to fight those who disobeyed him in company with those who fol-

lowed him, leading them towards their salvation and hastening with them lest death overtook them. When any weary person sighed or a distressed one stopped he stood at him till he got him his aim, except the worst in whom there was not virtue at all. Eventually he showed them their goal and carried them to their places (of deliverance). Consequently, their affairs moved on and their hand-mill began to rotate, their spears got straightened.

By Allah, I was among their rear-guard till they turned back on their sides and were flocked in their rope. I never showed weakness or lack of courage, nor did I betray or become languid. By Allah, I shall split the wrong till I extract right from its flanks.

Sermon 103

Then Allah deputised Muhammad (S.A.) as a witness, giver of good tidings and warner, the best in the universe as a child and the most chaste as a grown up man, the purest of the purified in conduct, the most generous of those who are approached for generosity.

This world did not appear sweet to you in its pleasures and you did not secure milk from its udders except after having met it when its nose-rein was trailing and its leather girth was loose. For certain people its unlawful items were like bent branches (with fruit) while its lawful items were far away, not available. By Allah, you would find it like a long shade upto a fixed time. So the earth is with you without let or hindrance and your hands in it are extended while the hands of the leaders are held away from you. Your swords are hanging over them while their swords are held away from you.

Beware that for every blood (that is shed) there is an avenger and for every right there is a claimant. The avenger for our blood is like the judge for his own claim, and it is Allah who is such that if one seeks Him, then He does not disappoint him, and one who runs away from Him cannot escape Him. I swear by Allah, O' Banu Umayyah, shortly you will see it (i.e. your possession) in the hands of others and in the house of your enemy. Know that the best looking eye is that whose sight catches virtue and know that the best hearing ear is that which hears good advice and accepts it.

O people, secure light from the flame of lamps of the preacher who follows what he preaches and draw water from the spring which has been cleaned of dirt. O' creatures of Allah, do not rely on your ignorance, do not be obedient to your desires, because he who stays at this place is like one who stays on the brink of a bank undermined by water carrying ruin on his back from one portion to the other following his opinion which he changes (one after the other). He wants to make adhere what cannot adhere and to bring together what cannot keep together. So fear Allah and do not place your complaints before him who cannot redress your grievance, nor undo with his opinion what has been made obligatory for you.

Certainly, there is no obligation on the Imam except what has been devolved

on him from Allah, namely to convey warnings, to exert in good advice, to revive *sunnah*, to enforce penalties on those liable to them and to issue shares to the deserving. So hasten towards knowledge before its vegetation dries up and before you turn yourselves away from seeking knowledge from those who have it. Desist others from unlawful and abstain from it yourself, because you have been commanded to abstain before abstaining (others).

Sermon 104

Praise be to Allah who established Islam and made it easy for those who approach it and gave strength to its columns against any one who tries to overpower it. So Allah made it (a source of) peace for him who clings to it, safety for him who enters it, argument for him who speaks about it, witness for him who fights with its help, light for him who seeks light from it, understanding for him who provides it, sagacity for him who exerts, a sign (of guidance) for him who perceives, sight for him who resolves, lesson for him who seeks advice, salvation for him who testifies, confidence for him who trusts, pleasure for him who entrusts, and shield for him who endures.

It is the most bright of all paths, the clearest of all passages. It has dignified minarets, bright highways, burning laps, prestigious field of activity, and high objective. It has a collection of race horses. It is approached eagerly. Its riders are honourable. Testimony (of Allah, Prophet etc.) is its way, good deeds are its minarets, death is its extremity, this world is its race-course, the Day of Judgement is its horses and Paradise is its point of approach.

A part of the same sermon: The Prophet lighted flames for the seeker and put bright signs for the impeded. So he is Your trustworthy trustee, Your witness on the Day of Judgement, Your deputy as a blessing and Your messenger of truth as mercy. My Allah distribute to him a share from Your Justice and award him multiples of good by Your bounty. My Allah heighten his construction over the constructions of others, honour him when he comes to You, dignify his position before You, give him honourable position, and award him glory and distinction, and bring us out (on the Day of Judgement) among his party, neither ashamed, nor repentant, nor deviators, nor pledge-breakers, nor strayers, nor misleaders. nor seduced.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: This sermon had already appeared earlier but we have repeated it here because of the difference between the two versions.

A part of the same sermon: By bounty of Allah over you, you have acquired a position where even your slave maids are honoured, your neighbours are treated well. Even he over whom you enjoy no distinction or obligation honours you. Even those people fear you who had no apprehension of attack from you or any authority over you. You now see pledges to Allah being broken but do not feel enraged although you fret and frown on the breaking of the traditions of your forefathers. Allah's matters have been coming to you, and going from and again coming back to you; but you have made over your place to wrongdoers and thrown towards them your responsibilities, and have placed Allah's

affairs in their hands. They act in doubts and tread in (fulfilment of) desires. By Allah, even if they disperse you under every star Allah would surely collect you on the day that would be worst for them.

Sermon 105

I have seen your flight and your dispersal from the lines. You were surrounded by rude and low people and Bedouins of Syria, although you are the chiefs of Arabs and summit of distinction, and possess dignity as that of the high nose and big hump of the camel. The sigh of my bosom can subside only when I eventually see you surrounding them as they surrounded you, and see you dislodging them from their position as they dislodged you, killing them with arrows and striking them with spears so that their forward rows might fall on the rear ones just like the thirsty camels who have been turned away from their place of drink and removed from their water-points.

Sermon 106

It is one of the sermons about the vicissitudes of time:

Praise be to Allah Who is Manifest before His creation because of themselves, Who is apparent to their hearts because of clear proof; Who created without meditating, since meditating does not befit except one who has thinking organs while He has no thinking organ in Himself. His knowledge has split forth the inside of unknown secrets and covered the bottom of deep beliefs.

A part of same sermon: Allah chose him from the lineal tree of prophets, from the flame of light, from the forehead of greatness, from the best part of the valley of Batha, from the lamps for darkness, and from the sources of wisdom.

A part of the same sermon: The Prophet was like a roaming physician who has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence and places of perplexity.

They (people) did not take light from the lights of his wisdom nor did they produce flame from the flint of sparkling knowledge. So in this matter they are like grazing cattle and hard stones. Nevertheless, hidden things have appeared for those who perceive, the face of right has become clear for the wanderer, the approaching moment has raised the veil from its face and signs have appeared for those who search for them.

What is the matter with me! I see you just bodies without spirits and spirits without bodies, devotees without good, traders without profits, wakeful but sleeping, present but unseen, seeing but blind, hearing but deaf and speaking but dumb. I notice that misguidance has stood on its centre and spread through its off-shoots. It weighs you with its weights and confuses you with

its measures. Its leader is an out-cast from the community. He persists on misguidance. So on that day none from among you would remain except as the sediment in a cooking pot or the dust left after dusting a bundle. It would scrape you as leather is scraped, and trample you as harvest is trampled, and pick out the believer as a bird picks out a big grain from the thin grain.

Where are these ways taking you, gloom misleading you, and falsehoods deceiving you? Whence are you brought and where are you driven? For every period there is a written document and everyone who is absent has to return. So listen to your godly leader and keep your hearts present. If he speaks to you be wakeful. The forerunner must speak truth to his people, should keep his wits together and maintain presence of mind. He has clarified to you the matter as the stitch-hole is cleared, and scraped it as the gum is scraped (from the twigs).

Nevertheless, now the wrong has set itself on its places and ignorance has ridden on its riding beasts. Unruliness has increased while the call for virtue is suppressed. Time has pounced upon like a devouring carnivore, and wrong is shouting like a camel after remaining silent. People have become brothers over ill-doings. have forsaken religion, are united in speaking lie but bear mutual hatred in the matter of truth.

When such is the case, the son would be a source of anger (instead of coolness of the eye to parents) and rain the cause of heat, the wicked would abound and the virtuous would diminish. The people of this time would be wolves, its rulers beasts, the middle class men gluttons and the poor (almost) dead. Truth would go down, falsehood would overflow, affection would be claimed with tongues but people would be quarrelsome at heart. Adultery would be the key to lineage while chastity would be rare and Islam would be worn overturned like the skin.

Sermon 107

Everything submits to Him and everything exists by Him. He is the satisfaction of every poor, dignity of the low, energy for the weak and shelter for the oppressed. Whoever speaks, He hears his speaking, and whoever keeps quiet, He knows his secret. On Him is the livelihood of everyone who lives, and to Him returns whoever dies.

The eyes have not seen You so as to be aware of You, but You were before the describers of Your creation. You did not create the creation on account of loneliness, nor did You make them work for gain. He whom You catch cannot go further than You, and he whom You hold cannot escape You. He who disobeys You does not decrease Your authority, and he who obeys You does not add to Your Might. He who disagrees with Your judgement cannot turn it, and he who turns away from Your command cannot do without You. Eve-

ry secret before You is open and for You every absent is present.

You art everlasting, there is no end to You. You are the highest aim, there is no escape from You, You are the promised (point of return) from which there is no deliverance except towards You. In Your hand is the forelock of every creature and to You is the return of every living being. Glory to You! How great is Your creation that we see, but how small is this greatness by the side of Your Might. How awe-striking is Your realm that we notice, but how humble is this against what is hidden from us out of Your authority. How extensive are Your bounties in this world, but how small are they against the bounties of the next world.

A part of the same sermon: You made angels reside in Your skies and place them high above from Your earth. They have the most knowledge about You and Your whole creation, the most fearing from You, and the nearest to You. They never stayed in loins nor were retained in wombs. They were not created "*from mean water* (semen)" (Qur'an , 32:8; 77:20). They were not dispersed by vicissitudes of time. They are on their places (distinct) from You and in their positions near You. Their desires are concentrated in You. Their worship for You is much. Their neglect from Your command is little. If they witness what remains hidden about You they would regard their deeds as very little, they would criticise themselves and would realise that they did not worship You according to Your right for being worshipped and did not obey You as You have the right of being obeyed.

Glorified are You, the Creator, the Worshipped, on account of Your good trials of Your creatures. You created a house (the Paradise) and provided in it for feasting, drinks, foods, spouses, servants, places, streams, plantations and fruits. Then You sent a messenger to invite towards it, but the people did not respond to the caller, and did not feel persuaded to what You persuaded them nor showed eagerness towards what You desired them to feel eager. They jumped on the carcass (of this world), earned shame by eating it and became united on loving it.

When one loves a thing it blinds him and sickens his heart. Then he sees but with a diseased eye, hears but with unhearing ears. Desires have cut asunder his wit, and the world has made his heart dead, while his mind is all longing for it. Consequently, he is a slave of it and of everyone who has any share in it. Wherever it turns, he turns towards it and wherever it proceeds, he proceeds towards it. He is not desisted by any desister from Allah, nor takes admonition from any preacher. He sees those who have been caught in neglect whence there is neither rescission nor reversion.

Whatever they were ignoring has befallen them, separation from this world, from which they took themselves safe, has come to them and they have reached that in the next world which they had been promised. Whatever has befallen them cannot be described. Pangs of death and grief for losing (this world) have surrounded them. Consequently, their limbs become languid and their complexion changes. Then death increases its struggle over them.

In some one it stands in between him and his power of speaking although he lies among his people, looking with eyes, hearing with ears, with full wits and intelligence. He then thinks over how he wasted his life and in what he passed his time. He recalls wealth he collected when he had blinded himself in seeking it, and gained it from fair and foul sources. Now the consequences of collecting it have overtaken him. He gets ready to leave it. It would remain for those who are behind him. They would enjoy it and benefit by it.

It would be an easy acquisition for others but a burden on his back, and the man cannot get rid of it. He would thereupon bite his hands with teeth out of shame for what was disclosed to him about his affairs at the time of his death. He would dislike what he coveted during the days of his life and would wish that he who envied him on account of it and felt jealous over him for it should have amassed it instead of he himself.

Death would go on affecting his body till his ears too would behave like his tongue (lose functioning). So he would lie among his people, neither speaking with his tongue or hearing with his ears. He would be rotating his glance over their faces, watching the movements of their tongues, but not hearing their speaking. Then death would increase its sway over him, and his sight would be taken by death as the ears had been taken and the spirit would depart from his body. He would then become a carcass among his own people. They would feel loneliness from him and get away from near him. He would not join a mourner or respond to a caller. Then they would carry him to a small place in the ground and deliver him in it to (face) his deeds. They abandoned visiting him.

Till whatever is written as ordained approaches its end, the affairs complete their destined limits, the posteriors join the anteriors and whatever Allah wills takes place in the shape of resurrection of His creation. Then He would convulse the sky and split it. He would quake the earth and shake it. He would root out the mountains and scatter them. They would crush each other out of awe of His Glory and fear of His Dignity.

He would take out everyone who is in it. He would refresh them after they had been worn out and collect them after they had been separated. Then He would set them apart for questioning about the hidden deeds and secret acts. He would then divide them into two groups, rewarding one and punishing the other. As regards the obedient people He would reward them with His nearness and would keep them for ever in His house from where those who settle therein do not move out. Their position would not undergo change, fear would not overtake them, ailments would not befall them, dangers would not affect them and journey would not force them (from place to place).

As for people of sins, He would settle them in the worst place would bind their hands with the necks, bind the forelocks with feet and would clothe them in shirts of tar and dresses cut out of flames. They would be in punishment whose heat would be severe, door would be closed on the inmates - in

fire which is full of shouts and cries and rising flames and fearful voices. Its inmate does not move out of it. its prisoner cannot be released by ransom and its shackles cannot be cut. There is no fixed age for this house so that it might perish, nor period for its life that might pass away.

A part of the same sermon about the Holy Prophet: He treated this world disdainfully and regarded it low. He held it contemptible and hated it. He realised that Allah kept it away from him with intention and spread it out for others by way of contempt. Therefore, he remained away from it by his heart, banished its recollection from his mind and wished that its attraction should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not acquire any clothing from it, or hope for staying in it. He conveyed from Allah the pleas (against committing sins), counselled his people as a warner (against Divine chastisement) and called (people) towards Paradise as a conveyor of good tidings.

We are the tree of prophethood, staying place of (Divine) Message, descending place of angels, mines of knowledge and the sources of wisdom. Our supporter and lover awaits mercy while our enemy and he who hates us awaits wrath.

Sermon 108

The best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah seek nearness, is the belief in Him and His Prophet, fighting in His cause, for it is the high pinnacle of Islam, and to believe in the *Kaleematul Ikhlās* for it is just nature and establishing prayer for it is (basis of) community, payment of *zakaat* for it is a compulsory obligation, fasting the month of *Ramadan* for it is the shield against chastisement, the performance of *hajj* of the House of Allah and its *'umrah* for these two acts banish poverty and wash away sins, regard for kinship for it increases wealth and length of life, to giving alms secretly for it covers shortcomings, giving alms openly for it protects against a bad death and extending benefits for it saves from positions of disgrace.

Go ahead with the remembrance of Allah for it is the best remembrance, and long for that which He has promised to the pious, for His promise is the most true promise. Tread the course of the Prophet for it is the most distinguished course. Follow *sunnah* of Prophet for it is most right of all behaviours. Learn the Quran for it is fairest of discourses and understand it thoroughly for it is best blossoming of hearts. Seek cure with its light for it is the cure for hearts. Recite it beautifully for it is the most beautiful narration. Certainly, a scholar who acts not according to his knowledge is like the off-headed ignorant who does not find relief from his ignorance, but on the learned the plea of Allah is greater and grief more incumbent, and he is more blameworthy before Allah.

Sermon 109

So now, certainly I frighten you from this world for it is sweet and green, surrounded by lusts, and liked for its immediate enjoyments. It excites wonder with small things, is ornamented with (false) hopes and decorated with deception. Its rejoicing does not last and its afflictions cannot be avoided. It is deceitful, harmful, changing, perishable, exhaustible, liable to destruction, eating away and destructive. When it reaches the extremity of desires of those who incline towards it and feel happy with it, the position is just what Allah, the Glorified, says (in the Qur'an):

"... like the water which send We down from heaven, and the herbage of the earth mingles with it, then it becomes dry stubble which the winds scatter; for Allah over all things has power. (18:45)

No person gets rejoicing from this world but tears come to him after it, and no one gets its comforts in the front but he has to face hardships in the rear. No one receives the light rain of ease in it but the heavy rain of distress pours upon him. It is just worthy of this world that in the morning it supports a man but in the evening it does not recognise him. If one side of it is sweet and pleasant the other side is bitter and distressing.

No one secures enjoyment from its freshness but he has to face hardship from its calamities. No one would pass the evening under the wing of safety but that his morning would be under the feathers of the wing-tip of fear. It is deceitful, and all that is there in it is deception. It is perishable and all that is on it is to perish. There is no good in its provisions except in piety. Whoever takes little from it collects much of what would give him safety, while one who takes much from it takes much of what would ruin him. He would shortly depart from his collection. How many people relied on it but it distressed them; (how many) felt peaceful with it but it tumbled them down; how many were prestigious but it made them low and how many were proud but it made them disgraceful.

Its authority is changing. Its life is dirty. Its sweet water is bitter. Its sweetness is like myrrh. Its foods are poisons. Its means are weak. The living in it is exposed to death; the healthy in it is exposed to disease. Its realm is (liable to be) snatched away. The strong in it is (liable to be) defeated and the rich is (liable to be) afflicted with misfortune. The neighbour in it is plundered.

Are you not (residing) in the houses of those before you, who were of longer ages, better traces, had bigger desires, were more in numbers and had greater armies. How they devoted themselves to the world and how they showed preference to it! Then they left it without any provision that could convey them through, or the back (of a beast for riding) to carry them.

Did you get the news that the world was ever generous enough to present ransom for them, or gave them any support or afforded them good company? It rather inflicted them with troubles, made them languid with calamities, molested them with catastrophes, threw them down on their noses, trampled them under hoofs and helped the vicissitudes of time against them. You have

observed its strangeness towards those who went near it, acquired it and appropriated it, till they depart from it for good. Did it give them any provision other than starvation or make them stay in other than narrow places, or give them light other than gloom, or give them in the end anything other than repentance? Is this what you much ask for or remain satisfied with, or towards which you feel greedy? How bad is this abode for him who did not suspect it (to be so) and did not entertain fear from it?

You should know as you do know, that you have to leave it and depart from it. While in it, take lesson from those *"who proclaimed 'who is more powerful than we'"* (Quran , 41 :15) but they were carried to their graves, though not as riders. They were then made to stay in the graves, but not as guests. Graves were made for them from the surface of the ground. Their shrouds were made from earth. Old bones were made their neighbour. They are neighbours who do not answer a caller nor ward off trouble, nor pay heed to a mourner.

If they get rain they do not feel happy, and if they face famine they do not get disappointed. They are together but each one apart. They are close together but do not see each other. They are near but do not meet. They are enduring and have no hatred. They are ignorant and their malice has died away. There is no fear of trouble from them and no hope of their warding off (troubles). They have exchanged the back (surface) of the earth with its stomach (interior), vastness with narrowness, family with loneliness, and light with darkness. They have come to it (this world) as they had left it with bare feet and naked bodies. They departed from it with their acts towards the continuing life and everlasting house as Allah has said:

As We caused the first creation, so will We get it return. (It is) a promise binding Us, verily We were doing it. (Quran , 21 :104)

Sermon 110

About the Angel of Death and departure of the spirit

Do you feel when the Angel of Death enters a house, or do you see him when he takes out life of anyone? How does he take out the life of an embryo in the womb of his mother? Does he reach it through any part of her body or the spirit responded to his call with the permission of Allah? Or does he stay with him in the mother's interior? How can he who is unable to describe a creature like this, describe Allah?

Sermon 111

I warn you of the world for it is the abode of the unsteady. It is not a house for foraging. It has decorated itself with deception and deceives with its decoration. It is a house which is low before Allah. So He has mixed its lawful with its unlawful, its good with its evil, its life with its death, and its sweet-

ness with its bitterness. Allah has not kept it clear for His lovers, nor has He been niggardly with it towards His foes. Its good is sparing. Its evil is ready at hand. Its collection would dwindle away. Its authority would be snatched away. Its habitation would face desolation. What is the good in a house which falls down like fallen construction or in an age which expires as the provision exhausts, or in time which passes like walking?

Include whatever Allah has made obligatory on you in your demands. Ask from Him fulfilment of what He has asked you to do. Make your ears hear the call of death before you are called by death. Surely the hearts of the abstemious weep in this world even though they may (apparently) laugh, and their grief increases even though they may appear happy. Their hatred for themselves is much even though they may be envied for the subsistence they are allowed. Remembrance of death has disappeared from your hearts while false hopes are present in you. So this world has mastered you more than the next world, and the immediate end (of this world) has removed you away from the remote one (of the next life). You are brethren in the religion of Allah. Dirty natures and bad conscience have separated you. Consequently you do not bear burdens of each other nor advise each other, nor spend on each other, nor love each other.

What is your condition? You feel satisfied with what little you have secured from this world while much of the next world of which you have been deprived does not grieve you. The little of this world which you lose pains you so much so that it becomes apparent in your faces, and in the lack of your endurance over whatever is taken away from you; as though this world is your permanent abode, and as though its wealth would stay with you for good. Nothing prevents anyone among you to disclose to his comrade the shortcomings he is afraid of, except the fear that the comrade would also disclose to him similar defects. You have decided together on leaving the next world and loving this world. Your religion has become just licking with the tongue. It is like the work of one who has finished his job and secured satisfaction of his master.

Sermon 112

Praise be to Him Who makes praise followed by bounty and bounty with gratefulness. We praise Him on His bounties as on His trials. We seek His help against these hearts which are slow to obey what they have been commended but quick towards what they have been desisted from. We seek His forgiveness from that which His knowledge covers and His document preserves - knowledge which does not leave anything and a document which does not omit anything. We believe in Him like the belief of one who has seen the unknown and has attained the promised rewards - belief, the purity whereof keeps off from belief in partners of Allah, and whose conviction removes doubt.

We stand witness that there is no god but Allah, the One, Who has no partner

for Him, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet, Allah may bless him and his descendants. These two testimonies heighten the utterance and raise the act. The scale wherein they would be placed would not be light while the scale from which they are removed would not become heavy.

O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to have fear of Allah which is the provision (for the next world) and with it is (your) return. The provision would take you (to your destination) and the return would be successful. The best one, who is able to make people listen has called towards it and the best listener has listened to it. So the caller has proclaimed and the listener has listened and preserved.

O' creations of Allah! certainly fear of Allah has saved the lovers of Allah from unlawful items and gave His dread to their hearts till their nights are passed in wakefulness and their afternoons in thirst. So they achieve comfort through trouble and copious watering through thirst. They regarded death to be near and therefore hastened towards (good) actions. They rejected their desires and so they kept death in their sight.

Then, this world is a place of destruction, tribulations, changes and lessons. As for destruction, the time has its bow pressed (to readiness) and its dart does not go amiss, its wound does not heal; it afflicts the living with death, the healthy with ailment and the safe with distress. It is an eater who is not satisfied and a drinker whose thirst is never quenched. As for tribulation, a man collects what he does not eat and builds wherein he does not live. Then he goes out to Allah without carrying the wealth or shifting the building.

As for its changes, you see a pitiable man becoming enviable and an enviable man becoming pitiable. This is because the wealth has gone and misfortune has come to him. As for its lessons, a man reaches near (realisation of) his desires when (suddenly) the approach of his death cuts them; then neither the desire is achieved nor the desirer spared. Glory to Allah, how deceitful are its pleasures, how thirst-rousing its quenching and how sunny its shade. That which approaches (death) cannot be sent back, he who goes away does not return. Glory to Allah, how near is the living to the dead because he will meet him soon and how far is the dead from the living because he has gone away from him.

Certainly nothing is viler than evil except punishment, and nothing is better than good except reward. In this world everything that is heard is better than what is seen, while of everything of the next world that is seen is better than what is heard. So you should satisfy yourself by hearing rather than seeing and by the news of the unknown. You should know that what is little in this world but much in the next is better than what is much in this world but little in the next. In how many cases little is profitable while much causes loss.

Certainly that which you have been commanded to do is wider than what you have been refrained from, and what has been made lawful for you is more than what has been prohibited. Then give up what is less for what is much,

and what is limited for what is vast. Allah has guaranteed your livelihood and has commanded you to act. Therefore, the pursuit of that which has been guaranteed to you should not get preference over that whose performance has been enjoined upon you.

But by Allah, most certainly the position is that doubt has overtaken and certainty has been shattered and it seems as if what has been guaranteed to you is obligatory on you and what was made obligatory on you has been taken away from you. So, hasten towards (good) actions and dread the suddenness of death, because the return of age cannot be hoped for, as the return of livelihood can be hoped for. Whatever is missed from livelihood today may be hoped tomorrow with increase, but whatever is lost from the age yesterday, its return cannot be expected today. Hope can be only for that which is to come, while about that which is passed there is only disappointment. So *"fear Allah as He ought to be feared and do not die until you are (true) Muslims."* (Qur'an , 3:102)

Sermon 113

Seeking rain

O my Allah! Surely our mountains have dried up and our earth has become dusty. Our cattle are thirsty and are bewildered in their enclosures. They are moaning like the moaning of mothers for their (dead) sons. They are tired of going to their meadows and longing for their watering places. O' my Allah! Have mercy on the groan of the groaning and yearn of the yearning. O' my Allah! Have mercy on their bewilderment and their passages and their groaning in their yards.

O' my Allah ! We have come out to You when the years of drought have crowded over us like (a herd of) thin camels, and rain clouds have abandoned us. Thou art the hope for the afflicted and succour for the seeker. We call You when the people have lost hopes, cloud has been denied and cattle have died, that do not seize us for our deeds and do not catch us for our sins, and spread Your mercy over us through raining clouds, rain-fed blossoming, amazing vegetation, and heavy down-pours with which all that was dead regains life and all that was lost returns.

My Allah! Give rain from You which should be life giving, satisfying, thorough, wide-scattered, purified, blissful, plentiful and invigorating. Its vegetation should be exuberant, its branches full of fruits and its leaves green. With it You reinvigorate the weak among Your creatures and brings back to life the dead among Your cities. O my Allah! Give rain from You with which our high lands get covered with green herbage, streams get flowing, our sides grow green, our fruits thrive, our cattle prosper, our far-flung areas get watered and our dry areas get its benefit, with Your vast blessing and immeasurable grant on Your distressed universe and Your untamed beasts. And pour upon us rain which is drenching, continuous and heavy; wherein one cycle of rain clashes with the other and one rain drop pushes another (in a continuous

chain), its lightning should not be deceptive, its cheek not rainless, its white clouds not scattered and rain not light, so that the famine-stricken thrive with its abundant herbage and the drought stricken come to life with its bliss. Certainly, You pour down rain after the people lose hopes and spread Your mercy, since You are the Guardian, the praiseworthy.

Sermon 114

Allah deputised him (the Prophet) as a caller towards Truth and a witness over the creatures. The Prophet conveyed the messages of Allah without being lazy and without any short-coming, and he fought His enemies in the cause of Allah without being languid and without pleading excuses. He is the foremost of all who practise piety and the power of perception of all those who achieve guidance.

A part of the same sermon: If you know what I know of the unknown that is kept wrapped up from you certainly you would have gone out into the open weeping over your deeds and beating yourselves in grief and you would have abandoned your properties without any guard for it or any substitute over it. Everyone would then have cared for his own self without paying attention to anyone else. But you have forgotten what was recalled to you and felt safe from what you had been warned. Consequently, your ideas went astray and your affairs were dispersed.

I do long that Allah may cause separation between me and you and give me those who have a better right to be with me than you. By Allah, they are people of blissful ideas, enduring wisdom and true speech. They keep aloof from revolt. They trod forward on the path (of Allah) and ran on the high road. Consequently, they achieved the everlasting next life and easeful honours. Beware! By Allah, a tall lad of swinging gait from Banu Thaqif would be placed over you. He would eat away your vegetation and melt your fat. So, O' Aba Wadhahah, is that all?

Sermon 115

You spend no wealth in the cause of Him Who gave it, nor do you risk your lives for the sake of Him Who created them. You enjoy honour through Allah among His creatures, but you do not honour Allah among His creatures. You should derive lessons from your occupying the places of those who were before you and from the departure of your nearest brothers.

Sermon 116

You are supporters of Truth and brethren in faith. You are the shield on the day of tribulation, and trustees among the rest of people. With your support I

strike the runner away and hope for the obedience of him who advances forward. Therefore, extend to me support which is free from deceit and pure from doubt because, by Allah, I am the most preferable of all for the people.

Sermon 117

Imam collected the people and exhorted them to jihad but they observed long silence. Then he said: "What is the matter with you. Have you become dumb?" A group of them replied: "O Ameerul Momineen if you go forth we shall be with you." Whereupon Imam 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 suit me to leave the army, the city, the public treasury, the land revenue, the dispensation of justice among Muslims and looking after the demands of the claimants and to 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 centre of its rotation would be disturbed and its lower stone would also be disturbed. By Allah, this is a very bad advice. By Allah, if I had not been hoping for martyrdom by my meeting with the enemy - and my meeting with him has been ordained, I would have secured my carrier and went away from you and would not have sought you so long as North and South differed. There is no benefit in the majority of your numbers because of lack of unity of your hearts. I have put you on the clear path whereon no one will perish except who perishes by himself. He who sticks to it would achieve Paradise and he who deviates goes to Hell.

Sermon 118

By Allah, I have knowledge of the conveyance of messages, fulfilment of promises and of entire expressions. We the people of the house (Ahlulbayt) possess the doors of wisdom and light of governance. Beware that the paths of religion are one and its highways are straight. He who follows them achieves (the aim) and secures (the objective). And he who stood away from it went astray and incurred repentance.

Act for the day for which provisions are stored, and when intentions would be tested. If a person's own intelligence which is present with him does not help him, the wits (of others) which are remote from him are more unhelpful and those which are away from him more useless. Dread the fire whose flame is severe, whose hollow is deep, whose dress is iron and drink is bloody pus. Beware! The good name of a man retained by Allah, among the people is better than wealth inherited by those who would not praise him.

Sermon 119

A man from among the Imam's companions stood up and said, "You first stopped us from

Arbitration and then gave order for it. We do not know which of these two was more appropriate." Ameerul Momineen struck one hand over the other and said:

This is the reward of one who breaks pledge. By Allah, when I gave you my orders to abide by arbitration I had led you to an undesirable thing (war) in which Allah had ordained good. If you had been steadfast I would have guided you, if you had been bent I would have straightened you and if you had refused I would have rectified you. This was the surest way. But with whom and to whom. I wanted my treatment from you but you proved to be my disease, like the extractor of thorn with thorn when he knows the thorn bends towards itself.

My Allah, the physicians have despaired of this fatal ailment and water-drawers have become tired with the rope of this well. Where are those who were invited to Islam and they accepted it? They read Quran and decided according to it. They were exhorted to fight and they leapt as she-camels leap towards their young. They took their swords out of the sheaths and went out into the world in groups and rows. Some of them survived. The good news of survival does not please them nor do they get condoled about the dead. Their eyes have turned white with weeping. Their bellies are emaciated because of fasting. Their lips are dry because of (constant) praying. Their colour is pale because of wakefulness. Their faces bear 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.

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. Keep away from his evil ideas and enchantments and accept good advice of one who offers it to you and preserve it in your minds.

Sermon 120

When Kharijites persisted rejecting Arbitration, Imam went and addressed them thus:

Were all of you with us in Siffin? *They replied that some of them were but some of them were not. Imam said:* Then divide yourselves into two groups. One of those who were in Siffin and other of those who were not present there, so that I may address each as I see suitable. Then he shouted to the people: Stop talking and keep quiet to listen to what I say. Turn your hearts to me. Whomever we ask for evidence, he should give it according to his knowledge about it.

Then he had a long conversation with them during which he said: When they had raised the Quran by way of deceit, craft, artifice and cheat, did you not say "They are our brothers and our comrades in accepting Islam. They want us to cease fighting, and ask for protection through the Book of Allah, the Glorified. Our opinion is to agree with them and to end their troubles." Then I said to you, "In this affair the outer side is Faith but the inner side is enmity. Its beginning is pity and the end is repentance. Consequently you should stick to your position, and remain steadfast on your path. You should press your teeth (put all

your might) in *jihad* and should not pay heed to the shouts of the shouter If he is answered he would mislead, but if he is left he would be disgraced."

But when this thing (Arbitration) was done I found that you agreed to it. By Allah, if I had refused it, it would not have been obligatory on me. Nor would Allah have laid its sin on me. And by Allah, not that I have accepted it, I alone am the rightful person who should be followed, for certainly the Qur'an is with me. I never forsake it since I adopted its company. We have been with the Prophet in battles wherein those killed were fathers, sons, brothers and relations of one another. Nevertheless, every trouble and hardship just increased us in our belief, in our treading on the right path, in submission to (divine) command and in endurance of the pain of wounds.

We now had to fight our brethren in Islam because of entry into Islam of misguidance, crookedness, doubts and (wrong) interpretation. However, if we find any way by which Allah may collect us together in our disorder and by which we may come near each other in whatever common remains between us we would accept it and would give up everything else.

Sermon 121

Ameerul Momineen's address to his followers on the battlefield of 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. Certainly death is a quick seeker. Neither does the steadfast escape it nor can the runner-away defy it. The best death is to be killed. By Allah in Whose hand (power) lies the life of the son of Abu Talib, certainly a thousand striking of the sword on me are easier to me than a death in bed which is not in obedience to Allah.

A part of the same sermon: It is as if I see you uttering voices like rustling sound of lizards! You do not seek your own claims nor do you defend against oppression. You have been let free on the path. He who rushes (into battle) achieves salvation, while he who lags behind, hesitating, gets destruction.

Sermon 122

To exhort his followers to fight

Put the armoured man forward and keep the unarmoured one 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 honour 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 next world. 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 valour 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 (opinion) and destroy them on account of their sins.

They will not budge from their stand till the continuous striking of spears causes piercings (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.

Sermon 123

We did not name people the arbitrators but we named Quran arbitrator. The Quran is a book, covered, between two flaps, and it does not speak. It should therefore necessarily have an interpreter. Men alone can be such interpreters. When people invited us to name Quran as the arbitrator between us, we could not be the party turning away from Book of Allah. since Allah said:

And then if you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Prophet (Qur'an, 4:59)

Reference to Allah means that we decide according to the Quran while reference to the Prophet means that we follow his *Sunnah*. Now therefore, if arbitration were truly done through the Book of Allah (Quran), we would be the most rightful of all people for the Caliphate; or if it were done by the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), we would be the most preferable of them.

Concerning your point why I allowed a time lag between myself and them with regard to Arbitration, I did so in order that the ignorant may find out (truth) and one who already knows may hold with it firmly. Possibly Allah may, as a result of this peace, improve the condition of these people, and they

will not be caught by the throats and will not, before indication of the right, fall into rebellion as before. 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.

So, where are you being misled and from where have you been brought (to this state)? Be prepared to march to the people who have deviated from the right and do not see it, have been entangled in wrong-doing and are not corrected. They are away from the Book and turned from the (right) path. You are not trustworthy to rely upon, nor are you holders of honour to be adhered to. You are very bad in kindling the fire of fighting. Woe to you! I had to bear a lot of worries from you. Some day I call you (to jihad) and some day I speak 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.

Sermon 124

When Ameerul Momineen was spoken ill of for showing equality in the distribution (of shares from the public Treasury) he said:

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. Beware; certainly that giving of wealth without any right for it is wastefulness and lavishness. It raises its doer in this world, but lowers him in the next world. It honours him before people, but disgraces him with Allah. If a man gives his property to those who have no right for it or do not deserve it, Allah deprives him of their gratefulness, and their love too would be for others. Then if he falls on bad days and needs their help, they would prove the worst comrades and ignoble friends.

Sermon 125

About the Kharjites

If you do not stop believing that I have gone wrong and been misled, why do you consider that the common men among the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) have gone astray like me, and accuse them with my wrong, and hold them unbelievers on account of my sins. You are holding your swords on your shoulders and using them right and wrong. You are confusing those who have committed sins with those who have not. You know that the Prophet (pbuh) stoned the protected (married) adulterer, then he also said his burial prayer and allowed his successors to inherit from him. He killed the murderer and allowed his successors to inherit from him. He amputated (the hand of) the thief and whipped the unprotected (unmarried) adulterer, but thereafter allowed their shares from the booty, and they married Muslim women. Thus the Prophet took them to ask for their sins and also abided by

Allah's commands about them, but did not disallow them their rights created by Islam, nor did he remove their names from its followers.

Certainly you are the most evil of all persons and are those whom Satan has put on his lines and thrown out into his wayless land. With regard to me, two categories of people will be ruined, namely he who loves me too much and the love takes him away from rightfulness, and he who hates me too much and the hatred takes him away from rightfulness. The best man with regard to me is he who is on the middle course. So be with him and be with the great majority because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the one isolated from the group is to Satan just as the one isolated from the flock of sheep is to the wolf.

Beware; whoever calls to this course, kill him, even though he may be under this headband of mine. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what the Quran revives and to destroy what the Quran destroys. Revival means to unite on it (in a matter) and destruction means to divide on a matter. If the Quran drives us to them we should follow them, and if it drives them to us they should follow up. May you have no father! (Woe to you), I did not cause you any misfortune, nor have I deceived you in any matter, nor created any confusion. Your own group had unanimously suggested in favour of these two men and we bound them that they would not exceed the Quran but they deviated from it and abandoned the right although both of them were conversant with it. This wrong-doing was the dictate of their hearts and so they trod upon it, although we had stipulated that in arbitrating with justice and sticking to rightfulness they would avoid the evil of their own views and the mischief of their own verdict

Sermon 126

About important happenings in Basrah

O' Ahnaf! It is as though I see him advancing with an army which has neither dust nor noise, nor rustling of reins, nor neighing of horses. They are trampling the ground with their feet as if they are the feet of ostriches.

Imam pointed to the Chief of the Negroes, (Sahibu'z-Zanj) .Then Imam said:: Woe to you (the people of Basrah's) inhabited streets and decorated houses which possess wings like the wings of vultures and trunks like the trunks of elephants; they are the people from among whom if one is killed he is not mourned and if one is lost he is not searched for. I turn this world over on its face, value it only according to its (low) value, and look at it with an eye suitable to it.

A part of the same sermon: I can see a people whose faces are like shields covered with rough-scraped skins. They dress themselves in silken and woollen clothes and hold dear excellent horses. Their killing and bloodshed shall take place freely till the wounded shall walk over the dead and the number of runners-away shall be less than those taken prisoner:

One of his companions said to him: O' Imam you have been given knowledge of hidden things. Whereupon Imam laughed and said to the man who belonged to the tribe of Banu Kalb: O' brother of Kalb! This is not knowledge of hidden things (ilmu'l-ghayb), these matters have been acquired from him (the Prophet) who knew them. As regard knowledge of hidden things, that means knowledge of the Day of Judgement, and the things covered by Allah in the verse.

Verily, Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour. (Quran, 31:34)

Therefore, Allah alone knows what is there in the wombs, whether male or female, ugly or handsome, generous or miserly, mischievous or pious, and who will be the fuel for Hell and who will be in the company of the Prophets in Paradise. This is the knowledge of the hidden things which is not known to anyone save Allah. All else is that whose knowledge Allah passed on to His Prophet and he passed it on to me, and prayed for me that my bosom may retain it and my ribs may hold it.

Sermon 127

About measure and weights

O' creatures of Allah! You and whatever you desire from this world are like guests with fixed period of stay, and like debtors called upon to pay. Life is getting short while (the records of) actions are being preserved. Many strivers are wasting (their efforts) and many of those who exert are heading towards harm. You are in a period when steps of virtue are moving backwards, steps of evil are moving forward and Satan is increasing his eagerness to ruin people. This is the time that his equipment is strong, his traps have been spread and his prey has become easy (to catch).

Cast your glance over people wherever you like, you will see either a poor man suffering from poverty, or a rich man ignoring Allah despite His bounty over him, or a miser increasing his wealth by trampling on Allah's obligations, or an unruly person closing his ears to all counsel. Where are your good people; where are your virtuous people? Where are your high spirited men and generous men? Where are those of you who avoid deceit in their business and remain pure in their behaviour? Have they not all departed from this ignoble, transitory and troublesome world? Have you not been left among people who are just like rubbish and so low that lips avoid mention of them and do not move even to condemn their low position.

"Verily we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return." (Qur'an, 2:156)

Mischief has appeared and there is no one to oppose and change it, nor anyone to dissuade from it or desist from it. Do you, with these qualities, hope to secure abode in the purified neighbourhood of Allah and to be regarded His staunch lovers? Alas! Allah cannot be deceived about His paradise and His will cannot be secured save by His obedience. Allah may curse those who advise good but they themselves avoid it, and those who desist others from evil but they themselves act upon it.

Sermon 128

Delivered when Abu Dharr was exiled towards Rabazah

O' Abu Dharr! You showed anger in the name of Allah therefore have hope in Him for whom you became angry. The people were afraid of you in the matter of their (pleasure of this) world while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them taking away what you fear them about. How needy are they for what you dissuade them from and how heedless are you towards what they are denying you. You will shortly know who is the gainer tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) and who is more enviable. Even if these skies and earth were closed to some individual and he feared Allah, then Allah would open them for him. Only rightfulness should attract you while wrongfulness should detract you. If you had accepted their worldly attractions they would have loved you and if you had shared in it they would have given you asylum.

Sermon 129

O' (people of) differing minds and divided hearts, whose bodies are present but wits are absent. I am leading you 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.

My Allah! You know what we did was not to seek power nor acquire anything from the world's vanities. We rather wanted to restore signs of Your religion and to usher prosperity into Your cities so the oppressed among Your creatures might be safe and Your forsaken commands be established. My Allah! I am the first who leaned (towards You) and who heard and responded (to Islam's call). No one preceded me in prayer except the Prophet.

You certainly know that he who is in charge of honour, 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 behaviour who would estrange them with his rudeness, nor should he 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 *sunnah* as he would ruin the people.

Sermon 130

We praise Him for whatever He takes or gives or whatever He inflicts on us or tries us with. He is aware of all that is hidden and He sees all that is concealed. He knows all that breasts contain or eyes hide. We render evidence that there is no god except He and that Muhammad (pbuh) has been chosen by Him and deputised by Him - evidence tendered both secretly and openly,

by heart and by tongue.

A part of the same sermon: By Allah, certainly it is reality not fun, truth not falsehood. It is none else than death. Its caller is making himself heard and its dragsman is making haste. The majority of the people should not deceive you. You have seen those who lived before you, amassed wealth, feared poverty and felt safe from its (evil) consequences, the longevity of desires and the (apparent) distance from death. How, then, death overtook them, turned them out of their homelands and took them out of their places of safety. They were borne on coffins, people were busy about them one after another, carrying them on their shoulders and supporting them with their hands.

Did you not witness those who engaged in long-reaching desires, built strong buildings, amassed much wealth but their houses turned to graves and their collections turned into ruin. Their property devolved on the successors and their spouses on those who came after them. They cannot add to their good acts nor invoke mercy in respect of evil acts. Therefore, whoever makes his heart habituated to fear Allah achieves a forward position and his action is successful. Prepare yourself for it and do all that you can for Paradise. Certainly this world has not been made a place of permanent stay for you. But it has been created as a pathway in order that you may take from it the provisions of your (good) actions for the permanent house (Paradise). Be ready for departure from here and keep close your riding animals for setting off.

Sermon 131

This world and the next have submitted to Him their reins, and the skies and earths have flung their keys towards Him. The thriving trees bow to Him in the morning and evening, and produce for Him flaming fire from their branches, and at His command, turn their own feed into ripe fruits.

A part of the same sermon: The Book of Allah is among you. It speaks and its tongue does not falter. It is a house whose pillars do not fall down, and a power whose supporters are never routed. *A part of the same sermon:* Allah deputised the Prophet after a gap from the previous prophets when there was much talk (among the people). With him Allah exhausted the series of prophets and ended the revelation. He then fought for Him those who were turning away from Him and were equating others with Him.

A part of the same sermon: Certainly this world is the end of the sight of the (mentally) blind who see nothing beyond it. The sight of a looker (who looks with the eye of his mind) pierces through and realises the (real) house is beyond this world. The looker therefore wants to get out of it while the blind wants to get into it. The looker collects provision from it (for the next world) while the blind collects provision for this very world.

A part of same sermon: You should know a man gets satiated and wearied with everything except life, because he does not find for himself any pleasure in

death. It is in the position of life for a dead heart, sight for the blind eye, hearing for the deaf ear, quenching for the thirsty and it contains complete sufficiency and safety.

The Book of Allah is that through which you see, you speak and you hear. Its one part speaks for the other part, and one part testifies to the other. It does not create differences about Allah nor does it mislead its own follower from Allah. You are joined together in hatred of each other and in the growing of herbage on your filth (for covering inner dirt by good appearance outside). You are sincere with one another in your love of desires and bear enmity against each other in earning wealth. The evil spirit (Satan) has perplexed you and deceit has misled you. I seek the help of Allah for myself and you.

Sermon 132

Delivered when Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Ameerul Momineen about himself, taking part in the march towards Rome (Byzantine Empire).

Allah has taken upon Himself for the followers of this religion the strengthening of boundaries and hiding of secret places. Allah helped them when they were few and could not protect themselves. He is living and will not die. If you will yourself proceed towards the enemy and clash with them and fall into some trouble, there will be no place of refuge for the Muslims other than their remote cities, nor any place they would return to. Therefore, you should send there an experienced man and send with him people of good performance who are well-intentioned. If Allah grants you victory, then this is what you want. If it is otherwise, you would serve as a support for the people and a returning place for the Muslims.

Sermon 133

There was some exchange of words between Uthman ibn Affan and Imam when Mughirah bin Akhnas said to Uthman he would deal with Imam on his behalf whereupon Imam said:

O' son of the accursed and issueless, and of a tree which has neither root nor branch. Will you deal with me? By Allah, Allah will not grant victory to him whom you support, nor will he be able to stand up whom you raise. Get away from us. Allah may keep you away from your purpose. Then do whatever you like. Allah may not have mercy on you if you have pity on me.

Sermon 134

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.

Sermon 135

About Talha and Zubair

By Allah, they did not find any disagreeable thing in me, nor did they do justice between me and themselves. Surely, they are now demanding a right which they abandoned and blood which they themselves shed. If I partook in it with them then they too have a share in it, but if they committed it without me the demand should be against them. The first step of their justice should be that they pass verdict against themselves. I have my intelligence with me.

I have never mixed matters nor have they appeared mixed to me. Certainly, this is the rebellious group in which there is the near one (az-Zubayr), the scorpion's venom (A'ishah) and doubts which cast a veil (on facts). But the matter is clear, and the wrong has been shaken from its foundation. Its tongue has stopped uttering mischief. By Allah, I will prepare for them a cistern from which I alone will draw water. They will not be able to drink from it nor would they be able to drink from any other place.

A part of the same sermon: You advanced towards 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. O' my Allah! these two have ignored my rights and did injustice to me. They both have broken allegiance to me, and roused people against me. Unfasten Thou what they have fastened, and do not make strong what they have woven. Show them the evil in what they aimed at and acted upon. Before fighting I asked them to be steadfast in allegiance and behaved with them with consideration but they belittled the blessing and refused (to adopt the course of) safety.

Sermon 136

Referring to events in the future

He will direct desires towards (the path of) guidance while people will have turned guidance towards desires, and he will turn their views to the direction of the Qur'an while the people will have turned the Qur'an to their views.

A part of the same sermon: (Before the Enjoiner of Good, matters deteriorate) till war will rage among you with full force, showing forth its teeth, with udders full of sweet milk but with a sour tip. Beware, it will be tomorrow and the morrow will come soon with things which you do not know. The Man in power, not from this crowd, will take to task all officers for their ill deeds and the earth will pour forth its eternal treasures and fling before him easily her keys. He will show you the just way of behaviour and revive the Quran and *sunnah* which have become lifeless (among people).

A part of the same sermon: As if I see (him), he (the Enjoiner of Evil) is shouting in Syria and is extending his banners to the outskirts of Kufa. He is bent towards it like the biting of the she-camel. He has covered the ground with

heads. His mouth is wide open and (the trampling of) his footsteps on the ground have become heavy. His advance is broad and his attacks are severe.

By Allah, he will disperse you throughout the earth till only a few of you remain, like kohl in the eye. You will continue like this till Arabs return to their sense. You should therefore stick to established ways, clear signs and the early period which has lasting virtues of Prophethood. You should know that Satan makes his ways easy so that you may follow him on his heels.

Sermon 137

On the occasion of the Consultative Committee

No one preceded me in inviting people to truthfulness, in giving consideration to kinship and practising generosity. So, hear my word and preserve what I say. Maybe you will see soon after today that over this matter swords will be drawn and pledges broken, so much so that some of you will become leaders of the people of misguidance and followers of people of ignorance.

Sermon 138

About backbiting and speaking ill of others

Those who do not commit sins and have been gifted with safety (from sins) should take pity on sinners and other disobedient people. Gratefulness should be mostly their indulgence and it should prevent them from (finding faults with) others. What about the backbiter who blames his brother and finds fault with him? Does he not remember that Allah has concealed the sins which he committed while they were bigger than his brother's sins pointed out by him? How can he vilify him about his sins when he has himself committed one like it? Even if he has not committed a similar sin he must have committed bigger ones. By Allah, even if he did not commit big sins but committed only small sins, his exposing the sins of people is itself a big sin.

O creature of Allah, do not be quick in exposition anyone's sin for he may be forgiven for it, and do not feel yourself safe even for a small sin because you may be punished for it. Therefore, every one of you who comes to know the faults of others should not expose them in view of what he knows about his own faults, and he should remain busy in thanks that he has been saved from what others have been indulging in.

Sermon 139

O people! If a person knows his brother to be steadfast in faith and of correct ways he should not lend ear to what people may say about him. Sometimes the bowman shoots arrows but the arrow goes astray; similarly talk can be off the point. Its wrong perishes, while Allah is the Hearer and the Witness. There is nothing between truth and falsehood except four fingers.

Ameerul Momineen was asked the meaning of this whereupon he closed his fingers together

and put them between his ear and eye and said: It is falsehood when you say, "I have heard so," while it is truth when you say, "I have seen."

Sermon 140

He who shows generosity to those who have no claim or who are not fit for it would not earn anything except the praise of the ignoble and appreciation of bad persons, although as long as he continues giving, the ignorant will say how generous his hand is, even though in the affairs of Allah he is a miser.

Therefore, to whosoever Allah gives wealth he should use it in extending good behaviour to his kinsmen, in entertaining, in releasing prisoners and the afflicted; in giving to the poor and to debtors, and he should endure (the troubles arising out of) the fulfilment of rights (of others) and hardships in expectation of reward. Certainly, the achievement of these qualities is the height of greatness in this world and achievement of the distinctions of the next world; if Allah so wills.

Sermon 141

Praying for rain

Beware; the earth which bears you and the sky which overshadows you are obedient to their Sustainer (Allah). They have not been bestowing their blessings on you for any feeling of pity on you or inclination towards you, nor for any good which they expect from you, but they were commanded to bestow benefits on you and they are obeying, and were asked to maintain your good and so they are maintaining it.

Certainly, Allah tries his creatures in respect of their evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and closing the treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to turn away (from evils) may turn away, he who wishes to recall (forgotten good) may recall, and he who wishes to abstain (from evil) may abstain. Allah, the Glorified, has made the seeking of (His) forgiveness a means for the pouring down of livelihood and mercy on the people as Allah has said:

"Seek the forgiveness of your Lord! Verily, He is the Most-forgiving, He will send (down) upon you the cloud raining in torrents, and help you with wealth and sons (children) . . . (Qur'an, 17:10-12)

Allah may shower mercy on him who took up repentance, gave up sins and hastened (in performing good acts before) his death. O my Allah! We have come out to You from under the curtains and coverings (of houses) when the beasts and children are crying, seeking Your Mercy, hoping for the generosity of Your bounty and fearing Your chastisement and retribution. O' my Allah! Give us to drink from Your rain and do not disappoint us, nor kill us by years (of drought) nor punish us for what the foolish among us have committed, O the Most Merciful of all.

O my Allah! We have come out to You to complain to You who is not hidden from You, when the seven troubles have forced us, droughty famines have driven us, distressing wants have made us helpless and troublesome mischiefs have incessantly befallen us. O' my Allah! We beseech You not to send us back disappointed nor to return us with down-cast eyes, nor to address us (harshly) for our sins, nor deal with us according to our deeds.

O' my Allah! Do pour on us Your mercy, Your blessing, Your sustenance and Your pity, and make us enjoy a drink which benefits us, quenches our thirst, produces green herbage with which all that was lost gets a growing and all that had withered comes to life again. It should bring about the benefit of freshness and plentifulness of ripe fruits. With it plains may be watered, rivers may begin flowing, plants may pick up foliage and prices may come down. Surely, You are powerful over whatever You will.

Sermon 142

Allah deputed prophets and distinguished them with His revelation. He made them as pleas for Him among His creation, so that there should not remain any excuse for people. He invited people to the right path through a truthful tongue. You should know that Allah fully knows creation. Not that He was not aware of what they concealed from among their hidden secrets and inner feelings, but in order to try them as to whom from among them performs good acts, so that there is reward in respect of good acts and chastisement in respect of evil acts.

Where are those who falsely and unjustly claimed that they are deeply versed in knowledge, as against us, although Allah raised us in position and kept them down, bestowed upon us knowledge but deprived them, and entered us (in the fortress of knowledge) but kept them out. With us guidance is to be sought and blindness (of misguidance) is to be changed into brightness. Surely Imams (divine leaders) will be from the Quraysh. They have been planted in this line through Hashim. It would not suit others nor would others be suitable as heads of affairs.

A part of the sermon: They adopted this world and abandoned the next world; left clean water and drunk stinking water. I can almost see their wicked one who committed unlawful acts, associated himself with them, befriended them and accorded with them till his hair grew grey and his nature acquired their tinge. He proceeded onward emitting foam like a torrential stream not caring whom he drowned, or, like fire in straw, without realising what he burnt.

Where are the minds which seek light from the lamps of guidance, and the eyes which look at minarets of piety? Where are the hearts dedicated to Allah, and devoted to the obedience of Allah? They are all crowding towards worldly vanities and quarrelling over unlawful issues. The ensigns of Paradise and Hell have been raised for them but they have turned their faces away from Paradise and proceeded to Hell by dint of their performances. Allah

called them but they showed dislike and ran away. When Satan called them they responded and proceeded (towards him).

Sermon 143

O people, you are, in this world, the target for the arrows of death. With every drinking there is choking and with every eating there is suffocation. You do not get any benefit in it except by foregoing another (benefit) and no one among you advances in age by a day except by the taking away of a day from his life. Nothing more is added to his eating unless it reduces what was there before. No mark appears for him unless a mark disappears. Nothing new comes into being unless the new becomes old. No new crop comes up unless a crop has been reaped. Those roots are gone whose off-shoots we are. How can an off-shoot live after the departure of its root?

A part of the same sermon: No innovation is introduced unless one *sunnah* is forsaken, keep away from innovations and stick to the broad road. Surely the old tested ways are the best and the innovated ones are bad.

Sermon 144

Spoken when Umar ibn al-Khattab consulted Imam about taking part in the battle of Persia.

In this matter, victory of defeat is not dependent on the smallness or greatness of forces. It is Allah's religion which He has raised above all faiths, and His army which He has mobilised and extended, till it has reached the point where it stands now, and has arrived its present positions. We hold a promise from Allah, and He will fulfil His promise and support His army.

The position of the head of government is that of the thread for beads, as it connects them and keeps them together. If the thread is broken, they will disperse and be lost, and will never come together again. The Arabs today, even though small in number are big because of Islam and strong because of unity. You should remain like the axis for them, and rotate the mill with the Arabs, and be their root. Avoid battle, because if you leave this place the Arabs will attack you from all sides and directions till the unguarded places left behind by you will become more important than those before you.

If the Persians see you tomorrow they will say, "He is the root (chief) of Arabia. If we do away with him we will be in peace." In this way this will heighten their eagerness against you and their keenness to aim at you. You say that they have set out to fight against the Muslims. Well, Allah detests their setting out more than you do, and He is more capable of preventing what He detests. As regards your idea about their (large) number, in the past we did not fight on the strength of large numbers but we fought on the basis of Allah's support and assistance.

Sermon 145

Allah deputed Muhammad (pbuh) with Truth so that he may take out His people from worship of idols towards His worship and from obeying Satan towards obeying Him and sent him with Quran which He explained and made strong, in order that people may know their sustainer since they were ignorant of Him, may acknowledge Him since they were denying Him, and accept Him since they were refusing Him. Because He revealed Himself to them through His Book without their having seen Him, by means of what He showed them out of His might and made them fear His sway. How He destroyed those whom He wished to destroy through His chastisement and ruined those whom He wished to ruin through His retribution!

Certainly, a time will come upon you after me when nothing will be more concealed than rightfulness, nothing more apparent than wrongfulness and nothing more current than untruth against Allah and His Prophet. For the people of this period nothing will be more valueless than the Quran being recited as it ought to be recited, nor anything more valuable than the Quran being misplaced from its position. And in the towns nothing will be more hated than virtue, nor anything more acceptable than vice.

The holders of the book will throw it away and its memorisers would forget it. In these days the Quran and its people will be exiled and expelled. They will be companions keeping together on one path, but no one will offer them asylum. Consequently at this time the Quran and its people will be among the people but not among them, will be with them but not with them, because misguidance cannot accord with guidance even though they may be together. The people will have united on division and will therefore have cut away from the community, as though they were the leaders of the Quran and not the Qur'an their leader. Nothing of it will be left with them except its name, and they will know nothing save its writing and its words. Before that, they will inflict hardships on the virtuous, naming the latter's truthful views about Allah false allegations, and enforcing for virtues the punishment of the vice.

Those before you passed away because of the lengthening of their desires and the forgetting of their death, till that promised event befell them about which excuses are turned down, repentance is denied and punishment and retribution is inflicted. O people, he who seeks counsel from Allah secures guidance and he who adopts His word as guide is led towards what is more straight, because Allah's lover feels secure and His opponent feels afraid. It does not behove one who knows His greatness to assume greatness, but the greatness of those who know His greatness is that they should know before Him, and the safety for those who know what His power is lies in submitting to Him. Do not be scared away from the truth like the scaring of the healthy from the scabbed person, or the sound person from the sick.

You should know that you will never know guidance unless you know who has abandoned it, you will never abide by the pledges of the Quran unless you know who has broken them, and will never cling to it unless you know who has forsaken it. Seek these things from those who own them because

they are the life spring of knowledge and death of ignorance. They are the people whose commands will disclose to you their knowledge, their silence will disclose their speaking and their outer appearance will disclose their inner self. They do not go against religion, and do not differ from one other about it, while it is among them a truthful witness and a silent speaker.

Sermon 146

Both of these two (Talha and Zubair) wishes the Caliphate for himself, and is drawing towards himself as against the other fellow. They do not employ any connection for getting access to Allah nor proceed towards Him through any means. Both of them bear malice against the other. Shortly his veil over it will be uncovered. By Allah, if they achieve what they aim at, one of them will kill the other, and one will finish the other. The rebellious party has stood up. Where are the seekers of virtue; for the paths have already been determined and they have been given the news. For every misguidance there is a cause and for every break of pledge there is a misrepresentation. By Allah, I shall not be like him who listens to the voice of mourning, hears the man who brings news of death and also visits the mourner yet does not take lesson.

Sermon 147

Before passing away

O people, every one has to meet what he wishes to avoid by running away. Death is the place to which life is driving. To run away from it means to catch it. How many days did I spend in searching for the secret of this matter, but Allah did not allow save its concealment. Alas! It is a treasured knowledge. As for my last will, it is that concerning Allah, do not believe in a partner for Him, and concerning Muhammad (pbuh) do not disregard his *Sunnah*. Keep these two pillars and burn these two lamps. Till you are not divided, no evil will come to you. Every one of you has to bear his own burden. It has been kept light for the ignorant. Allah is Merciful. Faith is straight. The leader (Prophet) is the holder of knowledge. Yesterday I was with you; today I have become the object of a lesson for you, and tomorrow I shall leave you. Allah may forgive me and you.

If the foot remains firm in this slippery place, well and good. But if the foot slips, this is because we are under the shade of branches, the passing of the winds and the canopy of clouds whose layers are dispersed in the sky, and whose traces disappeared in the earth. I was your neighbour. My body kept you company for some days and shortly you will find just an empty body of mine which would be stationary after movement and silent after speech so that my calmness, the closing of my eyes, and the stillness of my limbs may provide you counsel, because it is more of a counsel for those who take a lesson (from it) than eloquent speech and a ready word. I am departing from you like one who is eager to meet (someone). Tomorrow you will look at my days, then my inner side will be disclosed to you and you will understand me

after the vacation of my place and its occupation by someone else.

Sermon 148

About future events

They took to the right and the left piercing through to the ways of evil and leaving the paths of guidance. Do not make haste for a matter which is to happen and is awaited, and do not wish for delay in what the morrow is to bring for you. For, how many people make haste for a matter, but when they get it they begin to wish they had not got it. How near is today to the dawning of tomorrow. O' my people, this is the time for the occurrence of every promised event and the approach of things which you do not know. Whoever from among us will be during these days will move through them with a burning lamp and will tread on the footsteps of the virtuous, in order to unfasten knots, to free slaves, to divide the united and to unite the divided. He will be in concealment from people. The stalker will not find his footprints even though he pursues with his eye. Then a group of people will be sharpened like the sharpening of swords by the blacksmith. Their sight will be brightened by revelation, the (delicacies of) commentary will be put in their ears and they will be given drinks of wisdom, morning and evening.

A part of same sermon: Their period became long in order that they might complete (position of) disgrace and deserve vicissitudes, till the end of the period was reached, and a group of people turned towards mischief and picked up their arms for fighting. The virtuous did not show any obligation to Allah but calmly endured, and did not feel elated for having engaged themselves in truthfulness. Eventually the period of trial came to an end according to what was ordained. Then they propagated their good views among others and sought nearness to Allah according to the command of their leader.

When Allah took the Prophet (to himself) a group of men went back on their tracks. The ways (of misguidance) ruined them and they placed trust in deceitful intriguers, showed consideration to other than kinsmen, abandoned the kin whom they had been ordered to love, and shifted the building from its strong foundation and built it in other than its (proper) place. They are the source of every shortcoming and the door of gropers in the dark. They were moving to and fro in amazement and lay intoxicated in the way of the people of the Pharaohs. They were either bent on this world and taking support on it or away from the faith and removed from it.

Sermon 149

I praise Allah and seek His help from (what led to the) punishment of Satan and his deceitful acts, and (I seek His) protection from Satan's traps and way-layings. I stand witness that there is no god but Allah and I stand witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet (pbuh) and his chosen and his selected one. Muhammad's (pbuh) distinction cannot be paralleled nor can his

loss be made good. Populated places were brightened through him when previously there was dark misguidance, overpowering ignorance and rude habits, and people regarded unlawful as lawful, humiliated the man of wisdom, passed lives when there were no prophets and died as unbelievers.

You, O people of Arabia, will be victims of calamities which have come near. You should avoid the intoxication of wealth, fear the disasters of chastisement, keep steadfast in the darkness and crookedness of mischief when its hidden nature discloses itself, its secrets become manifest and its axis and the pivot of its rotation gain strength. It begins in imperceptible stages but develops into great hideousness. Its youth is like the youth of an adolescent and its marks are like the marks of beating by stone.

Oppressors inherit it by (mutual) agreement. The first of them serves as a leader for the latter one and the latter one follows the first one. They vie with each other in (the matter of) this lowly world, and leap over this stinking carcass. Shortly the follower will denounce his connection with the leader, and the leader with the follower. They will disunite on account of mutual and curse one another when they meet. Then after this there will appear another arouser of mischief who will destroy ruined things. The heart will become wavering after being normal, men will be misled after safety, desires will multiply and become diversified and views will become confused.

Whoever proceeds towards this mischief will be ruined and whoever strives for it will be annihilated. They will be biting each other during it as the wild asses bite each other in the herd. The coils of the rope will be disturbed and the face of affairs will be blinded. During it sagacity will be on the ebb, and the oppressors will (get the opportunity to) speak. This mischief will smash the Bedouins with its hammers and crush them with its chest. In its dust the single marchers will be lost, and in its way the horsemen will be destroyed. It will approach with the bitterness of destiny and will give pure blood (instead of milk). It will breach the minarets of faith and shatter the ties of firm belief. The wise will run away from it while the wicked will foster it. It will thunder and flash (like lightning). It will create a severe disaster. In it kinship will be forsaken and Islam will be abandoned. He who declaims it will also be affected by it, and he who flees from it will (be forced to) stay in it.

A part of the same sermon: Among them some will be unavenged martyrs and some will be stricken with fear and seek protection. They will be deceived by pledges and fraudulent belief. You should not become landmarks of mischiefs 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. Proceed towards Allah as oppressed and do not proceed to Him as oppressors. Avoid paths of Satan and places of revolt. Do not put in your bellies unlawful morsels because you are facing Him Who has made disobedience unlawful for you, and made the path of obedience easy for you.

Sermon 150

Praise to Allah who is proof of His existence through His creation, of His being external through the newness of His creation, and through their mutual similarities of the fact that nothing is similar to Him. Senses cannot touch Him and curtains cannot veil Him, because of the difference between the Maker and the made, the Limiter and the limited and the Sustainer and the sustained.

He is One but not by the first in counting, is Creator but not through activity or labour, is Hearer but not by means of any physical organ, is Looker but not by a stretching of eyelids, is Witness but not by nearness, is Distinct but not by measurement of distance, is Manifest but not by seeing and is Hidden but not by subtlety (of body). He is Distinct from things because He overpowers them and exercises might over them, while things are distinct from Him because of their subjugation to Him and their turning towards Him.

He who describes Him limits Him. He who limits Him numbers Him. He who numbers Him rejects His eternity. He who said "how" sought a description for Him. He who said "where" bounded him. He is the Knower even though there be nothing to be known. He is the Sustainer even though there be nothing to be sustained. He is the Powerful even though there be nothing to be overpowered.

A part of the same sermon: The riser has risen, the sparkler has sparkled, the appearer has appeared and the curved has been straightened. Allah has replaced one people with another and one day with another. We awaited these changes as the famine-stricken await the rain. Certainly the Imams are the vicegerents of Allah over His creatures and they make the creatures know Allah. No one will enter Paradise except he who knows them and knows Him, and no one will enter Hell except he who denies them and denies Him.

Allah the Glorified, has distinguished you with Islam and has chosen you for it. This is because it is the name of safety and the collection of honour. Allah the Glorified, chose its way and disclosed its pleas through open knowledge and secret maxims. Its (Quran) wonders are not exhausted and its delicacies do not end. It contains blossoming bounties and lamps of darkness. (The doors of) virtues cannot be opened save with its keys, nor can gloom be dispelled save with its lamps. Allah has protected its inaccessible points (from enemies) and allowed grazing (to its followers) in its pastures. It contains cover (from the ailment of misguidance) for the seeker of cure and full support for the seeker of support.

Sermon 151

He has been allowed time by Allah. He is falling into error along with negligent persons and goes early in the morning with sinners, without any road to lead or any Imam to guide.

*A part of the same sermon :*At last when Allah will make clear to them the reward for their sins, and take them out from the veils of their neglectfulness they

will proceed to what they were running away from, and run away from what they were proceeding to. They will not benefit from the wants they will satisfy or the desires they would fulfil.

I warn you and myself from this position. A man should derive benefit from his own self. Certainly, prudent is he who hears and ponders over it, who sees and observes and who benefits from instructive material and then treads on clear paths wherein he avoids falling into hollows and straying into pitfalls, and does not assist those who misguide him by turning away from truthfulness, changing his words, or fearing truth.

O my listener! Be cured from your intoxication, wake up from your slumber, decrease your hasty activity and ponder over what has come to you through the Holy Prophet, which is inevitable and inescapable. You should turn away from him who opposes him and leave him and leave whatever he has adopted for himself. Put off your vanity, drop your haughtiness and recall your grave because your way passes over it. You will be dealt with as you deal with others, you will reap what you sow, and what you send today will meet you tomorrow. So provide for your future and send (some good acts) for your day (of reckoning). Fear, fear, O listener! Act, act, O careless! No one will warn you like him who knows.

One of the firm decisions of Allah in the Quran upon which He bestows reward or gives punishment, and through which He likes or dislikes is that it will not benefit a man, even though he exerts himself and acts sincerely if he leaves this world to meet Allah with one of these acts without repenting, namely that he believed in a partner with Allah during his obligatory worship, or appeased his own anger by killing an individual, or spoke about acts committed by others, or sought fulfilment of his needs from people by introducing an innovation in his religion, or met people with a double face, or moved among them with a double tongue. Understand this because an illustration is a guide for its like.

Beasts are concerned with their bellies. Carnivores are concerned with assaulting others. Women are concerned with the adornments of this ignoble life and the creation of mischief herein. (On the other hand) believers are humble, believers are admonishers and believers are afraid (of Allah).

Sermon 152

He who has an intelligent mind looks to his goal. He knows his low road as well as his high road. The caller has called. The shepherd has tended (his flocks). So respond to the caller and follow the shepherd.

They (opposers) have entered the oceans of disturbance and have taken to innovations instead of the *Sunnah*, while the believers have sunk down, and the misguided and the liars are speaking. We are the near ones, companions, treasure holders and doors (to *Sunnah*). Houses are not entered save through their doors. Whoever enters them from other than the door is called a thief.

A part of the same sermon :The delicacies of the Quran are about them (Ahlulbayt) and they are the treasurers of Allah. When they speak they speak the truth, but when they keep quiet no one can speak unless they speak. The forerunner should report correctly to his people, should retain his wits and should be a man of the next world, because he has come from there and would return to it.

The beginning of the action of one who sees with heart and acts with eyes it is to assess whether the action will go against him or for him. If it is for him he indulges in it, but if it is against him he keeps away from it. For, he who acts without knowledge is like one who treads without a path. Then his deviation from the path keeps him at a distance from his aim. And he who acts according to knowledge is like he who treads the clear path. Therefore, he who can see should see whether he should proceed or return.

You should also know that the outside (of every thing) has a similar inside. Of whatever the outside is good, its inside too is good, and whatever the outside is bad, its inside too is bad. The truthful Prophet (pbuh) has said that: "Allah may love a man but hate his action, and may love the action but hate the man." You should also know that every action is like a vegetation, and a vegetation cannot do without water while waters are different. So where the water is good the plant is good and its fruits are sweet, whereas where the water is bad. the plant will also be bad and its fruits will be bitter.

Sermon 153

About the wonderful creation of the bat

Praise be to Allah who is such that it is not possible to describe the reality of knowledge about Him, since His greatness has restrained the intellects, and therefore they cannot find the way to approach the extremity of His realm. He is Allah, the True, the Manifester of Truth. He is more True and more Manifest than eyes can see. Intellects cannot comprehend Him by fixing limits for Him since in that case to Him would be attributed shape. Imagination cannot catch Him by fixing quantities for Him for in that case to Him would be attributed body. He created creatures without any example, and without the advice of a counsel, or the assistance of a helper. His creation was completed by His command, and bowed to His obedience. It responded (to Him) and did not defy (Him). It obeyed and did not resist.

An example of His delicate production, wonderful creation and deep sagacity which He has shown us is found in these bats which keep hidden in the daylight although daylight reveals everything else, and are mobile in the night although night shuts up every other living being; and how their eyes get dazzled and cannot make use of the light of the sun so as to be guided in their movements and so as to reach their known places through the direction provided by the sun.

Allah has prevented them from moving in the brightness of the sun and con-

fined them to their places of hiding instead of going out at the time of its shining. Consequently they keep their eyelids down in the day and treat night as a lamp and go with its help in search of their livelihood. The darkness of night does not obstruct their sight nor does the gloom of darkness prevent them from movement. As soon as the sun removes its veil and the light of morning appears, and the rays of its light enter upon the lizards in their holes, the bats pull down their eyelids on their eyes and live on what they had collected in the darkness of the night. Glorified is He who has made the night as day for them to seek livelihood and made the day for rest and stay.

He has given them wings of flesh with which, at the time of need they rise upwards for flying. They look like the ends of ears without feathers or bones. Of course, you can see the veins quite distinctly. They have two wings which are neither too thin so that they get turned in flying, nor too thick so that they prove heavy. When they fly, their young ones hold on to them and seek refuge with them, getting down when they get down and rising up when they rise. The young does not leave them till its limbs become strong, its wings can support it for rising up, and it begins to recognise its places of living and its interest. Glorified is He who creates everything without any previous sample by someone else.

Sermon 154

Warning the people of Basrah about what was to occur

Whoever can at this time keep himself clinging to Allah should do so. If you follow me I shall certainly carry you, if Allah so wills, on the path of Paradise, even though it may be full of severe hardship and of bitter taste. As regards a certain woman she is in the grip of womanly views, and malice is boiling in her bosom like the furnace of the blacksmith. If she were called upon to deal with others as she is dealing with me she would not have done it. (As for me), even hereafter she will be allowed her original respect, while the reckoning (of her misdeeds) is an obligation on Allah.

A part of the same sermon: This path is the lightest course and the brightest lamp. Guidance towards virtuous actions is sought through faith while guidance towards faith is achieved through virtuous actions. Knowledge is made to prosper through faith, and death is feared because of knowledge. This world come to an end with death, while the next world is secured (by virtuous actions) in this world. For people there is no escape from resurrection. They are heading for this last end in its appointed course.

A part of the same sermon: They have got up from the resting places in their graves and have set off for the final objectives. Every house has its own people. They are not changed nor shifted from there. Commanding for good and refraining from evil are two characteristics of Allah, the Glorified. They can neither bring death near nor lessen sustenance.

You should adhere to the Book of Allah because it is the strong rope, a clear light, a benefiting cure, a quenching for thirst, protection for the adherent and deliverance for the attached. It does not curve so as to need straightening and does not deflect so as to be corrected. Frequency of its repetition and its falling on ears does not make it old. Whoever speaks according to it, speaks truth and whoever acts by it is forward (in action).

A man stood up and said: O Ameerul Momineen, tell us about this disturbance and whether you enquired about it from the Holy Prophet. Thereupon Ameerul Momineen said: When Allah, the Glorified sent down the verse:

Alif lam mim. What! Do people imagine that they will be let off on (their) saying: "We believe!" and they will not be tried? (Quran, 29:1-2)

I came to know that the disturbance would not befall us so long as the Prophet (pbuh) is among us. So I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, what is this disturbance of which Allah, the Sublime, has informed you?" and he replied, "O' Ali, my people will create trouble after me." I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, on the day of Uhud, when people had fallen martyrs and I was not among them, and this had been very annoying to me, did you not say to me, 'cheer up, as martyrdom is for you hereafter?'" The Prophet replied, "Yes it is so, but what about your enduring at present?" I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, this is not an occasion for endurance, but rather an occasion for cheering up and gratefulness." Then he said:

"O' `Ali, people will fall into mischief through their wealth, will show obligation to Allah on account of their faith, will expect His mercy, will feel safe from His anger and regard His unlawful matters as lawful by raising false doubts and by their misguiding desires. They will then hold lawful (the use of) wine by calling it barley water, a bribe by calling it a gift, and taking of usurious interest by calling it sale." I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, how should I deal with them at the time, whether to hold them to have gone back in heresy or just in revolt." He said, "in revolt."

Sermon 155

Praise be to Allah who made praise the Key for His remembrance, a means for increase of His bounty and a guide for His Attributes and Dignity. O' creatures of Allah! Time will deal with the survivors just as it dealt with those gone by. The time that has passed will not return and whatever there is in it will not stay for ever. Its later deeds are the same as the former ones. Its trouble try to excel one another. Its banners follow each other. It is as though you are attached to the last day which is driving you as rapidly as are driven the she camels which are dry for seven months. He who busies himself with things other than improvement of his own self becomes perplexed in darkness and entangled in ruination. His evil spirits immerse him deep in vices and make his bad actions appear handsome. Paradise is the end of those who are forward (in good acts) and Hell is the end of those who commit excesses. Know O' creatures of Allah! Piety is a strong house of protection while impi-

ety is a weak house which does not protect its people, and does not give security to him who takes refuge therein. Know that the sting of sins is cut by piety and the final aim is achieved by conviction of belief.

O creatures of Allah! (fear) Allah, (fear) Allah, in the matter of your own selves, which are the most beloved and dear to you, because Allah has clarified to you the way of truthfulness and lighted its paths. So either ever-present misfortune or eternal happiness. You should therefore provide in these mortal days for eternal days. You have been informed of the provision, ordered to march and told to make haste in setting off. You are like staying riders who do not know when they would be ordered to march on. Beware, what will he, who has been created for the next world, do with this world? What will a person do with wealth which he would shortly be deprived of while only its ill effects and reckoning would be left behind for him?

O creatures of Allah! The good which Allah has promised should not be abandoned and the evil from which He has refrained should not be coveted. O creatures of Allah! Fear the day when actions will be reckoned; there will be much quaking and even children will get old. Know, O creatures of Allah! Your own self is a guard over you; limbs are watchmen and truthful vigil-keepers who preserve (the record of) your actions and the numbers of your breaths. The gloom of the dark night cannot conceal you from them, nor can closed doors hide you from them. Surely tomorrow is close to today.

Today will depart with all that it has and tomorrow will come in its wake. It is as though every one of you has reached that place on earth where he would be alone, namely the location of his grave. So, what to say of the lonely house, the solitary place of staying and the solitary exile. It is as though the cry (of the Horn) has reached you, the Hour has overtaken you and you have come out (of your graves) for the passing of judgement. (The curtains of) falsehood have been removed from you and your excuses have become weak. The truth about you has been proved. All your matters have proceeded to their consequences. Therefore, you should (now) take counsel from examples, learn lessons from vicissitudes and take advantage of the warners.

Sermon 156

Allah deputed the Prophet at a time when there had been no prophets for some time. People had been in slumber for a long time and the twist of the rope had loosened. The Prophet came with (a Book containing) testimony to what (books) were already there and also with a light to be followed. It is the Quran. If you ask it to speak it won't do so; but I will tell you about it. 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.

A part of the same sermon: At that time there will remain no house or tent but oppressors would inflict it with grief and inject sickness in it. On that day no one in the sky will listen to their excuse and no one on the earth will come to

their help. You selected for the governance (caliphate) one who is not fit for it, and you raised him to a position which was not meant for him. Shortly Allah will take revenge from every one who has oppressed, food for food and drink for drink, namely colocynth for eating, myrrh and aloes for drinking, and fear for an inner and the sword for an outer covering. They are nothing but carrier-beasts laden with sins and camels laden with evil deeds. I swear and again swear that the Umayyads will have to spit out the caliphate as phlegm is spat and thereafter they will never taste it nor relish its flavour so long as day and night rotate.

Sermon 157

I lived as a good neighbour to you and tried my best to look after you, and I freed you from the snare of humbleness and the fetters of oppression through my gratefulness for the little good and closed my eyes to your many misdeeds which my eyes had observed and my body had witnessed.

Sermon 158

Allah's verdict is judicious and full of wisdom. His pleasure implies protection and mercy. He decides with knowledge and forgives with forbearance.

O my Allah! Praise be to You for what You take and give and for that from which You cure or with which You afflict; praise which is the most acceptable to You, the most like by You, and the most dignified before You; praise which fills all Thy creation and reaches where You desire; praise which is not veiled from You and does not end, and whose continuity does not cease.

We do not know the reality of Your greatness except that we know that You are Ever-living and Self-subsisting by Whom all things subsist. Drowsiness or sleep do not overtake You, vision does not reach You and sight does not grasp You. You see the eyes and count the ages. You hold (people as slaves) by foreheads and feet. We see Your creation and wonder over it because of Your might, and describe it as Your great authority; whereas what is hidden from us, of which our sight has fallen short, which our intelligence has not attained, and between which curtains of the unknown are cast, is far greater.

He who frees his heart (from other engagements) and exerts his thinking in order to know how You established Your throne, how You created Your creatures, how You suspended the air in Your skies and how You spread Your earth on the waves of water, his eyes would return tired, his intelligence defeated, his ears eager and his thinking awander.

A part of the same sermon: He claims according to his own thinking that he hopes from Allah. By Allah, the Great, he speaks a lie. The position is that his hope does not appear through his action although the hope of every one who hopes is known through his action. Every hope is so, except the hope in Allah, the Sublime, if it is impure; and every fear is established except the fear for Allah

if it is unreal.

He hopes big things from Allah and small things from men but he gives to man (consideration as) he does not give to Allah. What is the matter with Allah, glorified be His praise? He is accorded less (consideration) than what is given to His creatures. Do you ever fear to be false in your hope in Allah? Or do you not regard Him the centre of your hope? Similarly, if a man fears man he gives him (such consideration) out of his fear which he does not give to Allah. Thus, he has made his fear for men ready currency while his fear from the Creator is mere deferment or promise. This is the case of every one in whose eye this world appears big and in whose heart its position is great. He prefers it over Allah, so he inclines towards it, and becomes its devotee.

Certainly, in the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) was sufficient example for you and a proof concerning the vices of the world, its defects, the multitude of its disgraces and its evils, because its sides had been constrained for him, while its flanks had been spread for others; he was deprived of its milk and turned away from its adornments.

If you want, I will, as a second example, relate to you concerning Musa, the Interlocutor of Allah (pbuh.) when he said: *O' Allah! I need whatever good You may grant me* (Qur'an, 28:24). By Allah, he asked Him only for bread to eat because he was used to eating the herbs of the earth, and the greenness of the herbs could be seen from the delicate skin of his belly due to his thinness and paucity of his flesh.

If you desire I can give you a third example of Dawud (pbuh). He is the holder of the Psalms and the reciter among the people of Paradise. He used to prepare baskets of date palm leaves with his own hands and would say to his companions: "Which of you will help me by purchasing it?" He used to eat barley bread (bought) out of its price.

If you desire I will tell you about Isa (pbuh) son of Maryam (Mary). He used a stone for his pillow, put on coarse clothes and ate rough food. His condition was hunger. His lamp at night was the moon. His shade during the winter was just the expanse of earth eastward and westward. His fruits and flowers were only what grows from the earth for the cattle. He had no wife to allure him, nor any son to give grief, nor wealth to deviate (his attention), nor greed to disgrace him. His two feet were his conveyance and his two hands his servant.

You should follow your Prophet, the pure, the chaste. In him is the example for the follower, and the consolation for the seeker of consolation. The most beloved person before Allah is he who follows His Prophet and who treads in his footsteps. He took the least (share) from this world and did not take a full glance at it. Of all the people of the world he was the least satiated and the most empty of stomach. The world was offered to him but he refused to accept it. When he knew that Allah, the Glorified, hated a thing, he too hated it; that Allah held a thing low, he too held it low; that Allah held a thing small,

he too held it small. If we love what Allah and His Prophet hate and hold great what Allah and His prophet hold small that would be enough isolation from Allah and transgression of His commands.

The Prophet used to eat on the ground, and sat like a slave. He repaired his shoe with his hand, and patched his clothes with his hand. He would ride an unsaddled ass and would seat someone behind him. If there was a curtain on his door with pictures on it he would say to one of his wives. "O' such-and-such, take it away out of my sight because if I look at it I recall the world and its allurements." Thus, he removed his heart from this world and destroyed its remembrance from his mind. He loved that its allurements should remain hidden from his eye so that he should not secure good dress from it, should not regard it a place of stay and should not hope to live in it. Consequently, he removed it from his mind, let it go away from his heart and kept it hidden from his eyes. In the same way he who hates a thing should hate to look at it or to hear about it.

Certainly there was in the Prophet of Allah all that would apprise you of the evils of this world and its defects, namely that he remained hungry along with his chief companions, and despite his great nearness the allurements of the world remained remote from him. Now, one should see with one's intelligence whether Allah honoured Muhammad (pbuh) as a result of this or disgraced him. If he says that Allah disgraced him, he certainly lies and perpetrates a great untruth. If he says Allah honoured him, he should know that Allah dishonoured the others when He extended the world for him but held them away from him who was the nearest to Him of all men.

Therefore, one should follow His Prophet, tread in his footsteps and enter through his entrance. Otherwise he will not be safe from ruin. Certainly, Allah made Muhammad (pbuh) a sign for the Day of Judgement. a conveyor of tidings for Paradise and a warner of retribution. He left this world hungry but entered upon the next world safe. He did not lay one stone upon another (to make a house) till he departed and responded to the call of Allah. How great is Allah's blessing in that He blessed us with the Prophet as a predecessor whom we follow and a leader behind whom we tread.

By Allah, I have been putting patches in my shirts so much that now I feel shy of the patcher. Someone asked me whether I would not put it off, but I said, "Get away from me." Only in the morning do people (realised the advantage of and) speak highly of the night journey.

Sermon 159

Allah deputed the Prophet with a sparkling light, a clear argument, an open path and a guiding book. His tribe is the best tribe and his lineal tree the best lineal tree whose branches are in good proportion and fruits hanging (in plenty). His birthplace was Mecca, and the place of his migration Madina, from where his name rose high and his voice spread far and wide.

Allah sent him with a sufficing plea, a convincing discourse and a rectifying announcement. Through him Allah disclosed the ways that had been forsaken, and destroyed the innovations that had been introduced. Through him He explained the detailed commands. Now, whoever adopts a religion other than Islam, his misery is definite, his stick (of support) will be cracked, his fate will be serious, his end will be long grief and distressing punishment.

I trust in Allah, the trust of bending towards Him, and I seek His guidance for the way that leads to His Paradise and takes to the place of His pleasure. I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, to exercise fear of Allah and to obey Him because it is salvation tomorrow and deliverance for ever. He warned (you of chastisement) and did so thoroughly. He persuaded (you towards virtues) and did so fully. He described this world, its cutting away from you, its decay and its shifting. Therefore, keep aloof from its attractions, because very little of it will accompany you. This house is the closest to the displeasure of Allah and the remotest from the pleasure of Allah.

So close your eyes, O creatures of Allah, from its worries and engagements, because you are sure about its separation and its changing conditions. Fear it like a sincere fearer and one who struggles hard, and take a lesson from what you have seen about the falling places of those before you, namely that their joints were made to vanish, their eyes and ears were destroyed, their honour and prestige disappeared and their pleasure and wealth came to an end. The nearness of their children changed into remoteness. The company of their spouses changed into separation with them. They do not boast over each other, nor do they beget children nor meet each other nor live as neighbours. Therefore, fear O creature of Allah, like the fear of one who has control over himself, who can check his passions and perceive with his wisdom. Surely, the matter is quite clear, the banner is standing, the course is level and the way is straight.

Sermon 160

One of Imam's companions (from Banu Asad) asked him: "How was it that your tribe (Quraysh) deprived you of this position (Caliphate) although you deserved it most." Then in reply he said:

O' brother of Banu Asad! Your girth is loose and you have put it on the wrong way. Nevertheless you enjoy in-law kinship and also the right to ask, and since you have asked, listen. As regards the oppression against us in this matter although we were the highest as regards descent and the strongest in relationship with the Messenger of Allah. It was a selfish act over which the hearts of people became greedy, although some people did not care for it. The Arbiter is Allah and to Him is the return on the Day of Judgement. *"Now leave this story of devastation about which there is hue and cry all round."* Come and look at the son of Abu Sufyan (Muawiyah). Time has made me laugh after weeping. No wonder, by Allah; what is this affair which surpasses all wonder and which has increased wrongfulness. These people have tried to

put out the flame of Allah's light from His lamp and to close His fountain from its source. They mixed epidemic-producing water between me and themselves. If the trying hardships were removed from among us, I would take them on the course of truthfulness otherwise:

"So let not yourself go (in vain) in grief for them; verily Allah knows all that they do." (Quran, 35:8)

Sermon 161

Praise be to Allah, Creator of people; He has spread the earth. He makes streams to flow and vegetation to grow on high lands. His firstness has no beginning, nor has His eternity any end. He is the First and from ever. He is the everlasting without limit. Foreheads bow before Him and lips declare His oneness. He determined the limits of things at the time of His creating them, keeping Himself away from any likeness.

Imagination cannot surmise Him within the limits of movements limbs or senses. It cannot be said about Him: "whence"; and no time limit can be attributed to Him by saying "till". He is apparent, but it cannot be said "from what". He is hidden, but it cannot be said "in what". He is not a body which can die, nor is He veiled so as to be enclosed therein. He is not near to things by way of touch, nor is He remote from them by way of separation.

The gazing of people's eyes is not hidden from Him, nor the repetition of words, nor the glimpse of hillocks, nor the tread of a footstep in the dark night or in the deep gloom, where the shining moon casts its light and the effulgent sun comes in its wake, through its setting and appearing again and again with the rotation of time and periods, by the approach of the advancing night or the passing away of the running day.

He precedes every extremity and limit, and every counting and numbering. He is far above what those whose regard is limited attribute to Him, such as the qualities of measure, having extremities, living in house and dwelling in abodes, because limits are meant for creation and are attributable only to other than Allah.

He did not create things from eternal matter nor after ever-existing examples, but He created whatever He created and then He fixed limits thereto, and He shaped whatever He shaped and gave the best shape thereto. Nothing can disobey Him, but the obedience of something is of no benefit to Him. His knowledge about those who died in the past is the same as His knowledge about the remaining survivors, and His knowledge about whatever there is in the high skies is like His knowledge of whatever there is in the low earth.

A part of the same sermon: O' creature who has been equitably created and who has been nurtured and looked after in the darkness of wombs with multiple curtains. You were originated from the essence of clay (Quran, 23:12) and placed in a still place for a known length (Quran, 77:21-22) and an ordained

time. You used to move in the womb of your mother as an embryo, neither responding to a call nor hearing any voice.

Then you were taken out from your place of stay to a place you had not seen, and you were not acquainted with the means of awaiting its benefits, or with who guided you to eke out your sustenance from the udder of your mother, and, when you were in need, appraised you of the location of what you required or aimed at. Alas! Certainly he who is unable to understand the qualities of a being with shape and limbs is the more unable to understand the qualities of the Creator and the more remote from appreciating Him through the limitations of creatures.

Sermon 162

When people went to Ameerul Momineen in a deputation and complained to him through what they had to say against Uthman, and requested him to speak to him on their behalf and to admonish him for their sake, he went to see him and said:

The people are behind me and they have made me an ambassador between you and themselves; but by Allah, I do not know what to say to you. I know nothing (in this matter) which you do not know, nor can I lead you to any matter of which you are not aware. You certainly know what we know, we have not come to know anything before you which we could tell you; nor did we learn anything in secret which we should convey to you. You have seen as we have seen and you have heard as we have heard. You sat in the company of the Prophet of Allah as we did. Abi Quhafah (Abu Bakr) and (Umar) ibn Khattab were no more responsible for acting righteously than you, since you are nearer than both of them to the Prophet of Allah through kinship, and you also hold relationship to him by marriage which they do not hold.

Then (fear) Allah, in your own self; for, by Allah, you are not being shown anything as if you are blind or being apprised of anything as if you are ignorant. The ways are clear while the banners of faith are fixed. You should know that among the creatures of Allah, the most distinguished person before Allah is the just Imam who has been guided (by Allah) and guides others. So, he stands by the recognised ways of the Prophet's behaviour and destroys unrecognised innovations. The (Prophet's) ways are clear and they have signs, while innovations are also clear and they too have signs. Certainly, the worst man before Allah is the oppressive Imam who has gone astray and through whom others go astray. He destroys the accepted *sunnah* and revives abandoned innovations. I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "On the Day of Judgement the oppressive Imam will be brought without anyone to support him or anyone to advance excuses on his behalf, and then he will be thrown into Hell where he will rotate as the hand-mill rotates, then (eventually) he will be confined to its hollow."

I swear to you by Allah that you should not be that Imam of the people who will be killed because it has been said that, "An Imam of this people will be

killed after which killing and fighting will be made open for them till the Day of Judgement, and he will confuse their matters and spread troubles over them. As a result, they will not discern truth from wrong. They will oscillate like waves and would be utterly misled." You should not behave as the carrying beast for Marwan so that he may drag you wherever he likes, despite (your) seniority of age and length of life.

Then 'Uhman said to Imam: "Speak to the people to give me time until I redress their grievances." Imam then said: "So far as Madina is concerned here is no question of time. As for remoter areas you can have the time needed for your order to reach there."

Sermon 163

Describing the wonderful creation of the peacock.

Allah has provided wonderful creations including the living, the lifeless, the stationary, and the moving. He has established such clear proofs for His delicate creative power and great might that minds bend down to Him in acknowledgement thereof and in submission to Him, and arguments about His Oneness strike our ears. He has created birds of various shapes which live in the burrows of the earth, in the openings of high passes and on the peaks of mountains.

They have different kinds of wings, and various characteristics. They are controlled by the rein of (Allah's) authority. They flutter with their wings in the expanse of the vast firmament and the open atmosphere. He brought them into existence from non-existence in strange external shapes, and composed them with joints and bones covered with flesh. He prevented some of them from flying easily in the sky because of their heavy bodies and allowed them to use their wings only close to the ground. He has set them in different colours by his delicate might and exquisite creative power.

Among them are those which are tinted with one hue and there is no other hue except the one in which they have been dyed. There are others which are tinted with one colour, and they have a neck ring of a different colour than that with which they are tinted.

The most amazing among them in its creation is the peacock, which Allah has created in the most symmetrical dimensions, and arranged its hues in the best arrangement with wings whose ends are inter-leaved together and whose tail is long. When it moves to its female it spreads out its folded tail and raises it up so as to cast a shade over its head, as if it were the sail of a boat being pulled by the sailor. It feels proud of its colours and swaggers with its movements. It copulates like the cocks. It leaps (on the female) for impregnation like lustful energetic men at the time of fighting.

I am telling you all this from observation, unlike he who narrates on the basis of weak authority, as for example, the belief of some people that it impregnates the female by a tear which flows from its eyes and when it stops on the

edges of the eyelids the female swallows it and lays its eggs thereby and not through impregnation by a male other than by means of this flowing tear. Even if they say this, it would be no amazing than (what they say about) the mutual feeding of the crows (for impregnation). You would imagine its feathers to be sticks made of silvers and the wonderful circles and sun-shaped feathers growing thereon to be of pure gold and pieces of green emerald. If you likened them to anything growing on land, you would say that it is a bouquet of flowers collected during every spring. If you likened them to cloths, they would be like printed apparels or amazing variegated cloths of Yemen. If you likened them to ornaments then they would be like gems of different colour with studded silver.

The peacock walks with vanity and pride, and throws open its tail and wings and laughs admiring the handsomeness of its dress and the hues of its necklace of gems. But when it casts its glance at its legs it cries loudly with a voice which indicates its call for help and displays its true grief, because its legs are thin like the legs of Indo-Persian cross-bred cocks. At the end of its shin there is a thin thorn and on the crown of its head there is a bunch of green variegated feathers. Its neck begins in the shape of a goblet and its stretch up to its belly is like the hair-dye of Yemen in colour or like silk cloth put on a polished mirror which looks as if it has been covered with a black veil, except that on account of its excessive lustre and extreme brightness it appears that a lush green colour has been mixed with it. Along the openings of its ears there is a line of shining bright daisy colour like the thin end of a pen. Whiteness shines on the black background. There is hardly a hue from which it has not taken a bit and improved it further by regular polish, lustre, silken brightness and brilliance. It is therefore like scattered blossoms which have not been seasoned by the rains of spring or the sun of the summer.

It also sheds its plumage and puts off its dress. They all fall away and grow again. They fall way from the feather stems like the falling of leaves from twigs, and then they begin to join together and grow till they return to the state that existed before their falling away. The new hues do not change from the previous ones, nor does any colour occur in other than its own place. If you carefully look at one hair from the hairs of its feather stems it would look like red rose, then emerald green and then golden yellow.

How can sharpness of intellect describe such a creation, or faculty of mind, or the utterances of describers manage to tell of it. Even its smallest parts have made it impossible for the imagination to pick them out or for tongues to describe them. Glorified is Allah who has disabled intellects from describing the creation which He placed openly before the eyes and which they see bounded, shaped, arranged and coloured. He also disabled tongues from briefly describing its qualities and also from expanding in its praise.

Glorified is Allah who has assigned feet to small ants and gnats and also to those above them, the serpents and the elephants. He has made it obligatory upon Himself that no skeleton in which He infuses the spirit would move, but that death is its promised place and destruction its final end.

A part of the same sermon describing Paradise: If you cast your mind's eye at what is described to you about Paradise, your heart would begin to hate the delicacies of this world that have been displayed here, namely its desires and its pleasures, and the beauties of its scenes, and you would be lost in the rustling of the trees whose roots lie hidden in the mounds of musk on the banks of the rivers in Paradise and in the attraction of the bunches of fresh pearls in the twigs and branches of those trees, and in the appearance of different fruits from under the cover of their leaves. These fruits can be picked without difficulty as they come down at the desire of their pickers. Pure honey and fermented wine will be handed round to those who settle down in the courtyards of its palaces.

They are a people whom honour has always followed till they were made to settle in the house of eternal abode, and they obtained rest from the movement of journeying. O listener! If you busy yourself in advancing towards these wonderful scenes which will rush towards you, then your heart will certainly die due to eagerness for them, and you will be prepared to seek the company of those in the graves straight away from my audience here and hasten towards them. Allah may, by His mercy, include us and you too among those who strive with their hearts for the abodes of the virtuous.

Sermon 164

The young among you should follow the elders while the elders should be kind to the young. Do not be like those rude people of the pre-Islamic period who did not exert themselves in religion nor use their intellects in the matter of Allah. They are like the breaking of eggs in the nest of a dangerous bird, because their breaking looks bad, but keeping them intact would mean the production of dangerous young ones.

A part of the same sermon: They will divide after their unity and scatter away from their centre. Some of them will stick to the branches, and bending down as the branches bend, until Allah will collect them together for the day that will be worst for the Umayyads just as the scattered bits of clouds collect together in the autumn. Allah will create affection among them. Then He will make them into a strong mass like the mass of clouds. Then he will open doors for them to flow out from their starting place like the flood of the two gardens (of Saba) from which neither high rocks remained safe nor small hillocks, and its flow could be repulsed neither by strong mountains nor by high lands. Allah will scatter them in the low lands of valleys and then He will make them flow like streams throughout the earth, and through them He will arrange the taking of rights of one people by another people and make one people to stay in the houses of another people. By Allah, all their position and esteem will dissolve as fat dissolves on the fire.

O people! If you had not evaded support of the truth and had not felt weakness from crushing wrong then he who was not your match would not have aimed at you and he who overpowered you would not have overpowered you.

But you roamed about the deserts (of disobedience) like Banu Isra'il. I swear by my life that after me your tribulations will increase several times, because you will have abandoned the truth behind your backs, severed your connection with your near ones and established relations with remote ones. Know that if you had followed him who was calling you (to guidance) he would have made you tread the ways of the Prophet, then you would have been spared the difficulties of misguidance, and you would have thrown away the crushing burden from your necks.

Sermon 165

At the beginning of his Caliphate:

Allah has sent down a guiding Book wherein He has explained virtue and vice. You should adopt the course of virtue whereby you will have guidance, and keep aloof from the direction of vice so that you remain on the right way. Mind the obligations. Fulfil them for Allah and they will take you to Paradise. 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 as devotion (to Himself and His oneness). Therefore, a Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand every Muslim is safe save in the matter of truth. It is not, therefore, lawful to molest a Muslim except when it is obligatory.

Hasten towards the most common matter which is peculiar to every one; and that is death. Certainly, people (who have gone) are ahead of you while the hour (Judgement Day) is driving you from behind. Remain light, in order that you may overtake them. Your backs are being awaited for the sake of the fronts. Fear Allah in the matter of His creatures and His cities because you will be questioned even about lands and beasts. Obey Allah and do not disobey Him. When you see virtue adopt it, and when you see vice avoid it.

Sermon 166

After swearing allegiance to Imam, some companions of the Prophet said to him, "You should punish the people who assaulted Uthman," whereupon he 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 are 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 and these people have support behind them. 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 rights can be achieved for people easily. Rest 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).

Sermon 167

When the people of Jamal set off for Basrah Ameerul Momineen said:

There is no doubt that Allah sent down the Prophet as a guide with an eloquent Book and standing command. No one will be ruined by it except one who ruins himself. Certainly, only doubtful innovations cause ruin except those from which Allah may protect. In Allah's authority lies the safety of your affairs. Therefore, render Him such obedience as is neither blameworthy nor insincere. By Allah, you must do so, otherwise Allah will take away from you the power of Islam, and will never thereafter return it to you till it reverts to others.

Certainly, these people are in agreement in disliking my authority. I will carry on till I perceive disunity among you; because if, in spite of the unsoundness of their view, they succeed, the whole organisation of the Muslims will be shattered. They are hankering after this world out of jealousy against him on whom Allah has bestowed it. So they intend reverting the matters on their backs (pre-Islamic period), while on us it is obligatory, for your sake, to abide by the Book of Allah, the Sublime, and the conduct of the Prophet of Allah, to stand by His rights and the revival of his *sunnah*.

Sermon 168

When Imam approached Basrah an Arab met him and spoke to him, as he had been sent to him by a group of people of Basrah to enquire from him on their behalf position regarding the people of Jamal. Imam explained to him his position with respect to them, from which he was convinced that Imam was in the right. Then Imam asked him to swear allegiance, but he replied "I am just a message carrier of a people and shall not do anything until I get back to them." Upon this Imam said to him:

If those at your back send you as a forerunner to search out a rain-fed area for them, and you return to them and apprise them of greenery and water but they disagree with you and go towards dry and barren land, what would you do then?

He said: I would leave them and go towards greenery and water. Ameerul Momineen then said: So then extend your hand. This man related that: By Allah, by such a clear argument I could not refrain from swearing allegiance to Amir al-mu'minin.

Sermon 169

When Ameerul Momineen decided to fight the enemy face to face at Siffin he said:

O my Allah! O Sustainer of the high sky and the suspended firmament which You have made a shelter for the night and the day, an orbit for the sun and the moon and a path for the rotating stars, and for populating it You have created a group of Your angels who do not get weary of worshipping You. O Sustainer of this earth which You have made an abode for people and a place for the movement of insects and beasts and countless other creatures seen and unseen. O Sustainer of strong mountains which You have made as pegs for the earth and a support for people. If You give us victory over our enemy, save us from excesses and keep us on the straight path of truth. But if You give them victory over us, then grant us martyrdom and save us from mischief. Where are those who protect honour, and those self-respecting persons who defend respectable persons in the time of hardship? Shame is behind you while Paradise is in front of you.

Sermon 170

Praise be to Allah from whose view one sky does not conceal another sky nor one earth another earth.

A part of the same sermon: Someone said to me, "O' son of Abi Talib, you are eager for the caliphate." Then I told him: "Rather, you are, by Allah, more greedy, although more remote, while I am more suited as well as nearer. I have demanded it as my right, while you are intervening between me and it, and you are turning my face from it." When I knocked at his ears with arguments among the crowd of those present he was startled as if he was stunned not knowing what reply to give me about it.

O' my Allah! I seek Thy succour against the Quraysh and those who are assisting them, because they are denying me (the rights of) kinship, have lowered my high position, and are united in opposing me in the matter (of the caliphate) which is my right, and then they said, "Know that the rightful thing is that you have it and also that you may leave it."

A part of the same sermon: They (Talha, Zubair and their supporters) came out dragging the wife of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh.) just as a maidslave is dragged for sale. They took her to Basrah where those two (Talha and Zubair) put their own women in their houses but exposed the wife of the Messenger of Allah to themselves and to others in the army in which there was not a single individual who had not offered me his obedience and sworn to me allegiance quite obediently, without any compulsion.

Here in Basrah they approached my governor and treasurers of the public treasury and its other inhabitants. They killed some of them in captivity and others by treachery. By Allah, even if they had wilfully killed only one individual from among the Muslims without any fault, it would have been lawful for me to kill the whole of this army because they were present in it but did not disagree with it nor prevented it by tongue or hand, not to say that they killed from among the Muslims a number equal to that with which they had

marched on them.

Sermon 171

The Prophet is the trustee of Allah's revelation, the Last of His Prophets. the giver of tidings of His mercy and the warner for His chastisement.

O' people. the most rightful of all persons for this matter (the caliphate) is he who is most competent among them to maintain it, and he who knows best Allah's commands about it. If any mischief is created by a mischief-monger, he will be called upon to repent. If he refuses. he will be fought. By my life, if the question of caliphate was not to be decided unless all the people were present, then there would be no such case. But those who agreed about it imposed the decision on those who were absent, so much so that he who was present could not dissent and the one who was absent could not choose (any one else). Know that I shall fight two persons - one who claims what is not his and the other who ignores what is obligatory upon him.

O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to have fear of Allah because it is the best advice to be mutually given by persons, and the best of all things before Allah. The door of war has been opened between you and the other Muslims. 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.

Know that this world which you have started to covet and in which you are interested, and which sometimes enrages you and sometimes pleases you is not your (permanent) abode, nor the place of your stay for which you might have been created, nor one to which you have been invited. Know that it will not last for you nor will you live along with it. If anything out of this world deceives you (into attraction), its evils warn you too. You should give up (the objects of) its deceits in favour of (the objects of) its warning and (the objects of) its attractions in favour of (the objects of) its terrors. And while here in it, advance towards that house to which you have been called, and turn away your hearts from the world. None of you should cry like a maid slave over anything which she has been deprived of. Seek the perfection of Allah's bounty over you by endurance in obedience to Allah and in guarding what He has asked you to guard, namely His Book.

Know that the loss of anything of this world will not harm you, if you have guarded the principles of your religion. Know also that after the loss of your religion nothing of this world for which you have cared will benefit you. May Allah carry our hearts and your hearts towards the right and may He grant us and you endurance.

Sermon 172

About Talha ibn `Ubaydillah.

As for me, I would never be frightened of fighting or be made to fear striking because I am satisfied with Allah's promise of support to me. By Allah, Talha has hastened with drawn sword to avenge Uthman's blood for fear lest the demand for Uthman's blood be made against himself, because the people's idea in this matter is about him, and, in fact, he was the most anxious among them for his killing. Therefore, he has tried to create misunderstanding by collecting forces in order to confuse the matter and to create doubt.

By Allah, he did not act in either of three ways about Uthman. If the son of Affan was in the wrong, as Talha believed, it is necessary for him to support those who killed him or to have kept away from his supporters. If Uthman was the victim of oppression, then Talha should have been among those who were preventing (the assaulters) from him or were advancing pleas on his behalf. If he was in doubt about these two alternatives, then it was incumbent upon him to leave him (Uthman) and retire aside and leave the men with him (to deal with him as they wished). But he adopted none of these three ways, and came out with a thing in which there is no good, and his excuses are not acceptable.

Sermon 173

O people who are (negligent of Allah but) not neglected (by Allah), and those who miss (good) but are to be caught. How is it that I see you becoming removed from Allah and becoming interested in others? You are like the camel whom the grazer drives to a disease-stricken pasture and a disastrous watering place. They are like beasts who are fed in order to be slaughtered, but they do not know what is intended for them. When they are treated well they think that day to be their whole life, and eating their full to be their aim.

By Allah, if I wish, I can tell every one of you from where he has come, where he has to go and all his affairs, but I fear lest you abandon the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in my favour. I shall certainly convey these things to the selected ones who will remain safe from that fear. By Allah, Who deputed the Prophet with Right and distinguished him over creation. I do not speak save the truth. He (the Prophet) informed me of all this and also about the death of every one who dies, the salvation of every one who is granted salvation, and the consequences of this matter (the caliphate). He left nothing (that could) pass into my head without putting it in my ear and telling me about it. O' people ! By Allah, I do not impel you to any obedience unless I practise it before you and do not restrain you from any disobedience unless I desist from it before you.

Sermon 174

Seek benefit from the sayings of Allah, be admonished of Allah and accept the advice of Allah because Allah has left no excuse for you by providing clear guidance, has put before you the plea and clarified for you what acts He likes and what acts He hates, so that you may follow the one and avoid the other. The Prophet of Allah used to say. "Paradise is surrounded by unpleasant things while Hell is surrounded by desires."

You should know that every obedience to Allah is unpleasant in appearance while every disobedience to Allah has the appearance of enjoyment. Allah may have mercy on the person who kept aloof from his desire and uprooted the appetite of his heart, because this heart has far-reaching aims and it goes on pursuing disobedience through desires. You should know, O' creatures of Allah, that a believer should be distrustful of his heart every morning and evening. He should always blame it (for shortcomings) and ask it to add to (its good acts). You should behave like those who have gone before you and the precedents in front of you. They left this world like a traveller and covered it as distance is covered.

And know that this Quran is an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Quran but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution - addition in his guidance or elimination in his (spiritual) blindness. You should also know that no one will need anything after (guidance from) the Quran and no one will be free from want before (guidance from) the Qur'an. Therefore, seek cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt and misguidance. Pray to Allah through it and turn to Allah with its love. Do not ask the people through it. There is nothing like it through which the people should turn to Allah, the Sublime.

Know that it is an interceder and its intercession will be accepted. It is a speaker who is testified. For whoever the Quran intercedes on the Day of Judgement, its intercession for him would be accepted. He about whom the Quran speaks ill on the Day of Judgement shall testify to it. On the Day of Judgement an announcer will announce, "Beware. every sower of a crop is in distress except the sowers of the Quran." Therefore, you should be among the sowers of the Quran and its followers. Make it your guide towards Allah. Seek its advice for yourselves, do not trust your views against it. and regard your desires in the matter of the Quran as deceitful.

Action! action! Then (look at) the end; the end, and (remain) steadfast; steadfast. Thereafter (exercise) endurance, endurance, and piety, piety. You have an objective. Proceed towards your objective. You have a sign. Take guidance from your sign. Islam has an objective. Proceed towards its objective. Proceed towards Allah's by fulfilling His rights which He has enjoined upon you. He has clearly stated His demands for you. I am a witness for you and

shall plead excuses on your behalf on the Day of Judgement.

Beware! what had been ordained has occurred and that which had been destined has come into play. I am speaking to you with the promise and pleas of Allah. Allah the Sublime, has said:

Verily, those who say: Our Lord is Allah! and persevere aright, the angels descend upon them (saying): "Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive the glad tidings of the Garden which You were promised." (Quran, 41:30)

You have said. "Our Lord is Allah." Then keep steadfast to His Book, to the way of His command and to the virtuous course of His worship. Thereafter do not go out of it, do not introduce innovations in it, and do not turn away from it, because those who go away from this course will be cut off from (the mercy of) Allah on the Day of Judgement.

Beware from destroying your manners and changing them, maintaining one tongue. A man should control his tongue because the tongue is obstinate with its master. By Allah, I do not find that fear of Allah benefits a man who practises it unless he controls his tongue. Certainly the tongue of a believer is at the back of his heart while the heart of a hypocrite is at the back of his tongue; because, when a believer intends to say anything, he thinks it over in his mind. If it is good he discloses it, but if it is bad he lets it remain concealed. While a hypocrite speaks whatever comes to his tongue, without knowing what is in his favour and what goes against him.

The Prophet of Allah (pbuh) said: "The belief of a person cannot be firm unless his heart is firm, and his heart cannot be firm unless his tongue is firm." So whoever of you can manage to meet Allah, the Sublime, in such a position that his hands are not smeared with the blood of Muslims and their property and his tongue is safe from exposing them, he should do so.

Know, O' creatures of Allah, that a believer should regard lawful this year what he regarded lawful in the previous year, and should consider unlawful this year what he considered unlawful in the previous year. Certainly people's innovation cannot make lawful for you what has been declared unlawful; rather, lawful is that which Allah has made lawful and unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful. You have already tested the matters and tried them; you have been preached by those before you. Illustrations have been drawn for you and you have been called to clear fact. Only a deaf man can remain deaf to all this, and only a blind man can remain blind to all this.

He whom Allah does not allow benefit from trials and experience cannot benefit from preaching. He will be faced with losses from in front, so that he will approve what is bad and disapprove what is good. People are of two categories - the follower of the *shari'ah* (religious laws) and the follower of the innovations to whom Allah has not given any testimony by way of *sunnah* or the light of any plea.

Allah the Glorified, has not counselled anyone on the lines of this Quran, for

it is the strong rope of Allah and His trustworthy means. It contains the blossoming of the heart and springs of knowledge. For the heart there is no other gloss than the Quran although those who remembered it have passed away while those who forgot or pretended to have forgotten it have remained. If you see any good give your support to it, but if you see evil evade it, because the Messenger of Allah used to say: "O' son of Adam, do good and evade evil; by doing so you will be treading correctly."

Know that injustice is of three kinds - one, the injustice that will not be forgiven, another, that will not be left unquestioned, and another that will be forgiven without being questioned. The injustice that will not be forgiven is duality of Allah. Allah has said: *Verily Allah forgives not that (anything) be associated with Him ...* (Quran, 4:48,116). The injustice that will be forgiven is the injustice a man does to himself by committing small sins; and the injustice that will not be left unquestioned is the injustice of men against other men. The retribution in such a case is severe. It is not wounding with knives, nor striking with whips, but it is so severe that all these things are small against it. 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 from separation.

O' people, blessed is the man whose own shortcomings keep him away from the shortcomings of others, and also blessed is the man who is confined to his house, eats his meal, buries himself in obeying his Allah. and weeps over his sins, so that he is engaged in himself and people are in safety from him.

Sermon 175

About the two arbiters (after the battle of Siffin)

Your party had decided to select two persons, and so we took their pledge that they would act according to Quran and would not commit excess, that their tongues should be with it and their hearts should follow it. But they deviated from it, abandoned what was right although they had it before their eyes. Wrong-doing was their desire, and going astray was their behaviour. Although we had settled with them to decide with justice. to act according to light and without interference of their evil views and wrong judgement. Now that they have abandoned the course of right and have come out with just the opposite of what was settled, we have strong ground (to reject their verdict).

Sermon 176

One condition does not prevent Him from (getting into) another condition, time does not change Him, place does not locate him and the tongue does not describe Him. The number of drops of water, of stars in the sky, or of currents of winds in the air are not unknown to Him, nor the movements of ants

on rocks, or the resting place of grubs in the dark night. He knows the places where leaves fall, and the secret movements of the pupils of the eyes.

I stand witness that there is no god but Allah, Who has no parallel, Who is not doubted, Whose religion is not denied and Whose creativeness is not questioned. My witnessing is like that of a man whose intention is free, whose conscience is clear, whose belief is pure and whose loads (of good actions) are heavy. I also stand witness that Muhammad (pbuh) is His slave and His Messenger, chosen from His creations, selected for detailing His realities, picked for His selected honours and chosen for His esteemed messages. Through him the signs of guidance have been lighted and the gloom of blindness (misguidance) has been dispelled.

O' people, surely this world deceives him who longs for it and who is attracted towards it. It does not behave niggardly with him who aspires for it and overpowers him who overpowers it. By Allah, no people are deprived of the lively pleasures of life after enjoying them, except as a result of sins committed by them, because certainly Allah is not unjust to His creatures. Even then, when calamities descend upon people and pleasures depart from them, they turn towards Allah with true intention and the feeling in their hearts that He will return them everything that has fled from them and cure all their ills.

I fear about you lest you fall into ignorance. In the past there were certain matters in which you were deflected, and in my view you were not worthy of admiration; but if your previous position could be returned to you then you would become virtuous. I can only strive; but if I were to speak I would (only) say may Allah forgive your past actions.

Sermon 177

Dhi'lib al-Yamani asked Imam whether he had seen Allah, he replied, "Do I worship one whom I have not seen?" Then he enquired, "How have you seen Him?" Then Imam replied:

Eyes do not see Him face to face, but hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief. He is near to things but not (physically) contiguous. He is far from them but not (physically) separate. He is a speaker, but not with reflection. He intends, but not with preparation. He moulds, but not with limbs. He is subtle but cannot be attributed with being concealed. He is great but cannot be attributed with haughtiness. He sees but cannot be attributed with the (sight) sense. He is Merciful but cannot be attributed with weakness of heart. Faces feel low before His greatness and hearts tremble out of fear of Him.

Sermon 178

Condemning his disobedient men

I praise Allah for whatever matter He ordained and whatever action He destines and for my trial with you, O' group of people who do not obey when I order and do not respond when I call you. If you are at ease you engage in conversation, but if you are faced with battle you show weakness. If people

agree on one Imam you taunt each other. If you are faced with an arduous matter you turn away from it. May others have no father (woe to your enemy!) what are you waiting for in the matter of your assistance and for fighting for your rights? For you there is either death or disgrace. By Allah, if my day (of death) comes, and it is sure to come, it will cause separation between me and you although I am sick of your company and feel lonely with you.

May Allah deal with you. Is there no religion which may unite you nor sense of shamefulness that may sharpen you? Is it not strange that Muawiya 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? Truly, there is nothing between me to you which I like and you also like it, or with which I am angry and you may also unite against it. What I love most is death. I have taught you the Quran, clarified to you arguments, apprised you of what you were ignorant and made you swallow what you were spitting out. Even a blind man would have been able to see, and he who was sleeping would have been awakened. How ignorant of Allah is their leader Muawiya and their instructor (Amr bin A'as)

Sermon 179

Imam sent one of his men to bring him news about a group of the army of Kufa who had decided to join the Kharijites but were afraid of him. When the man came back Imam said to him: "Are they satisfied and staying or feeling weak and going astray?" The man replied, "They have gone away, O' Ameerul Momineen" Then he said:

May Allah's mercy remain away from them like Thamud. Know when the spears are hurled towards them and swords are struck at their heads they will repent of their doings. Surely today Satan has scattered them and tomorrow he will disclaim any connection with them, and will leave them. Their departing from guidance, returning to misguidance and blindness, turning away from truth and falling into wrong is enough (for their chastisement).

Sermon 180

It has been related by Nawf al-Bikali that Imam (a.s.) delivered this sermon at Kufa standing on a stone which Ja' dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzumi had placed for him. Imam had a woolen apparel on his body, the belt of his sword was made of leaves, and the sandals on his feet too were of palm leaves. His forehead had a hardened spot like that a camel (on its knee).

Praise be to Allah to Whom is the return of all creation and the end of all matters. We render Him praise for the greatness of His generosity, the charity of His proofs, the increase of His bounty and His favours, - praise which may fulfil His right, repay His thanks, take (us) near His reward and be productive of increase in His kindness. We seek His help like one who is hopeful of His bounty, desirous of His benefit, and confident of His warding off (calamities), who acknowledges His gifts and is obedient to Him in word and deed. We believe in Him like him who reposes hope in Him with conviction,

inclines to Him as a believer, humbles himself before Him obediently, believes in His oneness exclusively, regards Him great, acknowledging His dignity, and seeks refuge with Him with inclination and exertion.

Allah the Glorified has not been born so that someone could be (His) partner in glory. Nor has He begotten anyone so as to be inherited from after dying. Time and period have not preceded Him. Increase and decrease do not occur to Him. But He has manifested Himself to our understanding through our having observed His strong control and firm decree. Among the proofs of His creation is the creation of the skies which are fastened without pillars and stand without support. He called them and they responded obediently and humbly without being lazy or loathsome. If they had not acknowledged His Godhead and obeyed Him He would not have made them the place for His throne, the abode of His angels and the destination for the rising up of the pure utterances and the righteous deeds of the creatures.

He has made the stars in the skies by way of signs by which travellers wandering the various routes of the earth may be guided. The gloom of the dark curtains of the night does not prevent the flame of their light, nor do the veils of blackish nights have the power to turn back the light of the moon when it spreads in the skies. Glory be to Allah from Whom neither the blackness of dark dusk or of gloomy night (falling) in the low parts of the earth or on high dim mountains is hidden, nor the thundering of clouds on the horizons of the skies, nor the sparking of lightning in the clouds, nor the falling of leaves blown away from their falling places by the winds of hurricanes or by down-pour from the sky. He knows where the drops fall and where they stay, where the grubs leave their trails or where they drag themselves, what livelihood would suffice the mosquitoes and what a female bears in its womb.

Praise be to Allah Who exists from before the coming into existence of the seat, the throne, the sky, the earth, the jinn or human being. He cannot be perceived by imagination nor measured by understanding. He who begs from Him does not divert Him (from others), nor does giving away cause Him diminution. He does not see by means of an eye, nor can He be confined to a place. He cannot be said to have companions. He does not create with limbs. He cannot be perceived by senses. He cannot be thought of after the people.

It is He who spoke to Musa clearly and showed him His great signs without the use of bodily parts, the organ of speech or the uvula. O' you who exert yourself in describing Allah if you are serious then (first try to) describe Gabriel, Michael or the host of angels who are close (to Allah) in the receptacles of sublimity; but their heads are bent downwards and their wits are perplexed as to how to assign limits (of definition) to the Highest Creator. This is because those things can only be perceived through qualities which have shape and parts and which succumb to death after reaching the end of their times. There is no god but He. He has lighted every darkness with His effulgence and has darkened every light with the darkness (of death).

I advise you, creatures of Allah, to practise fear of Allah Who gave you good clothing and bestowed an abundance of sustenance on you. If there was any-

one who could secure a ladder to everlasting life or a way to avoid death it was Sulayman ibn Dawud (pbuh) who was given control over the domain of the jinn and men along with prophethood and great position (before Allah), but when he finished what was his due in food (of this world) and exhausted his (set) time the bow of destruction shot him with arrow of death. His houses became vacant and his habitations became empty. Another group of people inherited them. Certainly, the bygone centuries have a lesson for you.

Where are the Amalekites and the sons of Amalekites? Where are the Pharaohs and the sons of Pharaohs? Where are the people of the cities of ar-Rass who killed the prophets, destroyed the traditions of the divine messengers and revived the traditions of the despots? Where are those who advanced with armies, defeated thousands, mobilised forces and populated cities?

A part of the same sermon: He will be wearing the armour of wisdom, which he will have secured with all its conditions, such as full attention towards it, its knowledge and exclusive devotion to it. For him it is like a thing which he had lost and which he was then seeking, or a need which he was trying to fulfil. If Islam is in trouble he will feel forlorn like a traveller and like a (tired) camel beating the end of its tail and with its neck flattened on the ground. He is last of Allah's proofs and one of vicegerents of His prophets.

Then Imam continued: O people! I have divulged to you advice which the prophets used to preach before their peoples, and I have conveyed to you what the vicegerents conveyed to those coming after them. I tried to train you with my whip but you could not be straightened. I drove you with admonition but you did not acquire proper behaviour. May Allah deal with you! Do you want an Imam other than me to take you on the path, and show you the correct way?

Beware, the things in this world which were forward have become things of the past, and those of which were behind are going ahead. The virtuous people of Allah have made up their minds to leave and they have purchased, with a little perishable (pleasure) of this world, a lot of such (reward) in the next world that will remain. What loss did our brothers whose blood was shed in Siffin suffer by not being alive today? Only that they are not suffering choking on swallowings and not drinking turbid water. By Allah, surely they have met Allah and He has bestowed upon them their rewards and He has lodged them in safe houses after their (having suffered) fear.

Where are my brethren who took the (right) path and trod in rightness. Where is Ammar? Where is Ibn at-Tayyihan? Where is Dhu'sh-Shahadatayn? 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.

Then Imam wiped his hand over his auspicious, honoured beard and wept for a long time, then continued: Oh! my brothers. who recited the Quran and strengthened it, thought over their obligation and fulfilled it, revived the *sunnah* and destroyed innovation. When they were called to *jihad* they responded and trusted in their leader then followed him.

Then Ameerul Momineen shouted at the top of his voice: al-jihad, al-jihad (fighting, fighting), O' creatures of Allah! By Allah, I am mobilising the army today. He who desires to proceed towards Allah should come forward.

Nawf says: Imam put Husain (pbuh) over (a force of) ten thousand, Qays ibn Sa'd over ten thousand, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari over ten thousand, and others over different numbers, intending to return to Siffin, but Friday did not appear again and the accursed Ibn Muljam (may Allah curse him) killed him. Consequently, the armies came back and were left like sheep who had lost their shepherd while wolves were snatching them away from all sides.

Sermon 181

Praise be to Allah Who is recognised without being seen and Who creates without trouble. He created the creation with His Might, and receives the devotion of rulers by virtue of His dignity. He exercises superiority over great men through His generosity. It is He who made His creation to populate the world and sent towards the jinn and human beings His messengers to unveil it for them, to warn them of its harm, to present to them its examples, to show them its defects and to place before them a whole collection of matters containing lessons about the changes of health and sickness in this world, its lawful things and unlawful things and all that Allah has ordained for the obedient and the disobedient, namely, Paradise and Hell and honour and disgrace. I extend my praise to His Being as He desires His creation to praise Him. He has fixed for everything a measure, for every measure a time limit, and for every time limit a document.

A part of the same sermon The Quran orders as well as refrains, remains silent and also speaks. It is the proof of Allah before His creation. He has taken from them a pledge (to act) upon it. He has perfected its effulgence, and completed through it His religion. He let the Prophet leave this world when he had conveyed to the people all His commands of guidance through the Quran. You should therefore regard Allah great as he has held Himself great, because He has not concealed anything of His religion from you, nor has He left out anything which He likes or which He dislikes, but He made for it a clear emblem (of guidance) and a definite sign which either refrains from it or calls towards it. His pleasure is the same for all time to come.

You should know that He will not be pleased with you for anything for which He was displeased with those before you, and He will not be displeased with you for anything for which He was pleased with those before you. You are treading on a clear path, and are speaking the same as the people before you had spoken. Allah is enough for your needs in this world. He has persuaded you to remain thankful, and has made it obligatory on you to mention Him with your tongues.

He has advised you to exercise fear and has made it the highest point of His pleasure and all that He requires from His creatures. You should therefore fear Allah, who is such that you are as though just in front of Him, and your forelocks are in His grip, and your change of position is in His control. If you conceal a matter, He will know of it. If you disclose a matter, He will record

it. For this He has appointed honoured guards (angels) who do not omit any rightful matter nor include anything incorrect. You should know that whoever fears Allah, He would make for him a way to get out of troubles and (grant him) a light (to help him) out of darkness. He will ever keep him in whatever condition he wishes, and will make him stay in a position of honour near Himself, in the house which He has made for Himself. The shade of this house is His house is His throne, its light is His effulgence, its visitors are His angels and its companions are His prophets.

Therefore, hasten towards the place of return and go ahead of (your) deaths (with provision for hereafter). Shortly, the expectations of the people will be cut short and death will overtake them while the door of repentance will be closed for them. You are still in a place to which those who were before you have been wishing to return. In this world, which is not your house, you are just a traveller in motion. You have been given the call to leave from here, and you have been ordered to collect provision while you are here. You should know that this thin skin cannot tolerate the Fire . So, have pity on yourselves because you have already tried it in the tribulations of the world.

Have you ever seen the crying of a person who has been pricked with a thorn or who bleeds due to stumbling or whom hot sand has burnt? How would he feel when he is between two frying pans of Hell with stones all round with Satan as his companion? Do you know that when Malik (guard-in-charge of Hell) is angry with the fire, its parts begin to clash with each other (in rage), and, when he scolds it, it leaps between the doors of Hell crying on account of his scolding.

O you old and big whom old age has made hoary, how will you feel when rings of fire will touch the bones of your neck, and handcuffs hold so hard that they eat away the flesh of the forearms? (Fear) Allah ! Allah! O' crowd of men, while you are in good health before sickness (grips you) and you are in ease before straitness (overtakes you). You should try for the release of your necks before their mortgage is foreclosed, your eyes, thin down bellies, use your feet, spend your money, take your bodies and spend them over yourselves, and do not be niggardly about them, because Allah the Glorified, has said:

“If you help (in the way) of Allah, He will (also) help you, and will set firm your feet. (Quran, 47:7) and He, the Sublime. has said:

Who is he who would loan unto Allah a goodly loan? so that He may double it for him, and for him shall be a noble recompense. (Quran, 57:11)

He does not seek your support because of any weakness, nor does He demand a loan from you because of shortage. He seeks your help, although He possesses all the armies of the skies and the earth and He is strong and wise. He seeks a loan from you, although He owns treasures of skies and earth and is rich and praiseworthy. He intends to try you as to which of you performs good acts. You should therefore be quick in performance of (good) acts so

that your way be with His neighbours in His abode; He made His Prophet's companions of these neighbours and made the angels to visit them. He has honoured their ears so that the sound of Hell fire may never reach them, and He has afforded protection to their bodies from weariness and fatigue.

"That is the grace of Allah, He bestows it upon whomsoever He wills; and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace. (Quran, 57:21)

I say you are hearing. I seek Allah's help for myself and yourselves. He is enough for me and He is the best dispenser.

Sermon 182

One of the Kharijites al-Burj ibn Mus'hir at-Ta'i raised the slogan, "Command behoves only Allah" in such a way that Ameerul Momineen n heard it. On hearing it he said:

Keep quiet, Woe of Allah be upon you, O you with broken tooth. Certainly, by Allah, when truth became manifest even then your personality was weak and your voice was loose. But when wrong began to shout loudly you again sprouted up like the horns of a kid.

Sermon 183

Praise be to Allah. He is such that senses cannot perceive Him, place cannot contain Him, eyes cannot see Him and veils cannot cover Him. He proves His eternity by the coming into existence of His creation, and (also) by originating His creation (He proves) His existence, and by their (mutual) similarity He proves that there is nothing similar to Him. He is true in His promise. He is too high to be unjust to His creatures. He stands by equity among His creation and practices justice over them in His commands. He provides evidence through the creation of things of His being from ever, through their marks of incapability of His power, and through their powerlessness against death of His eternity.

He is One, but not by counting. He is everlasting without, any limit. He is existent without any support. Minds admit of Him without (any activity of the) senses. Things which can be seen stand witness to Him without confronting Him. Imagination cannot encompass Him. He manifests Himself to the imagination with his help for the imagination, and refuses to be imagined by the imagination. He has made imagination the arbiter (in this matter). He is not big in the sense that volume is vast and so His body is also big. Nor is He great in the sense that His limits should extend to the utmost and so His frame be extensive. But He is big in position and great in authority.

I stand witness that Muhammad is His slave, His chosen Prophet and His responsible trustee (pbuh) . Allah sent him with undeniable proofs, a clear success and open paths. So he conveyed the message declaring the truth with it. He led the people on the (correct) highway, established signs of guidance and minarets of light, and made Islam's ropes strong and its knots firm.

A part of sermon: Had they pondered over the greatness of His power and the vastness of His bounty they would have returned to the right path and feared the punishment of the Fire; but hearts are sick and eyes are impure. Do they not see the small things He has created, how He strengthened their system and opened for them hearing and sight and made for them bones and skins? Look at the ant with its small body and delicate form. It can hardly be seen in the corner of the eye, nor by the perception of the imagination - how it moves on the earth and leaps at its livelihood. It carries the grain to its hole and deposits it in its place of stay. It collects during the summer for its winter, and during strength for the period of its weakness. Its livelihood is guaranteed, and it is fed according to fitness. Allah, the Kind, does not forget it and does not deprive it, even though it may be in dry stone or fixed rocks.

If you thought about its digestive tracts in its high and low parts, the carapace of its belly, and its eyes and its ears in its head you would be amazed at its creation and you would feel difficulty in describing it. Exalted is He who made it stand on its legs and erected it on its pillars. No other originator took part with Him in its origination and no one having power assisted Him in its creation. If you tread on the paths of your imagination and reach its extremity it will not lead you anywhere except that the Originator of the ant is the same as He who is the Originator of the date-palm, because everything has delicacy and detail, and every living being has little difference.

In His creation, the big, the delicate, the heavy, the light, the strong, the weak are all equal. So is the sky, the air, the winds and the water. Therefore, you look at the sun, moon, vegetation, plants, water, stone, the difference of this night and day, the springing of the streams, the large number of the mountains, the height of their peaks, the diversity of languages and the variety of tongues. Then woe be to him who disbelieves in the Ordainer and denies the Ruler. They believe they are like grass for which there is no cultivator nor any maker for their diverse shapes. They have not relied on any argument for what they assert, nor on any research for what they have heard. Can there be any construction without a Constructor, or any offence without an offender.

If you wish you can tell about the locust (as well). Allah gave it two red eyes, lighted for them two moon -- like pupils, made for it small ears, opened for it a suitable mouth and gave it keen sense, gave it two teeth to cut with and two sickle-like feet to grip with. The farmers are afraid of it in the matter of crops since they cannot drive it away even though they may join together. The locust attacks the fields and satisfies its desires (of hunger) from them although its body is not equal to a thin finger.

Glorified is Allah before Whom every one in the skies or the earth bows in prostration willingly or unwillingly, submits to Him by placing his cheeks and face (in dust), drops before Him (in obedience) peacefully and humbly, and hands over to Him full control in fear and apprehension.

The birds are bound by His commands. He knows the number of their feath-

ers and their breaths. He has made their feet to stand on water and on land. He has ordained their livelihoods. He knows their species: this is the crow, this is the eagle, this is the pigeon and this is the ostrich. He called out every bird with its name (while creating it) and provided it with its livelihood. He created heavy clouds and produced from them heavy rain and spread it on various lands. He drenched the earth after its dryness and grew vegetation from it after its barrenness.

Sermon 184

About Oneness of Allah, containing principles of knowledge which no other sermon contains:

He who assigns to Him (different) conditions does not believe in His oneness, nor does he who likens Him grasp His reality. He who illustrates Him does not signify Him. He who points at Him and imagines Him does not mean Him. Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of other things is the effect (of a cause). He works but not with the help of instruments. He fixes measures but not with the activity of thinking. He is rich but not by acquisition.

Times do not keep company with Him, and implements do not help Him. His Being precedes times. His Existence precedes non-existence and His eternity precedes beginning. By His creating the senses it is known that He has no senses. By the contraries in various matters it is known that He has no contrary, and by the similarity between things it is known that there is nothing similar to Him. He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture and heat that of cold. He produces affection among inimical things.

He fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things and separates things which are joined together. He is not confined by limits, nor counted by numbers. Material parts can surround things of their own kind, and organs can point out things similar to themselves. The word "*mundhu*" (since) disproves their eternity, the word "*qad*" (denotes nearness of time of occurrence), disproves their being from ever and the word "*lawla*" (if it were not) keep them remote from perfection.

Through them the Creator manifests Himself to the intelligence, and through them He is guarded from the sight of the eyes.

Stillness and motion do not occur in Him, and how can that thing occur in Him which He has Himself made to occur, and how can a thing revert to Him which He first created, and how can a thing appear in Him which He first brought to appearance. If it had not been so, His Self would have become subject to diversity, His Being would have become divisible, and His reality would have been prevented from being deemed Eternal. If there was a front to Him there would have been a rear also for Him. He would need completing only if shortage befell Him. In that case signs of the created would appear in Him, and He would become a sign (leading to other objects) instead of

signs leading to Him. Through the might of His abstention (from affectedness) He is far above being affected by things which effect others.

He is that which does not change or vanish. The process of setting does not behove Him. He has not begotten any one lest He be regarded as having been born. He has not been begotten otherwise He would be contained within limits. He is too High to have sons. He is too purified to contact women. Imagination cannot reach Him so as to assign Him quantity. Understanding cannot think of Him so as to give him shape. Senses do not perceive Him so as to feel Him. Hands cannot touch Him so as to rub against Him. He does not change into any condition. He does not pass from one state to another. Nights and days do not turn Him old. Light and darkness do not alter Him.

It cannot be said that He has a limit or extremity, or end or termination; nor do things control Him so as to raise Him or lower Him, nor does anything carry Him so as to bend Him or keep Him erect. He is not inside things nor outside them. He conveys news, but not with the tongue or voice. He listens, but not with the holes of the ears or the organs of hearing. He says, but does not utter words. He remembers, but does not memorise. He determines, but not by exercising His mind. He loves and approves without any sentimentality. He hates and feels angry without painstaking. When He intends to create someone He says "Be" and there he is, but not through a voice that strikes (ears) is that call heard. His speech is an act of His creation. His like never existed before this. If had been eternal it would have been the second god.

It cannot be said He came into being after He had not been in existence because in that case attributes of created things would be assigned to Him and there would remain no difference between them and Him, and He would have no distinction over them. Thus, the Creator and the created would become equal and the initiator and the initiated would be on the same level. He created creation without any example made by someone else, and He did not secure the assistance of any one out of His creation for creating it.

He created the earth and suspended it without being busy, retained it without support, made it stand without legs, raised it without pillars, protected it against bends and curves and defended it against crumbling and splitting. He fixed mountains on it like stumps, solidified its rocks, caused its streams to flow and opened wide its valleys. Whatever He made did not suffer from any flow, and whatever He strengthened did not show weakness.

He manifests Himself over the earth with His authority and greatness. He is aware of its inside through his knowledge and understanding. He has power over every thing in the earth by virtue of His sublimity and dignity. Nothing from the earth that he may ask for defies Him, nor does it oppose Him so as to overpower Him. No swift-footed creature can run away from Him so as to surpass Him. He is not needy towards any possessing person so that he should feed Him. All things bow to Him and are humble before His greatness. They cannot flee away from His authority to someone else in order to escape His benefit or His harm. There is no parallel for Him who may match

Him and no one like Him so as to equal Him.

He will destroy the earth after its existence, till all that exists on it will become non-existent. But the extinction of the world after its creation is no stranger than its first formation and invention. How could it be? Even if all the animals of the earth, whether birds or beasts, stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men -- all jointly try to create (even) a mosquito they are not able to bring it into being and do not understand what is the way to its creation. Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short and fail, and return disappointed and tired, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also realising that they are too weak (even) to destroy it.

Surely, after the extinction of the world, Allah the Glorified will remain alone with nothing else beside Him. He will be, after its extinction, as He was before its production: without time or place or moment or period. At this moment, period and time will not exist, and years and hours will disappear. There will be nothing except Allah, the One, the All-powerful. To Him is the return of all matters. Its initial creation was not in its power; and the prevention of its extinction was not in its power. If it had the power to prevent it, it would have existed for ever. When He made anything of the world, the making of it did not cause Him any difficulty, and the creation of anything which He created and formed did not fatigue Him. He did not create it to heighten His authority nor for fear of loss or harm, nor to seek its help against an overwhelming foe, nor to guard against any avenging opponent with its help, nor for the extension of His domain by its help, nor for boasting against a partner, nor because He felt lonely and desired to seek its company.

Then after its creation He will destroy it, not because any worry has overcome Him in its upkeep and administration, nor for any pleasure that will accrue to Him, nor for cumbrousness of anything over Him. Length of life does not weary Him so to induce Him to quick destruction. But Allah, the Glorified, has maintained it with His kindness, kept it intact with His command and perfected it with His power. Then after destruction, He will resuscitate it, but not for any need of His own towards it, nor to seek assistance of any of things against it, nor to change over from condition of loneliness to that of company, nor from condition of ignorance and blindness to that of knowledge and search, nor from paucity and need towards needlessness and plenty, nor from disgrace and lowliness towards honour and prestige.

Sermon 185

May my father and mother be sacrificed for those few whose names are well-known in the sky and not known on earth. Beware, you should expect what is to befall you such as adversity in your affairs, severance of relations and rising up of inferior people. This will happen when the blow of a sword will be easier for a believer than to secure one Dirham lawfully. This will happen when the reward of a beggar is more than of the giver. This will be when you

are intoxicated, not by drinking, but with wealth and plenty, you are swearing without compulsion and speaking lies without compulsion. This will be when troubles hurt you as the saddle hurts the hump of camels. How long will these tribulations be and how distant the hope (for deliverance)?

O' people, throw away reins of horses who carry on their backs the weight of your hands (sins), do not cut away from your chief (Imam) otherwise you will blame yourself for your own doings. Do not jump in the fire which is in flames in front of you; keep away from its courses and leave middle way for it. Because, by my life, the believer will die in its flames, and others will remain safe in it.

I am among you like a lamp in the darkness. Whoever enters by it will be lit from it. So listen O' men, preserve it and remain attentive with the ears of your hearts so that you may understand.

Sermon 186

I advise you, O people, to fear Allah and to praise Him profusely for His favours to you and His reward for you and His obligations on you. See how He chose you for favours and dealt with you with mercy. You sinned openly; He kept you covered. You behaved in a way to incur His punishment, but He gave you more time.

I also advise you to remember death and lessen your heedlessness towards it. Why should you be heedless of Him Who is not heedless of you? Why expect from him (angel of death) who will not give you time? The dead whom you have been watching suffice as preachers. They were carried to their graves, not riding themselves, and were placed in them, not of their own accord. It seems as if they never lived in this world and if the next world had always been their abode. They made lonely the place where they were living, and now living where they used to feel lonely. They remained busy about what they had to leave, and did not care for where they were to go. Now they cannot remove themselves from evil, nor add to virtues They were attached to the world and it deceived them. They trusted it and it overturned them.

May Allah have pity on you. You should therefore hasten towards (the preparation of) houses which you have been commanded to populate, and towards which you have been called and invited. Seek the completion of Allah's favours on you by exercising endurance in His obedience and abstention from His disobedience, because tomorrow is close to today. How fast are the hours of the day, how fast are the days in the month, how fast are the months in the years and how fast the years in a life.

Sermon 187

One belief is that which is firm and steadfast in hearts, and one is that which remains temporarily in the heart and the breast up to a certain time. If you were to acquit (yourself) before any person, you should wait till death ap-

proaches him, for that is the time limit for being acquitted.

And migration stands as its original position. Allah has no need towards him who secretly accepts belief or him who openly does so. Migration will not apply to any one unless he recognises the proof (of Allah) on the earth. Whoever recognises him and acknowledges him would be *muhajir* (migrant). *Is-tid`af* (freedom from the obligation of immigration) does not apply to him whom the proof (of Allah) reaches and he hears it and his heart preserves it.

Certainly, our case is difficult and complicated. No one can bear it except a believer whose heart Allah has tried with belief. Our traditions will not be preserved except by trustworthy hearts and (men of) solid understanding. O' people! ask me before you miss me, because certainly I am acquainted with the passages of the sky more than the passages of the earth, and before that mischief springs upon its feet which would trample even the nosestring and destroy the wits of the people.

Sermon 188

I praise Him out of gratefulness for His reward, and I seek His assistance in fulfilling His rights. He has a strong army. His dignity is grand. I stand witness that Muhammad (pbuh) is His slave and His Prophet. He called (people) to His obedience and overpowered His enemies by fighting for the sake of His religion. People's joining together to falsify him and their attempt to extinguish His light did not prevent him from it.

You should therefore exercise fear of Allah because it has a rope whose twist is strong and its pinnacle is lofty and invulnerable. Hasten toward death in its pangs (by doing good) and be prepared for it before its approach, because the ultimate end is the Day of Judgement. This is enough preaching for one who understands and enough of a lesson for one who does not know. What idea do you have, before reaching that end, of the narrowness of grave, the hardship of loneliness, fear of the passage towards the next world, the pangs of fear, the shifting of ribs here and there (due to narrowing of the grave), the deafness of ears, the darkness of the grave, fear of the promised punishment, the closing of the receptacle of the grave and the laying of stones?

Therefore, (fear) Allah, (fear) Allah, O' creatures of Allah, because the world is behaving with you in the usual way and you and the Day of Judgement are in the same rope (close). As though it has come with its signs, has approached with its pleas and has made you stand in its way; and as though it has come forward with all its quakings and has settled down with its chest on the ground while the world has parted from its people and has turned them out of its lap. It was like a day that has passed or a month that has gone by. Its new things have become old and the fat ones have become thin.

They are in a narrow place, in very complicated affairs and in a fire whose pain is sharp, cries are loud, flames are rising, sound is trembling, burning is severe, abatement is remote; its fuel is burning, its threats are fearful, its hol-

lows are hidden, its sides are dark, its vessels are aflame, and everything about it is abominable.

And shall be conveyed those who feared (the wrath of) their Lord, in companies unto the garden. . . (Quran. 39:73)

They are safe from chastisement, away from punishment, and kept aloof from fire. Their abode will be peaceful and will be pleased with their longing and place of stay. These are the people whose acts in this world were chaste, eyes were tearful, their nights in this world were like days because of fearing and seeking forgiveness, and their days were like nights because of feeling of loneliness and separation. Therefore, Allah made Paradise the place of their (eventual) return and a reward in recompense.... *They were most eligible and suitable for it;* (Quran, 48:26) in the eternal domain and everlasting favours.

Therefore, O creatures of Allah, pay regard to all that by being regardful of which one will succeed and by ignoring which one will incur loss, and hasten towards your death by means of your (good) acts, because you are bound by what you have done in the past and you have to your credit only what (good acts) you have sent forward. (Behave) as though the feared event (death) has come upon you, so that you cannot return (to do good acts) nor can you be cleared of evil acts. Allah may prompt us and you for His obedience and obedience of His Prophet, and forgive us and you by His great mercy.

Stick to the earth, keep patient in trials, do not move your hands and swords after the liking of your tongues, and do not make haste in matters in which Allah has not asked for haste because any one of you who dies in his bed while he had knowledge of the rights of Allah and the rights of His Prophet and members of the Prophet's house, will die as martyr. His reward is incumbent on Allah. He is also eligible to the recompense of what good acts he has intended to do, since his intention takes the place of drawing his sword. Certainly, for every thing there is a time and a limit.

Sermon 189

Praise be to Allah Whose praise is wide-spread, Whose army is overpowering and Whose dignity is grand. I praise Him for His successive favours and His great gifts. His forbearance is high so that He forgives and is just in whatever He decides. He knows what is going on and what has already passed. He crafted all creation by His knowledge and produced it by His intelligence without limitation, without learning, without following the example of any intelligent producer, without committing any mistake and without the availability of any group (for help); I stand witness that Muhammad - the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants - is His slave and His messenger whom He deputed (at a time) when people were collecting in the abyss and moving in bewilderment. The reins of destruction were dragging them, and the locks of malice lay fixed on their hearts.

I advise you, O creature of Allah, that you should have fear of Allah because

it is a right of Allah over you and it creates your right over Allah, and that you should seek Allah's help in it, and its help in (meeting) Allah. Certainly, for today fear of Allah is a protection and a shield, and for tomorrow (Day of Judgement) it is the road to Paradise. Its way is clear and he who treads it is the gainer. Whoever holds it, guards it. It has presented itself to the people who have already passed and to those coming from behind, because they will need it tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement) when Allah will revive His creation again, take back what He has given and take account of what He has bestowed. How few will be those who accept it and practise it as it ought to be practised. They will be very few in number, and they are the people who correspond to the description given by Allah, the Glorified, when He says:

... *And very few of My creatures are grateful!* (Quran. 34:13)

Therefore, hasten with ears towards it and intensify efforts for it. Make it a substitute for all your past (shortcomings) to take their place as a successor, and make it your supporter against every opponent. Turn your sleep into wakefulness by its help, and pass your days with it. Make it the equipment of your hearts, wash sins with it, treat ailments with it and hasten towards your death with it. Take a lesson from him who neglects it, so others who follow it should not take a lesson from you (from your neglecting it). Beware, therefore; you should take care of it and should take care of yourselves through it.

Keep away from this world and proceed towards the next world infatuatedly. Do not regard humble he whom fear Allah has given a high position, and do not accord a high position to him whom this world has given a high position. Do not keep your eyes on the shining clouds of the world, do not listen to him who speaks of it, do not respond to him who calls towards it, do not seek light from its glare, and do not die in its precious things, because its brightness is deceitful, its words are false, its wealth is liable to be looted, and its precious things are to be taken away.

Beware, this world attracts and then turns away. It is stubborn, refusing to go ahead. It speaks lies and misappropriates. It disowns and is ungrateful. It is malicious and abandons (its lovers). It attracts but causes trouble. Its condition is changing, its step shaking, its honour disgrace, its seriousness jest, and its height lowliness. It is a place of plunder and pillage, and ruin and destruction. Its people are ready with their feet to drive, to overtake and to depart. Its routes are bewildering, its exits are baffling, and its schemes end in disappointment. Consequently, strongholds betray them, houses throw them out and cunning fails them.

Some of them are like hocked camel, some like butchered meat, some like severed limbs, some like spilt blood, some are biting their hands (in pain) some are rubbing their palms (in remorse), some are holding their cheeks on their hands (in anxiety), some are cursing their own views and some are retreating from their determination. But the time for action has gone away and the hour of calamity has approached, *while* (there was no longer) *the time to escape* (Quran, 38:3). Alas! Alas! what has been lost is lost! what has gone is

gone! The world has passed in its usual manner.

So wept not on them the heavens and the earth nor were they respited.
(Quran, 44:29)

Sermon 190

Known as "Khutbah al-Qasi'ah" (Sermon of Disparagement). (It comprises disparagement of Satan for his vanity and his refusing to prostrate before Adam and his being the first to display bigotry and act through vanity; it comprises warning to people treading in Satan's path)

Praise be to Allah who wears the apparel of Honour and Dignity and has chosen them for Himself instead of for His creation. He has made them inaccessible and unlawful for others. He has selected them for His own great self, and has hurled a curse on him who contests with Him concerning them. Then He put His angels on trial concerning these attributes in order to distinguish those who are modest from those who are vain. Therefore, Allah, who is aware of whatever is hidden in the hearts and whatever lies behind the unseen said:

"Verily I am about to create man from clay," And when I have completed and have breathed into him of My spirit, then fall ye prostrating in obeisance unto him. And did fall prostrating in obeisance the angels all together, Save Iblis;... (Quran. 38:71-74)

His vanity stood in his way. Consequently, he felt proud over Adam by virtue of his creation and boasted over him on account of his origin. Thus, this enemy of Allah is the leader of those who boast, and the fore-runner of the vain. It is he who laid the foundation of factionalism, quarrelled with Allah about the robe of greatness, put on the dress of haughtiness and took off the covering of humility. Do you not see how Allah made him low on account of his vanity and humiliated him for his feigning to be high? He discarded him in this world and provided for him burning fire in the next world.

If Allah had wanted to create Adam from a light whose glare would have dazzled the eyes, whose handsomeness would have amazed the wits and whose smell would have caught the breath, He could have done so; and if He had done so, people would have bowed to him in humility and the trial of the angels through him would have become easier. But Allah, the Glorified, tries His creatures by means of those things whose real nature they do not know in order to distinguish good and bad for them through the trial, and to remove vanity from them and keep them and keep them aloof from pride and self-admiration.

You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Para-

dise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him license for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.

Therefore, fear lest Satan infects you with his disease, or leads you astray through his call, or marches on you with his horsemen and footmen, because, by my life, he has put the arrow in the bow for you, has stretched the bow strongly, and has aimed at you from a nearby position, and:

"He (Satan) said: "My Lord! Because You have left me to stray, certainly will I adorn unto them the path of error, and certainly will I cause them all to go astray." (Quran, 15:39)

Although he (Satan) had said so only by guessing about the unknown future and by wrong conjecturing, yet sons of vanity, brothers of haughtiness and horsemen of pride and intolerance proved him to be true, so much so that when disobedient persons from among you bowed before him, and his greed about you gained strength; and what was a hidden secret turned into a clear fact, he spread full control over you and marched with forces towards you.

Then they pushed you into the hollows of disgrace, threw you into the whirlpools of slaughter, and trampled you, wounding you by striking your eyes with spears, cutting your throats, tearing your nostrils, breaking your limbs and taking you in ropes of control towards the fire already prepared. In this way he became more harmful to your religion and a greater kindler of flames (of mischief) about your worldly matters than the enemies against whom you showed open opposition and against whom you marched your forces.

You should therefore spend all your force against him, and all your efforts against him, because, by Allah, he boasted over your (Adam's) origin, questioned your position and spoke lightly of your lineage. He advanced on you with his army, and brought his footmen towards your path. They are chasing you from every place, and they are hitting you at every finger joint. You are not able to defend by any means, nor can you repulse them by any determination. You are in the thick of disgrace, the ring of difficulty, the field of death and the way of distress.

You should therefore put out fires of haughtiness and flames of intolerance hidden in your hearts. This vanity can exist in a Muslim only by 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. Adopt humility as the weapon between you and your enemy, Satan and his forces. He certainly has, from every people, fighters, helpers, footmen and horsemen. Do not be like him who feigned superiority over son of his own mother without any distinction given to him by Allah except feeling of envy which his feeling of greatness created in him and the fire of anger that vanity kindled in his heart. Satan blew into

his nose his own vanity, after which Allah gave him remorse and made him responsible for the sins of all killers up to the Day of Judgement.

Beware! You strove hard in revolting and created mischief on the earth in open opposition to Allah and in challenging the believers over fighting. (Fear) Allah! Allah! In feeling proud of your vanity and boasting over ignorance, because this is the root of enmity and the design of Satan wherewith he has been deceiving past people and bygone ages, with the result that they fell into the gloom of his ignorance and the hollows of his misguidance, submitting to his driving and accepting his leadership. In this matter the hearts of all the people were similar, and centuries passed by, one after the other, in just the same way, and there was vanity with which chests were tightened.

Beware! Beware of obeying your leaders and elders who felt proud of their achievements and boasted about their lineage. They hurled the (liability for) things on Allah and quarrelled with Allah in what He did with them, contesting His decree and disputing His favours. Certainly, they are the main foundation of obstinacy, the chief pillars of mischief and the swords of pre-Islamic boasting over fore-fathers. Therefore, fear Allah, do not become antagonistic to His favours on you, nor jealous of His bounty over you and do not obey the claimants (of Islam) whose dirty water you drink along with your clean one, whose ailments you mix with your healthiness and whose wrongs you allow to enter into your rightful matters.

They are the foundation of vice and the linings of disobedience. Satan has made them carriers of misguidance and the soldiers with whom he attacks men. They are interpreters through whom he speaks in order to steal away your wits, enter into your eyes and blow into your ears. In this way he makes you the victim of his arrows, the treading ground of his footsteps and source of strength for his hands. Take instruction from how he brought Allah's wrath, violence, chastisement and punishment on those who were vain among the past people. Take admonition from their lying on their cheeks and falling on their sides, and seek Allah's protection from the dangers of vanity, as you seek His protection from calamities.

Certainly, if Allah were to allow anyone to indulge in pride He would have allowed it to his selected prophets and vicegerents. But Allah, the Sublime, disliked vanity for them and liked humbleness for them. Therefore, they laid their cheeks on the ground, smeared their faces with dust, bent themselves down for the believers and remained humble. Allah tried them with hunger, afflicted them with difficulty, tested them with fear, and upset them with troubles. Therefore, do not regard wealth and progeny the criteria for Allah's pleasure and displeasure, as you are unaware of chances of mischief and trials during richness and power as Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, has said:

What! Think they that what We aid them with of wealth and children, We are hastening unto them the good things? Nay! they perceive not. (Quran, 23:55-56)

Certainly, Allah the Glorified, tries His creatures who are vain about themselves through His beloved persons who are humble in their eyes. When Musa, son of Imran, went to Pharaoh along with his brother Harun (Aaron) wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding sticks in their hands, they guaranteed him retention of his country and continuity of his honour if he submitted; but he said: "Do you not wonder at these two men guaranteeing me the continuity of my honour and the retention of my country although you see their poverty and lowliness. Otherwise, why do they not have gold bangles on their wrists?" He said so feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions, and considering wool and its cloth as nothing.

When Allah, the Glorified, deputed His prophets, if He had wished to open for them treasures and mines of gold and (surround with) planted gardens and to collect around them birds of the skies and beasts of the earth, He could have done so. If He had done so then there would have been no trial, nor recompense and no tidings (about the next world). Those who accepted (His message) could not be given the recompense falling due after trial and the believers could not deserve the reward for good acts, and all these words would not have retained their meanings. But Allah, the Glorified, makes His Prophets firm in their determination and gives them weakness of appearance as seen from the eyes, along with contentment that fills the hearts and eyes resulting from care-freeness, and with want that pains the eyes and ears.

If the prophets possessed authority that could not be assaulted, or honour that could not be damaged or domain towards which the necks of people would turn and the saddles of mounts could be set, it would have been very easy for people to seek lessons and quite difficult to feel vanity. They would have then accepted belief out of fear felt by them or inclination attracting them, and the intention of them all would have been the same, although their actions would have been different. Therefore, Allah, the Glorified decided that people should follow His prophets, acknowledge His books, remain humble before His face, obey His command and accept His obedience with sincerity in which there should not be an iota of anything else; and as the trial and tribulation would be stiffer the reward and recompense too should be larger.

Do you not see that Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, until the last ones in this world with stones which yield neither benefit nor harm, which neither see nor hear. He made those stones into His sacred house which He made a standby for the people. He placed it in the most rugged stony part of the earth and on a highland with least soil thereon, among the most narrow valleys between rough mountains. soft sandy plains, springs of scanty water and scattered habitants, where neither camels nor horses nor cows and sheep can prosper.

Then He commanded Adam and his sons to turn their attention towards it. In this way it became the centre of their journey in seeking pastures and the rendezvous for meeting of their carrier-beasts, so that human spirits hasten towards it from distant waterless deserts, deep and low lying valleys and scattered islands in the seas. They shake their shoulders in humbleness, recite the

slogan of having reached His audience, march with swift feet, and have dishevelled hair and dusted faces. They throw their pieces of cloth on their backs, they have marred the beauty of their faces by leaving the hair uncut as a matter of great test, severe tribulation, open trial, and extreme refining. Allah has made it a means to His mercy and an approach to His Paradise.

If Allah, the Glorified, had placed His sacred House and His great signs among plantations, streams, soft and level plains, plenty of trees, an abundance of fruits, a thick population, close habitats, golden wheat, lush gardens, green land, watered plains, thriving orchards and crowded streets, the amount of recompense would have decreased because of the lightness of the trial. If the foundation on which the House is borne and the stones with which it has been raised had been of green emerald and red rubies, and there had been brightness and effulgence, then this would have lessened the action of doubts in the breasts, would have dismissed the effect of Satan's activity from the hearts, and would have stopped the surging of misgivings in people. But Allah tries His creatures by means of different troubles, wants them to render worship through hardships and involves them in distresses, all in order to extract out vanity from their hearts, to settle down humbleness in their spirits and to make all this an open door for His favours and an easy means for His forgiveness (for their sins).

(Fear) Allah! Allah! From immediate consequence of rebellion (to accrue in this world), and eventual consequence of weighty oppressiveness (to accrue in the next world, and from evil result of vanity, because it is the great trap of Satan and his big deceit which enters hearts of the people like a fatal poison. It never goes waste, nor misses anyone - neither the learned because of his knowledge, nor the destitute in rags. This is the thing against which Allah has protected His creatures who are believers by prayers, and alms-giving, and suffering the hardship of fasting in the days in which it has been made obligatory, in order to give their limbs peacefulness, to cast fear in their eyes, to make their spirits humble, to give their hearts humility and to remove haughtiness from them. All this is achieved through the covering of their delicate cheeks with dust in humility, prostrating their main limbs on the ground in humbleness, and retracting of their bellies so as to reach to their backs due to fasting by way of lowliness (before Allah), besides giving all sorts of products of the earth to the needy and the destitute by way of alms.

Look what there is in these acts by way of curbing the appearance of pride and suppressing the traces of vanity. I cast my glance and noticed that no one in the world, except you, feels vanity for anything without a cause which may appeal to the ignorant, or a reason which may cling to the minds of the foolish, because you feel vanity for something for which no reason is discernible, nor any ground.

As for Satan, he felt proud over Adam because of his origin and taunted at him about his creation, since he said "I am of fire while you are of clay." In the same way the rich among the prosperous communities have been feeling vanity because of their riches, as (Allah) said:

And said they: "We are more (than you) in wealth and in children, and we shall not be chastised." (Quran, 34:35)

In case you cannot avoid vanity, your vanity should be for good qualities, praiseworthy acts, and admirable matters with which dignified and noble chiefs of the Arab families distinguished themselves, as attractive manners, high thinking, respectable position and good performances. You too should show vanity in praiseworthy habits like protection of the neighbour, fulfilment of agreements, obedience to the virtuous, opposition to the haughty, extending generosity to others, abstention from rebellion, keeping aloof from blood-shed, doing justice to people, suppressing anger and avoiding trouble on earth. You should also fear what calamities befell peoples before you on account of 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 the conditions of these people, attach yourself to everything with which their position became honourable, 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 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. 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 honour and fear into safety. Consequently, they became ruling kings and conspicuous leaders. and Allah's favours over them reached limits to which their own wishes had not reached.

Look, how they were when their groups were united, 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 themselves. Then Allah took away from them the apparel of His honour and deprived them of the

prosperity produced by His favours. 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 Ismael, the children of Isaac and the children of Israel. 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 Kisras of Persia and the Caesars of Rome had 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 repose 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 various favours 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. (Look) how (Allah's) bounty spread the wings of its favours over them and flowed for them streams of its blessing, and the whole community became wrapped in blissful prosperity. Consequently, they were submerged under its bounty and enjoyed its lush life. Their affairs were settled under the protection of a powerful ruler, and circumstances offered them overpowering honour, and all things became easy for them under the auspices of a strong country. They became rulers over the world and kings in the parts of the earth. They became masters of those who were formerly their masters, and began issuing commands over those who used to command them. They were so strong that neither did their spears need testing nor did their weapons have any flaw.

Beware! You have shaken your hands loose from the rope of obedience, and broken the divine fort around you by pre-Islamic rules. Certainly, it is a great blessing of Allah, the Glorified, that He has engendered among them unity through the cord of affection in whose shade they walk and take shelter. This is a blessing whose value no one in the whole world realises, because it is more valuable than any price and higher than any wealth.

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. You say, "The Fire yes. but no shameful position," as if you would throw down Islam on its face in order to defame its honour and break its pledge (for brotherhood) which Allah gave you as a sacred trust on His earth and peace among the people. Be sure if you incline towards anything other than Islam. 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 asking others to do good acts and refraining them from bad acts. In fact Allah cursed the foolish for committing sins and the wise because they gave up refraining others from evils. Beware! You have broken the shackles of Islam, have transgressed its limits, and have destroyed its commands.

Beware! surely Allah has commanded me to fight those who revolt, or who break the pledge, or create trouble on the earth. As regards pledge-breakers, I have fought them, as regards deviators from truth, I have waged holy war against them, and as regards those who have gone out of the faith, I have put them in (serious) disgrace. As for Satan of the pit, he too has been dealt with by me through the loud cry with which the scream of his heart and shaking of his chest was also heard. Only a small portion of the rebels has remained. If Allah allows me one more chance over them I will annihilate them except a few remnants that may remain scattered in the suburb of the cities.

Even in my boyhood I had lowered the chest of (famous men) of Arabia, and broken the horn points (defeated chiefs) of tribes of Rabee and Mudar. Certainly, you know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Prophet of Allah (pbuh). When I was only a child he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and lay me beside him in his bed, bring his body close to mine and make me smell his smell. He used to chew something and then feed me with it. He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in any act.

From the time of his weaning, Allah had put a mighty angel with him to take him along the path of high character and good behaviour through day and night, while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it. Every year he used to go in seclusion to the hill of Hira, where I saw him but no one else saw him. In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) and Khadija, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and breathed the scent of Prophethood.

When the revelation descended on the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) I heard the moan of Satan. I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, what is this moan?" and he replied, "This is Satan who has lost all hope of being worshipped. O' `Ali, you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a Prophet, but you are a vicegerent and you are surely on (the path of) virtue."

I was with him when a party of the Quraysh came and said to him, "O' Muhammad, you have made a big claim which none of your forefathers or those of your family have made. We ask you one thing; if you give us an answer to it and show it to us, we will believe that you are a prophet and a messenger, but if you cannot do it, we will know that you are a sorcerer and a liar."

The Messenger of Allah said: "What do you ask for?" They said: "Ask this tree to move for us, even with its roots, and stop before you." The Prophet said, "Verily, Allah has power over everything. If Allah does it for you, will you then believe and stand witness to the truth?" They said "Yes". Then he said, "I shall show you whatever you want, but I know that you won't bend towards virtue, and there are among you those who will be thrown into the pit, and those who will form parties (against me)." Then the Holy Prophet said: "O' tree, if you do believe in Allah and the Day of Judgement, and know that I am the Prophet of Allah, come up with your roots and stand before me with the permission of Allah." By Him who deputed the Prophet with truth, the tree did remove itself with its root and came with a great humming sound and a flapping like the flapping of the wings of birds, till it stopped before the Messenger of Allah while some of its twigs came down onto my shoulders, and I was on the right side of the Holy Prophet.

When the people saw this they said by way of pride and vanity. "Now you order half of it to come to you and the other half of it remain (in its place)." The Holy Prophet ordered the tree to do the same. Then half of the tree advanced towards him in an amazing manner and with greater humming. It was about to touch the Prophet of Allah. Then they said, disbelieving and revolting, "Ask this half to get back to its other half and be as it was." The Prophet ordered it and it returned. Then I said, "O' Prophet of Allah, I am the first to believe in you and to acknowledge that the tree did what it did just now with the command of Allah, the Sublime, in testimony to your Prophethood and to heighten your word. Upon this all the people shouted, "Rather a sorcerer, a liar; it is wonderful sorcery, he is very adept in it. Only a man like this (pointing to me) can stand testimony to you in your affairs."

Certainly, I belong to the group of people who care not for the reproach of anybody in matters concerning Allah. Their countenance is the countenance of the truthful and their speech is the speech of the virtuous. They are wakeful during the nights (in devotion to Allah), and over beacons (of guidance) in the day. They hold fast to the rope of the Quran. revive the traditions of Allah and of His Prophet. They do not boast nor indulge in self conceit, nor misappropriate, nor create mischief. Their hearts are in Paradise while their bodies are busy in (good) acts.

Sermon 191

It is related that a companion of Imam called Hammam (a man devoted to worship) said to him, "O' Imam, describe to me the pious man in such a way as though I see them." Imam avoided the reply and said, "O' Hammam, fear Allah and perform good acts because 'Verily, Allah is with those who guard (against evil), and those who do good "' (Quran, 16:128). Ham-

mam was not satisfied with this and pushed him to speak. Thereupon, Imam praised Allah and extolled Him and sought His blessings on the Holy Prophet and then spoke:

Now then, Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, created (things of) creation. He created them without any need for their obedience or being safe from their sinning, because the sin of anyone who sins does not harm Him nor does the obedience of anyone who obeys Him benefit Him. He has distributed among them their livelihood, and has assigned them their positions in the world.

Thus, the God-fearing, in it are the people of distinction. Their speech is to the point, their dress is moderate and their gait is humble. They keep their eyes closed to what Allah has made unlawful for them, and they put their ears to that knowledge which is beneficial to them. They remain in the time of trials as though they remain in comfort. If there had not been fixed periods (of life) ordained for each, their spirits would not have remained in their bodies even for the twinkling of an eye because of (their) eagerness for the reward and fear of chastisement. The greatness of the Creator is seated in their heart, and, so, everything else appears small in their eyes. Thus to them Paradise is as though they see it and are enjoying its favours. To them, Hell is also as if they see it and are suffering punishment in it.

Their hearts are grieved, they are protected against evils, their bodies are thin, their needs are scanty, and their souls are chaste. They endured (hardship) for a short while, and in consequence they secured comfort for a long time. It is a beneficial transaction that Allah made easy for them. The world aimed at them, but they did not aim at it. It captured them, but they freed themselves from it by a ransom.

During a night they are upstanding on their feet reading portions of the Quran and reciting it in a well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate themselves on their foreheads, their palms, their knees and their toes, and beseech Allah, the Sublime, for their deliverance. During the day they are enduring, learned, virtuous and God-fearing. Fear has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them he believes they are sick, although they are not sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern has made them mad.

They are not satisfied with their meagre good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deeds. When anyone of them is spoken of highly, he says: "I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know. O' Allah do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know."

The peculiarity of anyone of them is that you will see that he has strength in

religion, determination along with leniency, faith with conviction, eagerness in (seeking) knowledge in forbearance, moderation in riches, devotion in worship, gracefulness in starvation, endurance in hardship, desire for the lawful, pleasure in guidance and hatred from greed. He performs virtuous deeds but still feels afraid. In the evening he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning his anxiety is to remember (Allah). He passes the night in fear and rises in the morning in joy - fear lest night is passed in forgetfulness, and joy over the favour and mercy received by him. If his self refuses to endure a thing which it does not like he does not grant its request towards what it likes. The coolness of his eye lies in what is to last for ever, while from the things (of this world) that will not last he keeps aloof. He transfuses knowledge with forbearance, and speech with action.

You will see his hopes simple, his shortcomings few, his heart fearing, his spirit contented, his meal small and simple, his religion safe, his desires dead and his anger suppressed. Good alone is expected from him. Evil from him is not to be feared. Even if he is found among those who forget (Allah) he is counted among those who remember (Him), but if he is among the rememberers he is not counted among the forgetful. He forgives him who is unjust to him, and he gives to him who deprives him. He behaves well with him who behaves ill with him.

Indecent speech is far from him, his utterance is lenient, his evils are non-existent his virtues are ever present, his good is ahead and mischief has turned its face (from him). He is dignified during calamities, patient in distresses, and thankful during ease. He does not commit excess over him whom he hates, and does not commit sin for the sake of him whom he loves. He admits truth before evidence is brought against him. He does not misappropriate what is placed in his custody, and does not forget what he is required to remember. He does not call others bad names, he does not cause harm to his neighbour, he does not feel happy at others misfortunes, he does not enter into wrong and does not go out of right.

If he is silent his silence does not grieve him, if he laughs he does not raise his voice, and if wronged he endures till Allah takes revenge on his behalf. His own self is in distress because of him, while the people are in ease from him. He puts himself in hardship for the sake of his next life, and makes people feel safe from himself. His keeping away from others is by way of asceticism and purification, and his nearness to those to whom he is near is by way of leniency and mercifulness. His keeping away is not by way of vanity or feeling of greatness, nor his nearness by way of deceit and cheating.

It is related that Hammam passed into a deep swoon and then expired. Then Imam said: Verily, by Allah I had this fear about him. Then he added: Effective advices produce such effects on receptive minds. Someone said to him: O' Ameerul Momineen how is it you do not receive such an effect? Imam replied: Woe to you. For death there is a fixed hour which cannot be exceeded, and a cause which does not change. Now look, never repeat such talk which Satan had put on your tongue.

Sermon 192

About the hypocrites

We praise Allah for the succour He has given us in carrying out His obedience and in preventing us from disobedience, and we ask Him to complete His favours (to us) and to make us hold on to His rope. We stand witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger. He entered every hardship in search of Allah's pleasure and endured for its sake every grief. His near relations changed themselves for him and those who were remote from him (in relationship) united against him. The Arabs let loose the reins (of their horses to quicken their march) against him, and struck the bellies of their carriers to (rouse them) in fighting against him, so much so that enemies came to his threshold from the remotest places and most distant areas.

I advise you, O creatures of Allah, to fear Allah and I warn you of the hypocrites, because they are themselves misguided and misguide others, and they have slipped and make others slip too. They change into many colours, and adopt various ways. They support you with all sorts of supports, and lay in waiting for you at every lookout. Their hearts are diseased while their faces are clean. They walk stealthily and tread like the approach of sickness (over the body). Their words speak of cure, but their acts are like incurable diseases. They are jealous of ease, intensify distress, and destroy hopes. Their victims are found lying down on every path, while they have means to approach every heart and they have (false) tears for every grief.

They eulogise each other and expect reward from each other. When they ask something they insist on it, if they reprove (any one) they disgrace (him), and if they pass verdict they commit excess. They have adopted for every truth a wrong way, for every erect thing a bender, for every living being a killer, for every (closed) door a key and for every night a lamp. They covet, but with despair, in order to maintain with it their markets, and to popularise their handsome merchandise. When they speak they create doubts. When they describe they exaggerate. First they offer easy paths but (afterwards) they make them narrow. In short, they are the party of Satan and the stings of fire.

“Satan has gained hold on them, so he makes them forget the remembrance of Allah; they are Satan's Party; Beware! verily, the party of Satan are the losers. (Quran, 58:19)

Sermon 193

Praise be to Allah who has displayed such effects of His authority and the glory of His sublimity through the wonders of His might that they dazzle the pupils of the eyes and prevent the minds from appreciating the reality of His attributes. I stand witness that there is no god but Allah by virtue of belief, certainty, sincerity and conviction. I also stand witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet whom He deputed when the signs of guidance

were obliterated and the ways of religion were desolate. So, he threw open the truth, gave advice to the people, guided them towards righteousness and ordered them to be moderate. May Allah bless him and his descendants.

Know, Creatures of Allah, He has not created you for nought and has not left you free. He knows the extent of His favours over you and the quantity of His bounty towards you. Therefore, ask Him for success and for attainment of aims. Beg before Him and seek His generosity. No curtain hides you from Him, nor is any door closed before you against Him. He is at every place, in every moment and every instance. He is with every man and *jinn*. Giving does not create any breach in Him. Gifting does not cause Him diminution. A beggar cannot exhaust Him and paying (others) cannot take Him to the end.

One person cannot turn His attention from another, one voice does not detract Him from another voice, and one grant of favour does not prevent Him from refusing another favour. Anger does not prevent Him from mercy, mercy does not prevent Him from punishing; His concealment does not hide His manifestness and His manifestness does not prevent Him from concealment. He is near and at the same time distant. He is high and at the same time low. He is manifest and also concealed. He is concealed yet well-known. He lends but is not lent anything. He has not created (the things of) creation after devising, nor did He take their assistance on account of fatigue.

I advise you, O creatures of Allah, to have fear of Allah, for it is the rein and the mainstay (of religion). Hold fast to its salient points, keep hold of its realities. It will take you to abodes of easiness, places of comfort, fortresses of safety and houses of honour on *the Day* (of Judgement) *when eyes will be wide open*, (Quran, 14:42), when there will be darkness all round, when small groups of camels pregnant for ten months will be allowed free grazing, and when the Horn will be blown, then every living being will die, every voice will become dumb the high mountains and hard rocks will crumble (to pieces) so that their hard stones will turn into moving sand and their bases will become level. (On that day) there will be no interceder to intercede and no relation to ward off (trouble), and no excuse will be of avail.

Sermon 194

Allah deputed the Prophet when no sign of guidance existed, no beacon was giving light and no passage was clear. I advise you, O' creatures of Allah, to have fear of Allah, and I warn you of this world which is a house from which departure is inevitable and a place of discomfort. He who lives in it has to depart, and he who stays here has to leave it. It is drifting with its people like a boat whom severe winds dash (here and there) in the deep sea. Some of them get drowned and die, while some of them escape on the surface of the waves, where winds push them with their currents and carry them towards their dangers. So, whatever is drowned cannot be restored, and whatever escapes is on the way to destruction.

O creatures of Allah, you should know now that you have to perform (good) acts, because (at present) your tongues are free, your bodies are healthy, your limbs have movement, the area of your coming and going is vast and the course of your running is wide; before the loss of opportunity or the approach of death. Take death's approach as an accomplished fact and do not think it will come (hereafter).

Sermon 195

Those companions of Muhammad - peace be upon him and his progeny - who were the custodians (of divine messages) know that I never disobeyed Allah or His Messenger (pbuh) at all, and by virtue of the courage with which Allah honoured me I supported him with my life on occasions when even the brave turned away and feet remained behind (instead of proceeding forward).

When the Prophet (pbuh) died his head was on my chest, and his (last) breath blew over my palms and I passed it over my face. I performed his (funeral) ablution, and the angels helped me. The house and the courtyard were full of them.

One party of them was descending and the other was ascending. My ears continually caught their humming voice, as they invoked Allah's blessing on him, till we buried him in his grave. Thus, who can have greater rights with him than I during his life or after his death? Therefore depend on your intelligence and make your intentions pure in fighting your enemy, because I swear by Him who is such that there is no god but He, that I am on the path of truth and that they (the enemy) are on the misleading path of wrong. You hear what I say; and I seek Allah's forgiveness for myself and for you.

Sermon 196

Allah knows the cries of the beasts in the forest, the sins of the people in seclusion, the movements of the fishes in the deep seas and the rising of the water by tempestuous winds. I stand witness that Muhammad is the choice of Allah, the conveyor of His revelation and the messenger of His mercy.

Now, I advise you to fear Allah, Who created you for the first time; towards Him is your return, with Him lies the success of your aims, at Him terminate your desires, towards Him runs your path of right and He is the aim of your fears (for seeking protection). Certainly, fear of Allah is the medicine for your hearts, sight for the blindness of your spirits, the cure for the ailments of your bodies, the rectifier of the evils of your breasts, the purifier of the pollution of your minds, the light of the darkness of your eyes, the consolation for the fear of your heart and the brightness for the gloom of your ignorance.

Therefore, make obedience to Allah the way of life and not only your outside covering, make it inner habit instead of only outer routine, subtle enough to

enter through your ribs (to heart), the guide for all your affairs, the watering place for your getting down (Judgement Day), the interceder for the achievement of your aims, asylum for the day of your fear, the lamp of the interior of your graves, company for your long loneliness, and deliverance from the troubles of your abodes. Certainly, obedience to Allah is a protection against encircling calamities. expected dangers and the flames of burning fires.

Therefore, whoever entertains fear of Allah, troubles remain away from him after having been near, affairs become sweet after their bitterness, waves (of troubles) recede from him after having crowded over him, difficulties become easy for him after occurring, generosity rains fast over him after there had been famine, mercy bends over him after it had been loath, the favours (of Allah) spring forth on him after they had been dried, and blessing descends over him in showers after being scanty. So, fear Allah Who benefits you with His good advice, preaches to you through His Messenger, and obliges you with His favours. Devote yourselves to His worship, and acquit yourselves of the obligation of obeying Him.

This Islam is the religion which Allah has chosen for Himself, developed before His eyes, preferred as the best among His creations, established its pillars on His love. He has disgraced other religions by giving honour to it. He has humiliated all communities before its sublimity; He has humbled its enemies with His kindness and made its opponents lonely by according it His support. He has smashed pillars of misguidance with its columns. He has quenched the thirst of the thirsty from its cisterns, and filled the cisterns through those who draw its water.

He made Islam such that its constituent parts cannot break, its links cannot separate, its construction cannot fall, its columns cannot decay, its plant cannot be uprooted, its time does not end, its laws do not expire, its twigs cannot be cut, its parts do not become narrow, its ease does not change into difficulty, its clarity is not affected by gloom, its straightness does not acquire curvature, its wood has no crookedness, its vast paths have no narrowness, its lamp knows no putting off and its sweetness has no bitterness.

It consists of columns whose bases Allah has fixed in truthfulness and whose foundation He has strengthened, and of sources whose streams are ever full of water and of lamps, whose flames are full of light, and of beacons with whose help travellers get guidance, and of signs through which a way is found to its highways and of watering places which provide water to those who come to them. Allah has placed in Islam the height of His pleasure, the pinnacle of His pillars and the prominence of His obedience. Before Allah, therefore, its columns are strong, its construction is lofty, its proofs are bright, its fires are aflame, its authority is strong, its beacons are high and its destruction is difficult. You should therefore honour it, follow it, fulfil its obligations and accord the position due to it.

Then, Allah, the Glorified, deputed Muhammad (pbuh) with truth at a time when the destruction of the world was near and the next life was at hand,

when its brightness was turning into gloom after shining, it had become troublesome for inhabitants, its surface had become rough, and decay had approached near. This was during the exhaustion of its life at approach of signs (of decay), the ruin of its inhabitants, the breaking of its links, the dispersal of its affairs, the decay of its signs, the divulging of its secret matters and the shortening of its length. Allah made him responsible for conveying His message and honour for his people, a period of bloom for the men of his days, a source of dignity for the supporters and an honour for his helpers.

Then, Allah sent to him the Book as a light whose flames cannot be extinguished, a lamp whose gleam does not die, a sea whose depth cannot be sounded, a way whose direction does not mislead, a ray whose light does not darken, a separator (of good from evil) whose arguments do not weaken, a clarifier whose foundations cannot be dismantled, a cure which leaves no apprehension for disease, an honour whose supporters are not defeated, and a truth whose helpers are not abandoned. Therefore, it is the mine of belief and its centre, the source of knowledge and its oceans, the plantation of justice and its pools, the foundation stone of Islam and its construction, the valleys of truth and its plains, an ocean which those who draw water cannot empty, springs which those who draw water cannot dry up, a watering place which those who come to take water cannot exhaust, a staging place in moving towards which travellers do not get lost, signs which no trader fails to see and a highland which those who approach it cannot surpass it.

Allah has made it a quencher of the thirst of the learned, a bloom for the hearts of religious jurists, a highway for the ways of the righteous, a cure after which there is no ailment, an effulgence with which there is no darkness, a rope whose grip is strong, a stronghold whose top is invulnerable, an honour for him who loves it, a peace for him who enters it, a guidance for him who follows it, an excuse for him who adopts it, an argument for him who argues with it, a witness for him who quarrels with it, a success for him who argues with it, a carrier of burden for him who seeks the way, a shield for him who arms himself (against misguidance), a knowledge for him who listens carefully, worthy story for him who relates it and a final verdict of him who passes judgements.

Sermon 197

Containing advice given by Ameerul Momineen to his companions.

Pledge yourself with prayer and remain steady on it; offer prayer as much as possible and seek nearness through it, because it is *upon the believers as timed ordinance* (Quran 4:103). Have you not heard the reply of people of Hell when they were asked: *What has brought you into the hell? They shall say: We were not of those who offered the regular prayers!* (Quran, 74:42-43). Certainly, prayer drops out sins like the dropping of leaves (of trees), and removes them as ropes are removed from the necks of cattle. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) likened it to a hot bath situated at the door of a person who

bathes in it five times a day. Will then any dirt remain on him?

Its obligation is recognised by those believers whom neither the adornment of property nor the coolness of the eyes produced by children can turn away from it. Allah, the Glorified, says:

Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverted from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate; (Quran. 24:37)

Even after receiving assurance of Paradise, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to exert himself for prayers because of Allah, the Glorified's command. *And enjoin prayer on thy followers, and adhere thou steadily unto it,* (Quran, 20:132).

Then the Holy Prophet used to enjoin his followers to prayer and exert himself for it. Then Islamic tax has been laid down along with prayer as a sacrifice (offered) by the people of Islam. Whoever pays it by way of purifying his spirit, it serves as a purifier for him and a protection and shield against (Hell)fire. No one therefore (who pays it) should feel attached to it afterwards, nor should feel grieved over it. Whoever pays it without the intention of purifying his heart expects through it more than its due. He is certainly ignorant of the *sunnah*, he is allowed no reward for it, his action goes to waste and his repentance is excessive.

Then, as regards fulfilment of trust, whoever does not pay attention to it will be disappointed. It was placed before the strong skies, vast earths and high mountains but none of them was found to be stronger, vaster, or higher than it. If anything could be unapproachable because of height, vastness, power or strength they would have been unapproachable, but they felt afraid of the evil consequences (of failure in fulfilling a trust) and noticed what a weaker being did not realise it, and this was man.

“Verily he was (proved) unjust, ignorant. (Qur'an, 33:72)

Surely, Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, nothing is hidden from Him of whatever people do in their nights or days. He knows all the details, and His knowledge covers them. Your limbs are a witness, the organs of your body constitute an army (against yourself), your inner self serves Him as eyes (to watch your sins), and your loneliness is open to Him.

Sermon 198

By Allah, Muawiya is not more cunning than I am, but he deceives and commits evil deeds. Had I not been hateful of deceit I would have been the most cunning of all men. But (the fact is) every deceit is a sin and every sin is disobedience (of Allah), and every deceitful person will have a banner by which he will be recognised on the Day of Judgement. By Allah, I cannot be made forgetful by strategy, nor can I be overpowered by hardships.

Sermon 199

O people, do not wonder at the small number of those who follow the right path, because people throng only round the table (of this world) whose edibles are few but whose hunger is insatiable. O people, certainly, what gathers people together (in categories) is agreement (to good or bad) and disagreement, for only one individual killed the camel of Thamud but Allah held all of them in punishment because all of them joined him by their acquiescing in their consenting to it. Thus, Allah, the Glorified, has said:

Then they hamstrung her, and turned regretful. (Quran, 26:157).

Then their land declined by sinking (into earth) as the spike of a plough pierces unploughed weak land. O people, he who treads the clear path (of guidance) reaches the spring of water, and whoever abandons it strays into waterless desert.

Sermon 200

What Ameerul Momineen said on the occasion of the burial of Bibi Fatima (pbuh) while addressing the Holy Prophet at his grave.

O Prophet of Allah, peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. O Prophet of Allah, my patience about your chosen (daughter) has been exhausted, and my power of endurance has weakened, except that I have ground for consolation in having endured the great hardship and heart-rending event of your separation. I laid you down in your grave when your last breath had passed (when your head was) between my neck and chest.

“Verily we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return. (Quran 2:156)

Now, trust has been returned and what had been given has been taken back. As to my grief, it knows no bounds, and as to my nights, they will remain sleepless till Allah chooses for me the house in which you are now residing.

Certainly, your daughter would apprise you of the joining together of your *ummah* (people) for oppressing her. You ask her in detail and get all the news about the position. This has happened when a long time had not elapsed and your remembrance had not disappeared. My *salaam* (salutation) be on you both, the *salaam* of a grief stricken not a disgusted or hateful person; for if I go away it is not because I am weary (of you), and if I stay it is not due to lack of belief in what Allah has promised the endurers.

Sermon 201

O people, certainly this world is a passage while the next world is a place of permanent abode. So, take from the passage (all that you can) for the permanent abode. Do not tear away your curtain before Him Who is aware of your secrets. Take away from this world your hearts before your bodies go out of

it, because herein you have been put on trial, and you have been created for the other world. When a man dies people ask what (property) he has left while the angels ask what (good actions) he has sent forward. May Allah bless you; send forward something, it will be a loan for you, and do not leave everything behind, for that would be a burden on you.

Sermon 202

What Ameerul Momineen said generally to his companions

May Allah have mercy on you! Provide yourselves for the journey because the call for departure has been announced. Regard your stay in the world as very short, and return (to Allah) with the best provision that is with you, because surely, in front of you lies a valley, difficult to climb, and places of stay full of fear and dangers. You have to reach there and stay in them. And know that the eyes of death are approaching towards you. It is as though you are (already) in its talons and it has struck itself against you. Difficult affairs and distressing dangers have crushed you into it. You should therefore cut away all the attachments of this world and assist yourselves with the provision of Allah's fear.

Sermon 203

After swearing allegiance to Imam, Talhah and az-Zubayr complained to him that he had not consulted them or sought their assistance in the affairs (of state). Ameerul Momineen replied:

Both of you frown over a small matter and leave aside big ones. Can you tell me of anything wherein you have a right of which I have deprived you or a share which was due to you and which I have held away from you, or any Muslim who has laid any claim before me and I have been unable to decide it or been ignorant of it, or committed a mistake about it?

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. When the 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 (pbuh) had laid down as his *sunnah*. In this matter I did not need your advice or the advice of anyone else, nor has there been any order of which I was ignorant so that I ought to have consulted you or my Muslim brethren. If it were so I would not have turned away from you or from others.

As regards your reference to the question of equality (in distribution of shares from Muslim common fund), this is a matter in which I have not taken a decision by my own opinion, nor have I done it by my caprice. But I found, and you too (must have) found, that whatever the Prophet - may Allah bless him and his descendents - brought had been finalised. Therefore, I felt no need to turn towards you about a share which had been determined by Allah and in which His verdict has been passed. By Allah, in this matter, therefore, you

two or anyone else can have no favour from me. May Allah keep our hearts and your hearts in righteousness, and may He grant us and you endurance.

Then Ameerul Momineen added: May Allah have mercy on the person who, when he sees the truth, supports it, when he sees the wrong, rejects it, and who helps the truth against him who is on the wrong.

Sermon 204

During the battle of Siffin Imam heard some of his men abusing the Syrians, then he said:

I dislike you starting to abuse them, but if you describe their deeds and recount their situations that would be a better mode of speaking and a more convincing way of arguing. Instead of abusing them you should say, "O' Allah! Save our blood and their blood, produce reconciliation between us and them, and lead them out of their misguidance so that he who is ignorant of the truth may know it, and he who inclines towards rebellion and revolt may turn away from it."

Sermon 205

In the battle of Siffin Imam saw Imam al-Hasan proceeding rapidly to fight, then he said:

Hold back this young man on my behalf, lest he causes my ruin, because I am loath to send these two (meaning Hassan and Husain) towards death, lest the descending line of the Prophet (pbuh) is cut away by their death.

Sayyid ar-Radi says: Imam's words "amliku `anni hadha'l- ghulam" (Hold back this young man on my behalf) represents the highest and the most eloquent form of expression.

Sermon 206

When Imam's companions expressed displeasure about his attitude concerning Arbitration, he said:

O people, matters between me and you went as I wished till war exhausted you. By Allah, it has overtaken some of you and left others, and has completely weakened your enemy. Till yesterday I was giving orders 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.

Sermon 207

Ameerul Momineen went to enquire about the health of his companion Ala bin Ziad-el-Harisi and when he noticed the vastness of his house he said:

What will you do with this vast house in this world, although you need this house more in the next world. If you want to take it to the next world you could entertain in it guests and be regardful of kinship and discharge all

(your) obligations according to their accrual. In this way you will be able to take it to the next world.

Then Ala said to him: O' Ameerul Momineen, I want to complain to you about my brother Asim ibn Ziyad. Imam enquired: What is the matter with him? Ala said: He has put on a woollen coat and cut himself away from the world. Imam said: Present him to me.

When he came Imam said: O' enemy of yourself. Certainly, the evil (Satan) has misguided you. Do you feel no pity for your wife and your children? Do you believe that if you use those things which Allah has made lawful for you, He will dislike you? You are too unimportant for Allah to do so. He said: O' Ameerul Momineen you also put on coarse dress and eat rough food.

Then he replied: Woe be to you, I am not like you. Certainly, Allah, the Sublime, has made it obligatory on true leaders that they maintain themselves at the level of low people so that the poor do not cry over their poverty.

Sermon 208

Someone asked Ameerul Momineen about concocted traditions and contradictory sayings of the Prophet current among the people, whereupon he said:

Certainly what is current among the people is both right and wrong, true and false, repealing and repealed, general and particular, definite and indefinite, exact and surmised. Even during the Prophet's days false sayings had been attributed to him, so much so that he had to say during his sermon that, "Whoever attributes falsehoods to me makes his abode in Hell." Those who relate traditions are of four categories, no more.

The hypocrite is a person who makes a show of faith and adopts the appearance of a Muslim; he does not hesitate in sinning nor does he keep aloof from vice; he wilfully attributes false things against the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) If people knew that he was a hypocrite and a liar, they would not accept anything from him and would not confirm what he says.

Rather they say that he is the companion of the Prophet, has met him, heard from him and acquired (knowledge) from him. They therefore accept what he says. Allah too had warned you well about the hypocrites and described them fully to you. They have continued after the Holy Prophet. They gained positions with the leaders of misguidance and callers towards Hell through falsehoods and blames. So, they put them in high posts and made them officers over the heads of the people, and amassed wealth through them. People are always with the rulers and after this world, except those to whom Allah affords protection. This is the first of the four categories.

Then there is the individual who heard (a saying) from the Holy Prophet but did not memorise it as it was, but surmised it. He does not lie wilfully. Now, he carries the saying with him and relates it, acts upon it and claims that: "I heard it from the Messenger of Allah." If the Muslims come to know that he has committed a mistake in it, they will not accept it from him, and if he him-

self knows that he is on the wrong he will give it up.

The third man is he who heard the Prophet ordering to do a thing and later the Prophet refrained the people from doing it, but this man did not know it, or he heard the Prophet refraining people from a thing and later he allowed it, but this man did not know it. In this way he retained in his mind what had been repealed, and did not retain the repealing tradition. If he knew that it had been repealed he would reject it, or if the Muslims knew, when they heard it from him, that it had been repealed they would reject it.

The last, namely the fourth man, is he who does not speak a lie against Allah or against His Prophet. He hates falsehood out of fear for Allah and respect for the Messenger of Allah, and does not commit mistakes, but retains (in his mind) exactly what he heard (from the Prophet), and he relates it as he heard it without adding anything or omitting anything. He heard the repealing tradition, he retained it and acted upon it, and he heard the repealed tradition and rejected it. He also understands the particular and the general, and he knows the definite and indefinite, and gives everything its due position.

The sayings of the Prophet used to be of two types. One was particular and the other common. Sometimes a man would hear him but he would not know what Allah, the Glorified, meant by it or what the Messenger of Allah meant by it. In this way the listener carries it and memorises it without knowing its meaning and its real intention, or what was its reason. Among the companions of the Messenger of Allah all were not in the habit of putting him questions and ask him the meanings, indeed they always wished that some Bedouin or stranger might come and ask him (peace be upon him) so that they would also listen. Whenever any such thing came before me, I asked him about its meaning and preserved it. These are the reasons and grounds of differences among the people in their traditions.

Sermon 209

It is through the strength of Allah's greatness and His subtle power of innovation that He made solid dry earth out of the water of the fathomless, compact and dashing ocean. Then He made from it layers and separated them into seven skies after they had been joined together. So, they became stationary at His command and stopped at the limit fixed by Him. He so made the earth that it is born by deep blue, surrounded and suspended water which is obedient to His command and has submitted to His awe while its flow has stopped due to fear of Him.

He also created high hills, rocks of stones and lofty mountains. He put them in their positions and made them remain stationary. Their peaks rose into the air while their roots remained in the water. In this way He raised the mountains above the plains and fixed their foundations in the vast expanse wherever they stood. He made their peaks high and made their bodies lofty. He made them like pillars for the earth and fixed them in it like pegs. Consequently,

the earth became stationary; otherwise it might bend with its inhabitants or sink inwards with its burden, or shift from its positions.

Therefore, glorified is He who stopped it after the flowing of its waters and solidified it after the watery state of its sides. In this way He made it a cradle for His creatures and spread it for them in the form of a floor over the deep ocean which is stationary and does not move and is fixed and does not flow. Severe winds move it here and there and clouds draw up water from it.

“Verily in this there is a lesson unto him who fears (Allah) (Quran, 79:26)

Sermon 210

O my Allah! Whoever listens to our utterance which is just and which seeks prosperity of religion and worldly life and does not seek mischief, but rejects it after listening, then he certainly turns away from Your support and desists from strengthening Your religion. We make You a witness over him and You are the greatest of all witnesses, and we make all those who inhabit Your earth and Your skies witness over him. Thereafter, You alone can make us needless of his support and question him for his sin.

Sermon 211

Praise be to Allah who is above all similarity to the creatures, is above the words of describers, who displays the wonders of His management for the on-lookers, is hidden from the imagination of thinkers by virtue of the greatness of His glory, has knowledge without acquiring it, adding to it or drawing it (from someone), and Who is the ordainer of all matters without reflecting or thinking. He is such that gloom does not concern Him, nor does He seek light from brightness, night does not overtake Him nor does the day pass over Him (to affect Him in any manner). His comprehension (of things) is not through eyes and His knowledge is not dependent on being informed.

A part of the same sermon: Allah deputised the Prophet with light, and accorded him the highest precedence in selection. Through him Allah united those who were divided, overpowered the powerful, overcame difficulties and levelled rugged ground, and thus removed misguidance from right and left.

Sermon 212

I stand witness that He is just and does justice, He is the arbiter who decides (between right and wrong). I also stand witness that Muhammad is His slave, His Messenger and the Chief of His creatures. Whenever Allah divided the line of descent, He put him in the better one, and therefore, no evil-doer ever shared with him nor was any vicious person his partner.

Beware! Surely Allah, the Glorified, has provided for virtue those who are suited to it, for truth pillars (that support it), and for obedience protection . In every matter of obedience you will find Allah's succour that will speak through tongues and accord firmness to hearts. It has sufficiency for those who seek sufficiency, and a cure for those who seek cure.

Know that, certainly, those creatures of Allah who preserve His knowledge offer protection to those things which He desires to be protected and make His springs flow (for benefit of others). They contact each other with friendliness and meet each other with affection. They drink water from cups that quench the thirst and return from the watering places fully satiated. Misgiving does not affect them and backbiting does not gain ground with them. In this way Allah has tied their nature with good manners. Because of this they love each other and meet each other. They have become superior, like seeds which are selected by taking some and throwing away others. This selection has distinguished them and the process of choosing has purified them.

Therefore, man should secure honour by adopting these qualities. He should fear the day of Doom before it arrives, and he should appreciate the shortness of his life and the shortness of his sojourn in the place of stay which has only to last for his change over to the next place. He should therefore do something for his change over and for the known stages of his departure. Blessed be he who possesses a virtuous heart, who obeys one who guides him, desists from him who takes to ruin, catches the path of safety with the help of him who provides him light (of guidance) and by obeying the leader who commands him, hastens towards guidance before its doors are closed, gets open the door of repentance and removes the (stain of) sins. He has certainly been put on the right path and guided towards the straight road.

Sermon 213

A prayer which Ameerul Momineen often recited

Praise be to Allah who made me such that I have not died nor am I sick, nor have my veins been infected with disease, nor have I been hauled up for my evil acts, nor am I without progeny, nor have I forsaken my religion, nor do I disbelieve in my Lord, nor do I feel strangeness with my faith, nor is my intelligence affected, nor have I been punished with the punishment of peoples before me. I am a slave in Your possession, I have been guilty of excesses over myself. You have exhausted Your pleas over me and I have no plea (before You). I have no power to take except what You give me, and I cannot evade except what You save me from.

My Allah! I seek Your protection from becoming destitute despite Your riches, from being misguided despite Your guidance, from being molested in Your realm and being humiliated while authority rests with You. My Allah! Let my spirit be the first of those good objects that You take from me and the first trust out of Your favours held in trust with me. My Allah! We seek Your protection from turning away from Your command or revolting against Your

religion, or being led away by our desires instead of by guidance from You.

Sermon 214

Delivered at the battle of Siffin.

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 favour. If there is any right which is only in favour of a person with no (corresponding) right accruing against him it is solely for Allah 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 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 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 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 has placed on each other. He has made it the basis of affection, and an honour 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 honour among them, the ways of religion become established, signs of justice become fixed and the *sunnah* gains currency.

In this way time will improve, continuance of government will be expected, and aims of 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 ways of the *sunnah* 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, nor in committing big wrongs. In such circumstances, the virtuous are humiliated while the vicious are honoured, and there are serious chastisements from Allah, the Glorified, onto the people.

You should therefore counsel each other (for fulfilment of obligations) and cooperate 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 as is really due to Him, and it is an obligatory right of Allah over the people that they should advise each

other to the best of their ability and cooperate 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 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.

One of Imam's companions replied to him by a long speech wherein he praised him much and mentioned his own listening to him and obeying him, whereupon Imam said: 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 favours 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 view of virtuous people, the worst position of rulers is 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 loved to be mentioned like this, I would have given it up in humbleness 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; but do not mention for me handsome praise for obligations I have discharged towards Allah and towards you, because of fear about those obligations which I have not discharged and for issuing injunctions which could not be avoided, and do not address me in the manner despots are addressed.

Do not evade me as the people of passion are evaded, do not meet me with flattery and do not think I shall take it ill if a true thing is said to me, because a person who feels disgusted when truth is said to him or a just matter placed before him would find it more difficult to act upon them. Therefore, do not abstain from saying truth or 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 (avoid 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 ourselves 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.

Sermon 215

My Allah! I beseech You to take revenge on Quraysh and those assisting them, for they have cut asunder my kinship and over-turned my cup and have joined together to contest a right to which I was entitled more than anyone else. They said to me: "If you get your right, that will be just, but if you are denied the right, that too will be just. Endure it with sadness or kill yourself

in grief." I looked around but found no one to shield me, protect me or help me except the members of my family. I refrained from flinging them into death and therefore closed my eyes despite the dust, kept swallowing saliva despite (suffocation of) grief and endured pangs of anger although it was more bitter than colocynth and more grievous than the bite of knives.

A part of the same sermon about those who went to Basrah to fight Imam: They marched on my officers and the custodians of the public treasury which is still under my control and on the people of a metropolis, all of whom were obedient to me and were in allegiance to me. They created division among them, instigated their party against me and attacked my followers. They killed a group of them by treachery, while another group took up swords against them and fought with the swords till they met Allah as adherents to truth.

Sermon 216

When Imam passed by the corpses of Talha and Abdur Rahman bin Attab bin Asid who were both killed in the battle of Jamal, he said:

Abu Muhammad (Talha) lies here away from his own place. By Allah, I did not like that the Quraysh should lie killed under the stars. I have avenged myself with the descendants of Abd Manaf, but the chief persons of Banu Jumah have escaped me. They had stretched their necks towards a matter for which they were not suited, and therefore their necks were broken before they reached the goal.

Sermon 217

He (believer) kept his mind alive and killed (desires of) his heart till his body became thin, his bulk turned light and an effulgence of extreme brightness shone for him. It lighted the way for him and took him on the (right) path. Different doors led him to the door of safety and the place of (his permanent) stay. His feet, balancing his body became fixed in the position of safety and comfort, because he kept his heart (in good acts) and pleased his Allah.

Sermon 218

Imam recited this verse: Engage (your) vying in exuberance, until you come to the graves. (Quran, 102:1-2)

*He said:*How distant (from achievement) is their aim, how neglectful are these visitors and how difficult is the affair. They have not taken lessons from things full of lessons, but they took them from far off places. Do they boast on the dead bodies of their fore-fathers, or do they regard the number of dead persons as a ground for feeling boastful of their number? They want to revive the bodies that have become spiritless and the movements that have ceased. They are more entitled to be a source of lesson than a source of pride. They are more suitable for being a source of humility than of honour.

They looked at them with weak-sighted eyes and descended into the hollow of ignorance. If they had asked about them from the dilapidated houses and empty courtyards, they would have said that they went into the earth in the state of misguidance and you too are heading ignorantly towards them. You trample their skulls, want to raise constructions on their corpses, you graze what they have left and live in houses which they have vacated. The days between them and you are also bemoaning you and reciting elegies over you.

They are your fore-runners in reaching the goal and have arrived at the watering places before you. They had positions of honour and plenty of pride. They were rulers and holders of positions. Now they have gone into the interstice where earth covers them from above and is eating their flesh and drinking their blood. They lie in the hollows of their graves lifeless, no more growing, and hidden, not to be found. The approach of dangers does not frighten them, and the adversity of circumstances does not grieve them. They do not mind earthquakes, nor do they pay heed to thunders. They are gone and not expected back. They are existent but unseen. They were united but are now dispersed. They were friendly and are now separated.

Their accounts are unknown and houses are silent, not because of length of time or distance of place, but because they have been made to drink the cup (of death) which has changed their speech into dumbness, hearing into deafness and movements into stillness. It seems as though they are fallen in slumber. They are neighbours not feeling affection for each other, or friends who do not meet each other. The bonds of knowing each other have been worn out and connections of friendship have been cut asunder. Everyone of them is therefore alone although they are a group, and are strangers, even though friends. They are unaware of morning after night and of evening after day. The night or day when they departed has become ever existent for them. They found dangers of their placed of stay more serious than they had apprehended, and they witnessed that its signs were greater than they had guessed. The two objectives (namely paradise and hell) have been stretched for them upto a point beyond the reach of fear or hope. Had they been able to speak they would have become dumb to describe what they witnessed or saw.

Even though their traces have been wiped out and their news has stopped, eyes are capable of drawing a lesson, as they looked at them, ears of intelligence heard them and they spoke without uttering words. So, they said that handsome faces have been destroyed and delicate bodies have been smeared with earth. We have put on a worn-out shroud. The narrowness of the grave has overwhelmed us and strangeness has spread among us. Our silent abodes have been ruined. The beauty of our bodies has disappeared. Our known features have become hateful. Our stay in the places of strangeness has become long. We do not get relief from pain, nor widening from narrowness.

Now, if you portray them in your mind, or if the curtains concealing them are removed from them for you, in this state when their ears have lost their power and turned deaf, their eyes have been filled with dust and sunk down, their tongues which were very active have been cut into pieces, their hearts which

were ever wakeful have become motionless in their chests, in every limb of theirs a peculiar decay has occurred which has deformed it, and has paved the way for calamity towards it, all these lie powerless, with no hand to help them and no heart to grieve over them, (then) you would certainly notice the grief of (their) hearts and the dirt of (their) eyes.

Every trouble of theirs is such that its position does not change and distress does not clear away. How many a prestigious body and amazing beauty earth has swallowed, although when in the world he enjoyed abundant pleasures and was nurtured in honour. He clung to enjoyments in the hour of grief. If distress befell him he sought refuge in consolation through the pleasures of life and playing and games. He was laughing at the world while the world was laughing at him because of his life full of forgetfulness. Then time trampled him like thorns, the days weakened his energy and death began to look at him from near. Then he was overtaken by a grief which he had never felt, and ailments appeared in place of the health he had previously possessed. He then turned to that with which the physician had made him familiar, namely suppressing the hot (diseases) with cold (medicines) and curing the cold with hot doses, but the cold things did nothing save aggravate the hot ailments, while the hot ones did nothing except increasing the coldness, nor did he acquire temperateness in his constitution but rather every ailment of his increased till his physicians became helpless, his attendants grew loathsome and his own people felt disgusted from describing his disease, avoided answering those who enquired about him and quarrelled in front of him about the serious news which they were concealing from him. Thus, someone would say "his condition is what it is" and would console them with hopes of his recovery, while another one would advocate patience on missing him, recalling to them the calamities that had befallen the earlier generations.

In this state when he was getting ready to depart from the world and leave his beloved ones, such a serious choking overtook him that his senses became bewildered and dampness of his tongue dried up. Now, there was many an important question whose reply he knew about he could not utter it, and many a voice that was painful for his heart that he heard but remained as though he was deaf the voice of either an elder whom he used to respect or of a younger whom he used to caress. Pangs of death are too hideous to be covered by description or appreciated by hearts of the people in this world.

Sermon 219

After reciting the verse: "therein declare glory unto Him in the mornings and evenings; Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear the day when hearts and eyes shall writhe of the anguish. (Quran, 24:36-37)

Certainly, Allah, the Glorified, has made His remembrance the light for hearts which hear with its help despite deafness, see with its help despite blindness and become submissive with its help despite unruliness.

In all periods and times when there were no prophets, there have been persons with whom Allah, precious are His bounties, whispered through their wits and spoke through their minds. With the help of bright awakening of their ears, eyes and hearts they keep reminding others of remembrance of days of Allah and making others feel fear for Him like guide-points in wildernesses. Whoever adopts the middle way, they praise his ways and give him the tidings of deliverance, but whoever goes right and left they vilify his ways and frighten him with ruin. In this way, they served as lamps in the darkness and guides through these doubts.

There are some people devoted to the remembrance (of Allah) who have adopted it in place of worldly matters so that commerce or trade does not turn them away from it. They pass their life in it. They speak into ears of neglectful persons warning against matters held unlawful by Allah, they order them to practise justice and themselves keep practising it, and refrain them from the unlawful and themselves refrain from it. It is as though they have finished the journey of this world towards the next world and have beheld what lies beyond it. Consequently, they have become acquainted with all that befell them in the interstice during their long stay therein, and Judgement Day fulfils its promises for them. Therefore, they removed the curtain from these things for the people of the world, till it was as though they were seeing what people did not see and were hearing what people did not hear.

If you picture them in your mind in their admirable positions and well-known sittings, when they have opened the records of their actions and are prepared to render an account of themselves in respect of the small as well as the big things they were ordered to do but they failed to do, or were ordered to refrain from but they indulged therein, and they realised the weight of their burden (of bad acts) on their backs, and they felt too weak to bear them, then they wept bitterly and spoke to each other while still crying and bewailing to Allah in repentance and acknowledgement (of their shortcomings), you would find them to be emblems of guidance and lamps in darkness, angels would be surrounding them, peace would be descending upon them, the doors of the sky would be opened for them and positions of honour would be assigned to them in the place of which Allah had informed them.

Therefore, He has appreciated their actions and praised their position. They call Him and breathe in the air of forgiveness, they are ever needy of His bounty and remain humble before His greatness, the length of their grief has pained their hearts, and the length of weeping their eyes. They knock at every door of inclination towards Allah. They ask Him Whom generosity does not make destitute and from Whom those who approach Him do not get disappointed. Therefore, take account of yourself for your own sake because the account of others will be taken by one other than you.

Sermon 220

Ameerul Momineen recited the verse: O man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the Most Gracious One. (Quran, 82:6)

He said: The addressee (in this verse) is devoid of argument and his excuse is most deceptive. He is detaining himself in ignorance. O man! What has emboldened you to sins, deceived you about Allah and made you satisfied with destruction of yourself. Is there no cure for your ailment or no awakening from your sleep? Do you not have pity on yourself as you have on others? Generally, when you see anyone exposed to the heat of the sun you cover him with shade, or if you see anyone afflicted with grief that pains his body you weep out of pity for him. What has made you patient over your own disease, made you firm in your own afflictions, and consoled you from weeping over yourself though your life is the most precious of all lives to you, and why does not the fear of an ailment that may befall you in the night keep you wakeful though you lie on the way to Allah's wrath due to your sins?

You should cure the disease of languor in your heart by determination, and the sleep of neglectfulness in your eyes by wakefulness. Be obedient to Allah, and love His remembrance, and picture to yourself that you are running away while He is approaching you. He is calling you to forgiveness and concealing your faults with kindness, while you are fleeing away towards others. Certainly, Great is Allah the powerful, the generous, and how humble and weak are you and still so bold to commit His disobedience although you live in His protection and undergo changes of life in expanse of His kindness. He does not refuse you His kindness or remove His protection from you.

In fact, you have not been without His kindness even for a moment, whether it be favour that He conferred upon you or a sin of yours He has concealed or a calamity He has warded off from you. What is your idea about Him if you had obeyed Him? By Allah, if this had been the case with two persons equal in power and matching in might (one inattentive and the other showering favours on you) then you would have been the first to adjudge yourself to be of bad behaviour and evil deeds.

I truthfully say the world has not deceived you but you have had yourself deceived by it. The world had opened to you the curtains and divulged to you equally. And in all that it foretold you about the troubles befalling your bodies and the decay in your power, it has been too true and faithful in promise, and did not speak a lie to you or deceive you. There are many who advise you about it but they are blamed, and speak the truth about it but they are opposed. If you understand the world by means of dilapidated houses and forlorn abodes, then with your good understanding and far reaching power of drawing lessons you will find it like one who is kind over you and cautious about you. It is good abode for him who does not like it as an abode, and a good place of stay for him who does not regard it a permanent home for stay.

Only those who run away from this world today will be regarded virtuous tomorrow. When the earthquake occurs, the Day of Resurrection approaches with all its severities, the people of every worshipping place cling to it, all the

devotees cling to the object of their devotion and all the followers cling to their leader. Then on that day even the opening of an eye in the air and the sound of a footstep on the ground will be assigned its due through His Justice and His Equity. On that day many an argument will prove void and a contention for excuses will stand rejected. Therefore, you should now adopt for yourself the course with which your excuse may hold good and your plea may be proved. Take from the transient things of this world that which will stay for you (in the next world), provide for your journey, keep (your) gaze on the brightness of deliverance and keep ready the saddles (for setting off).

Sermon 221

By Allah, I would rather pass a night in wakefulness on the thorns of *sadan* (a plant) or be driven in chains as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on Judgement Day as an oppressor over anyone or usurper of anything out of worldly wealth. How can I oppress anyone 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 saw (my brother) Aqeel fallen in destitution and he asked me a *sa`* (three kg) out of your (share of) wheat, and I also saw his children with dishevelled 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 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 Aqeel. 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 Allah, the Powerful, has prepared for His wrath? Should you cry from pain, but I should not cry from the flames?"

A stranger incident than this is 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 saliva of a serpent or its vomit. I asked him whether it was reward, or *Zakaat* 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 religion of Allah, or are you mad, or have been overpowered by some jinn, or speaking without senses? "

By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey 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 succour.

Sermon 222

O my Allah! preserve (the grace of) my face with easiness of life and do not disgrace my countenance with destitution, lest I may have to beg a livelihood from those who beg from You, try to seek the favour of Your evil creatures, engage myself in praising those who give to me, and be tempted in abusing those who do not give to me, although behind all these You are the master of giving and denying.

“ . . . *Verily You are powerful over everything.* ” (Quran, 66:8)

Sermon 223

This is a house surrounded by calamities and well-known for deceitfulness. Its conditions do not last and those who inhabit it do not remain safe. Its conditions are variable and its ways changing. Life in it is blameworthy and safety in it is non-existent. Yet its people are targets; it strikes them with its arrows and destroys them through death.

Know, Creatures of Allah, certainly, you and all things of this world that you have are on the lines of those before you. They were of longer ages, had more populated houses and of more lasting traces. Their voices have become silent, movements have become stationary, bodies have become rotten, their houses have become empty and traces have been obliterated. Their magnificent places and spread-out carpets were changed to stones, laid-in-blocks and cave-like dug out graves whose very foundation is based on ruins and whose construction has been made with soil. Their positions are contiguous, but those settled in them are like far flung strangers. They are among the people of their area but feel lonely, and they are free from work but still engaged (in activity). They feel no attachment with homelands nor do they keep contact among themselves like neighbours despite nearness of neighbourhood and priority of abodes. And how can they meet each other when decay has ground them with its chest, and stones and earth have eaten them.

It is as though you too have gone where they have gone, the same sleeping place has caught you and the same place has detained you. What will then be your position when your affairs reach their end and graves are turned upside down (to throw out the dead)?

“There shall every soul realise what it has sent before, and they shall be brought back to Allah, their true Lord, and what they did fabricate (the false deities) will vanish (away) from them. (Quran, 10:30)

Sermon 224

My Allah! You are most attached to Your lovers and most ready to assist those who trust in You. You see them in their concealments, know whatever

is in their consciences, and are aware of the extent of their intelligence. Consequently, their secrets are open to You and their hearts eager from You. If loneliness bores them, Your remembrance gives them solace. If distresses befall them, they beseech Your protection, because they know the reins of affairs are in Your hands, and their movements depend on Your commands .

My Allah! If I am unable to express my request or cannot see my needs, then guide me towards my betterment and take my betterment and take my heart towards the correct goal. This is not against Your guidance or anything new against Your ways of support. My Allah! Deal with me through Your forgiveness and do not deal with me according to Your justice.

Sermon 225

May Allah reward such and such man who straightened the curve, cured the disease, abandoned mischief and established *sunnah*. He departed (from the world) with untarnished clothes and little shortcomings. He achieved good and remained safe from evils. He offered Allah's obedience and feared Him as He deserved. He went away and left the people in dividing ways wherein the misled cannot obtain guidance and the guided cannot attain certainty.

Sermon 226

About allegiance to Imam for the Caliphate. A similar sermon has already appeared earlier.

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 too reached for it in haste and young girls ran for it without veils.

Sermon 227

Certainly, fear of Allah is the key to guidance, provision for the next world, freedom from every slavery and deliverance from all ruin. With its help the seeker succeeds and he who makes for safety escapes and achieves his aims.

Perform (good) acts while such acts are being raised (in value), repentance can be of benefit, prayer can be heard, conditions are peaceful and the pens (of two angels) are in motion (to record actions). Hasten towards (good) actions before the change of age, lingering illness or snatching death. Certainly, death will end your enjoyments, mar your pleasures and remove your objectives. It is an unwanted visitor, invincible adversary and unaccounting killer. Its ropes have entrapped you, evils surrounded you, arrowheads aimed at you, its sway over you is great, its oppression on you is continuous and the chance of its missing you is remote.

Soon you will be overwhelmed with gloom of its shades, severity of its illness, darkness of its distresses, nonsense utterances of its pangs, grief of its destruction, darkness of its encompassment and unwholesomeness of its taste. It will seem as if it has come to you all of a sudden, silenced those whispering to you, separated your group, destroyed your doings, devastated your houses and altered your successors to distribute your estate among chief relatives, who did not give you any benefit, or grieved near ones who could not protect, or those rejoicers who did not lament.

It is upon you to strive, make effort, equip yourself, get ready and provide yourself from place of provision. Let not life of this world deceive you as it deceived those before you among past people and bygone periods - those who extracted its milk, benefited from its neglectfulness, passed long time and turned its new things into old. Their abodes turned into graves and wealth into inheritable estate. They do not know who came to them; do not pay heed to those who weep over them, and do not respond to those who call them. Therefore, beware of this world as it is treacherous, deceitful and cheating, it gives and takes back, covers with clothes and uncovers. Its pleasure does not last, its hardship does not end and its calamity do not stop.

A part of the same sermon: They are from among people of this world but are not its people, because they remain in it as though they do not belong to it. They act herein on what they observe and hasten here (to avoid) what they fear. Their bodies move among people of the next world. They see that people of this world attach importance to the death of their bodies but they themselves attach more importance to the death of the hearts of those who are living.

Sermon 228

Imam delivered this sermon at Dhiqar on his way to Basrah,

The Prophet manifested whatever he was commanded and conveyed the messages of his Lord. Consequently, Allah repaired through him the cracks, joined through him the slits and created (through) affection among kin although they bore intense enmity in chests and deep-seated rancour in hearts.

Sermon 229

Abdullah bin Zamaah who was one of the followers of Ameerul Momineen came to him during his Caliphate to ask for some money when Ameerul Momineen said:

This money is not 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.

Sermon 230

Know that the tongue is part of man's body. If man desists, speech will not

cooperate with him and when he dilates, speech will not give him time to stop. Certainly, we are masters of speaking. Its veins are fixed in us and its branches are hanging over us. Allah have mercy on you. Know that you are living at a time when those who speak about right are few, when tongues are loath to utter truth and those who stick to right are humiliated. The people of this time are engaged in disobedience. Their youths are wicked, old men are sinful, learned men are hypocrites, and speakers are sycophants. Their young do not respect elders, and their rich men do not support the destitute.

Sermon 231

Dhi'lib Yamami related from Ahmad bin Qutaybah, and he from Abdullah bin Yazid and he from Malik bin Dihyah who said, "We were with Ameerul Momineen when discussion arose about the differences of men (in features and conduct) and then Imam said":

They differ among themselves because of the sources of their clay (of creation). This is because they are either from saltish or sweet soil or from rugged or soft earth. They resemble each other on the basis of affinity of their soil and differ according to its difference. Therefore, sometimes a person of handsome features is weak in intelligence, a tall statured person is of low courage, a virtuous person is ugly in appearance, a short statured person is far-sighted, a good-natured person has an evil trait, a person of perplexed heart has bewildering mind and a sharp-tongued person has a wakeful heart.

Sermon 232

Spoken when Imam was busy in the funeral ablution of the Holy Prophet and shrouding him

May my father and my mother shed their lives for you. O Messenger of Allah! With your death the process of prophethood, revelation and heavenly messages has stopped, which had not stopped at the death of others (prophets). Your position with us (members of your family) is so special that your grief has become a source of consolation (to us) as against the grief of all others; your grief is also common so that all Muslims share it equally. If you had not ordered endurance and prevented us from bewailing, we would have produced a store of tears and even then the pain would not have subsided, and this grief would not have ended, and they would have been too little of our grief for you. But this (death) is a matter that cannot be reversed nor is it possible to repulse it. May my father and my mother die for you; do remember us with Allah and take care of us.

Sermon 233

In this sermon Imam has related his own condition after the Prophet's immigration till his meeting with him.

I began following the path adopted by the Prophet and treading on the lines of his remembrance till I reached al-'Arj.

Sermon 234

Perform (good) acts while you are still in the vastness of life, the books are open (for recording of actions), repentance is allowed, the runner away (from Allah) is being called and the sinner is being given hope (of forgiveness) before the (light of) action is put off, time expires, life ends, the door for repentance is closed and angels ascend to the sky. Therefore a man should derive benefit from himself for himself, from the living for the dead, from the mortal, for the lasting and from the departed for the one who has stayed. A man should fear Allah while he is given age to live upto his death, and is allowed time to act. A man should control his self by the rein and hold it with its bridle, thus by the rein he should prevent it from disobedience towards Allah, and by the bridle he should lead it towards obedience to Allah.

Sermon 235

About the two arbitrators (Abu Musa al-Ash`ari and Amr bin A'as) and disparagement of the people of Syria

Rude, low people and mean slaves. They have been collected from all sides and picked up from every pack. They need to be taught the tenets (of Islam), disciplined, instructed, trained, supervised and led by the hand. They are neither *muhajirun* nor *ansar* nor those who made their dwellings in the abode (in Madina) and in belief.

Look! They have chosen for themselves one who is nearest of all of them to what they desire, while you have chosen one who is nearest to what you dislike. You may certainly recall that the other day Abdullah ibn Qays (Abu Musa) was saying: "It is a mischief, therefore, cut away your bow-string and sheathe your swords." If he was right then he was wrong in marching (with us) without being forced, but if he was lying then he should be viewed with suspicion. Therefore, send Abdullah bin Abbas to face Amr bin A'as. Make use of these days and surround the borders of Islam. Do you not see that your cities are being attacked and your prowess is being aimed at?

Sermon 236

Ameerul Momineen describes herein members of the Prophet's family

They are life for knowledge and death for ignorance. Their forbearance tells you of their knowledge, and their silence of the wisdom of their speaking. They do not go against right nor do they differ about it. They are the pillars of Islam and the asylums of protection. With them right has returned to its position and wrong has left its place and its tongue is severed from its root. They have understood the religion attentively and carefully, not by mere hearsay or from relaters, because the relaters of knowledge are many but ones who understand are few.

Sermon 237

When Uthman was surrounded, Abdullah ibn Abbas brought a letter to Imam from Uthman in which he expressed the desire that Imam should leave for his estate Yanbu so that the proposal that was being mooted out for him to become caliph should subside. Uthman had this request earlier also. Upon this Imam said to Ibne Abbas:

O Ibne Abbas! Uthman just wants to treat me like the water-drawing camel so that I may go forward and backward with the bucket. Once he sent me word that I should go out then sent me word that I should come back. Now, again he sends me word that I should go out. By Allah, I continued protecting him till I feared lest I become a sinner.

Sermon 238

Exhorting his men to jihad

Allah seeks you to thank Him and assigns to you His affairs. He has allowed time in the limited field (of life) so that you may vie with each other in seeking the reward (of Paradise). Therefore, tight up your girdles and wrap up the skirts. High courage and dinners do not go together. Sleep causes weakness in the big affairs of the day and (its) darkness obliterates the memories of courage.

Selections of writings

Selections of writings of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) and his letters to his enemies and the governors of his provinces including selections of his diplomas of appointment of his officers and his injunctions to the members of his family and his companions.

Letter 1

Written to the people of Kufa at the time of his march from Madina to Basra.

This letter is from the servant and creature of Allah, Ali (a), Ameerul Momineen, to Kufiyites who are the leaders of Ansar and respectable persons.

After praising Allah and invoking His Blessings on the Holy Prophet (pbuh) I want to throw light on the event of the assassination of Uthman and to make the whole affair as clear as if you were present on the occasion and were witnessing the event yourself.

People were displeased with him and were accusing and blaming him. Out of Muhajirs, I was the only man who wished to appease and pacify people and not want to indulge in activities of the dissatisfied, while Talha and Zubair were instigating the people in a way that the least they said was worse than worst that could be asserted or alleged against Uthman. Their whispering campaign was deadlier than the loudest propaganda which could be carried on; Aisha also exhibited extreme annoyance and anger against him. Under such conditions some persons resolved to kill him and murdered him. Then everybody came to me and took the oath of allegiance to me.

This was done with no desire, instigation, inducement, persuasion or compulsion and force on my part. They came to me of their own free will, without hesitation, and with pleasure, ecstasy and joy. Let it be known to you that the people of the city towards which the Holy Prophet had migrated, is being deserted by its inhabitants, they are leaving it, it is seething with discontentment and rebellion. A seditious campaign has started against the Amir. I want you to hasten to the help of your Amir to fight against his enemies.

Letter 2

After the conquest of Basra Imam wrote the following letter to the citizens of Kufa.

Allah may reward you, townsmen (of Basra), on behalf of the member of the Prophet's family the best of reward that He bestows on those who acts in His

obedience and those who thank Him for His bounties. You heard me and obeyed, and when you were called you promptly responded.

Document 3

It is related Shuraih (Imam's Qazi at Kufa) purchased a house for eighty Dinars. When it became known to Imam he sent for him and said . "I have come to know you have purchased a house for eighty dinars, and have written a document for it and put witnessing on it." Shuraih replied, " Yes Ameerul Momineen, it is so." Imam cast an angry look and said, "Shuraih, shortly a body (angel of death) will come who will not look at the document, or question about evidence but take you out of it far away and deposit you in your grave quite

alone. If you purchased this house from money other than yours or paid the price from unlawful sources, you have incurred loss of this world as well as 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 you would not have liked to purchase the house even for one Dirham, not to speak of more. The document is this:

This is about a purchase made by a humble creature from another creature ready to depart (from this world.) He had 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 distresses, the third boundary adjoins the deceitful Satan and in 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 getting out of the honour of contentment and entering into the humility of want and submissiveness.

If the purchaser encounters some (evil) consequence of this transaction, it is for him who dismantles bodies of monarchs, snatches lives of despots, destroys domains of Pharaohs like Khusros, Caesars, Tubbas and Himyars and all who amass wealth upon wealth, go on increasing it, build high houses and decorate them, collect treasures and preserve them for children, to take to the place of accounting and judgement and position of reward and punishment.

“When the verdict would be passed Those who stood on falsehood would then be the losers. (Quran 40:78).

This document is witnessed by intelligence when it is free from the shackles of desires and away from the adornments of this world.

Letter 4

To an officer in command

If they return to the umbrella of obedience then this is all that we want. But if the condition of these people point 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 half-hearted man is better than his presence, and his sitting down is better than his rising up.

Letter 5

To Asha's bin Qais, Governor of Azerbaijan

Certainly your task is not a morsel for you but trust round your neck and you have been charged with protection on behalf of your superiors. It is not for you to be oppressive on subjects nor to risk yourself save on strong grounds. You have in your hands funds which is property of Allah and you hold its charge till you pass it on to me. Probably I will, not be a bad ruler for you.

Letter 6

To Muawiya bin Abi Sufian

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. He who was present has no choice and he who was absent has no right to reject.; and consultation is confined to Muhajirs and Ansars. If they agree on an individual and take him to be Caliph it would be deemed to mean Allah's pleasure. If anyone keeps out by way of objection or innovation they would return him to the position from where he kept out. If he refuses they would fight him for following a course other than that of the believers and Allah would put him back from where he had run away. By my life, O Muawiya, if you see with your brain without any passion you would find me the most innocent of all in respect of Uthman's blood and you would know that I was in seclusion from him, unless you conceal what is quite open to you.

Letter 7

To Muawiya Bin Abi Sufyan

I have received from you the packet of unconnected advices and embellished letter. You have written it because of your misguidance, and despatched it because of lack of wisdom. This is the letter of a man who has neither light to show him the way nor leader to guide him on the right path. Passion prompted him and he responded to it. Misguidance led him and he followed it. Consequently he began to speak nonsense and got recklessly astray.

A part of the same letter. Because allegiance is once for all. It is not open to review nor is there any scope for fresh proceedings of election. He who remains out of it is deemed to be critical of Islam while he who reflects upon it is a hypocrite.

Letter 8

When Imam sent Jareer bin Abdullah Bajali towards Muawiya, and there was a delay in his return, he wrote:

When you receive this letter of mine ask Muawiya to take a final decision and to follow a determined course. Then ask him to choose either war that externs him from home or ignoble peace. If he chooses war leave him alone, but if he chooses peace, secure his allegiance. Wasalaam.

Letter 9

To Muawiya

Our people (the Quraish) decided to kill our Prophet and to annihilate our

root. They created worries for us, behaved with us harshly, denied us ease of life, exposed us to fear, forced us to take refuge in a rugged mountain and ignited for us flames of war. Allah gave us determination to protect His religion and defend his honour. The believers among us expected heavenly reward from it and the unbelievers among us gave support due to kinship. Those who accepted Islam from among Quraish were away from distresses which we were involved in either because of a pledge that protected them or due to the tribe that would rise to support them . They were therefore safe from killing. The way with the Prophet (pbuh) was that when the fighting became fierce and people began to loose ground he would send forwards members of his family and through them protected his companions from the attack of swords and spears.

In this way Obaida bin Harith was killed on the day of Badr, Hamza on the day of Uhud and Jafar on the day of Mauta. One more person whom I can name if you want, desired to seek martyrdom as they did but their deaths had approached while his death had not yet approached. How strange it is that I am being grouped with him who never evinced briskness of pace like me nor he had to his credit any achievement like mine unless he claims something of which I do not know and which I think Allah too does not know.

In regards to your request to hand over to you the murderers of Uthman, I have thought over this matter and I do not find their handing over to you or to someone else possible for me. By Allah, if you do not give up your wrong ways and disruptive acts you would surely know them. They would shortly be seeking you and would not give you the trouble of seeking them in land, sea, mountains or plain. But this search would be painful for you and their visit would not give you happiness. Peace be upon those who deserve it.

Letter 10

To Muawiya

What will you do when the coverings of this world in which you are wrapped are removed from you. The world attracted you with its embellishment and deceived you with its pleasure. It called you and you responded to it. It led you and you followed it. It commanded you and you obeyed it. Shortly an informer will inform you of things against which there will be no shield (for your protection). Therefore, keep off from this affair, take heed of the accounting (on the Day of Judgement), get ready for death that will soon overtake you and do not give your ears to those who have gone astray. If you do not do so I shall recall to you whatever you have forgotten, because you are a man living in ease and luxury. Satan has taken you in his clutches, secured his wishes in you, and taken complete control of you, like the soul and blood.

O Muawiya, when were you protector of the ruled and guardian of the affairs of people without any forward step or conspicuous distinction? We seek Al-

lah's protection against befalling of previous misfortunes, and I warn you lest you continue being deceived by desires and your appearances becomes different from your inner self.

You have called me to war. Better to leave the people on one side, come out to me and spare both the parties from fighting so that it may be known who of us has a rusted heart, and covered eyes. I am Abul-Hasan who killed your grandfather, your brother and your uncle by cutting them to pieces on the day of Badr. The same sword is with me and I meet my adversary with the same heart. I have not altered the religion nor put up any new prophet. I am surely (treading) on that very highway which you had willingly foresaken (in the beginning) and then adopted per force.

You think you have come out seeking to revenge Uthman's blood. Certainly, you know how Uthman's blood was shed. If you want to avenge it, avenge it there. It is as though I see that when war is cutting you with its teeth you cry like camels crying under a heavy load. And it is as though I see your party bewildered by the incessant striking of swords, occurrence of death and falling of bodies after bodies, calling me towards the Quran although they would themselves be either unbelievers, deniers of truth or breakers of allegiance after swearing it.

Instruction 11

Given to the contingent sent to confront the enemy.

When you proceed towards the enemy or he proceeds towards you, the position of your force should be on the approaches of highland or on the edges of mountains or the bends of rivers, so it may serve you as a help and place to return to. Your encounter should be from one side or two sides. Place watchers on the peaks of mountains and the raised sides of the highland 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 drowsiness.

Instruction 12

Given to Ma'qil ibn 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 two cool periods (morning and evening). Let the men have a midday sleep. March easily and do not travel during early night for Allah has made it for resting and 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 jour-

ney 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 one who wants to commence the fighting, nor remain too distant like one 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.

Letter 13

To two of the officers in his army

I have placed Malik bin Harith Ashtar in command over you and over all those under you. Therefore, follow his commands and take him as the armour and shield for yourselves, because he is one of those from whom I have no fear of weakness nor any mistake, nor laziness where haste is more appropriate, nor haste where slackness is expected of him.

Instruction 14

Given to the army before the encounter with the enemy at Siffin

Do not fight them unless they start fighting, because by Allah's grace, you are in the right and to leave them till they start fighting will be another point from your side against them. If by Allah's will, the enemy is defeated then do not kill the runner away, nor strike a helpless person, or finish off the wounded, and do not inflict pain on women even though they may attack your honour 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. Even in pre-Islamic period if a man struck a woman with a stone or a stick he was rebuked along with his latter after him.

Invocation 15

Made by Imam when he used to face the enemy.

O my Allah! Hearts are getting drawn to You, necks are stretching (towards You), eyes are fixed (on You), steps are in motion and bodies have turned lean. O my Allah! Hidden animosity has become manifest and the pots of malice are boiling. O my Allah! We complain to You of the absence of our Prophet, the numerousness of our enemy and the diffusion of our passions.

Our Lord! Decide between us and between our people with truth, and You are the Best of Deciders. (Quran, 7:89)

Instruction 16

Ameerul Momineen used to give 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. Him Who broke open the seed (for growing) and created living beings, they had not accepted Islam but they had secured safety (by verbally professing it) and had hidden their misbelief. Consequently when they found helpers for their misbelief they disclosed it.

Letter 17

In reply to a letter from Muawiya

As for your demand to me to (hand over) Syria, I cannot give you today what I denied you yesterday. As regards your saying that the war has eaten up Arabia save its last breath, you should know that he whom right has eaten up goes to Paradise and he whom wrong has eaten up goes to Hell. As for our equality in (the art of) war and in (numbers of) men, certainly you cannot be more penetrating in doubtfulness (of belief) than I am in certainty (of belief), and the people of Syria are not more greedy for this world than the people of Iraq are for the next world.

As for your saying that both of us are sons of Abd Manaf, it is no doubt so, but Umayyah cannot be like Hashim, nor Harb like Abdul Muttalib, nor can Abu Sufyan be like Abu Talib. The muhajir cannot be a match for him who was set free (on fall of Mecca), nor can one of pure descent be a match for him who was adopted, nor the pursuer of truth be a match of the adherent to wrong, nor a believer be a match for a hypocrite. How bad are the successors who go on following their predecessors who have fallen in the fire of Hell!

Besides that, we also have distinction of prophethood among us, by virtue of which we subdued the strong and raised up the down-trodden. When Allah made Arabia enter His religion, and the people submitted to it willingly or unwillingly, you were among those who entered the religion either with greed or from fear, at a time when others had preceded and the first muhajirs had acquired their distinction. Now, do not allow Satan have a share with you nor let him have his sway over you.

Letter 18

To Abdullah ibne Abbas, his Governor of Basrah

You should know that Basrah is the place where Satan descends and mischiefs happen. Keep the people of this place pleased with good treatment and remove the knots of fear from their hearts. I have come to know of your strictness with Banu Tamim and your harshness over them. Banu Tamim are

those that if one star sets another one rises for them. They were never exceeded in war in pre-Islamic times or after Islam. They have a special kinship with us and a particular relationship. We shall be rewarded if we pay heed to the kinship and be deemed sinful if we disregard it. O Abul 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. Wasalaam.

Letter 19

To one of his officers

Now, the cultivators 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 or remoteness and aloofness with nearness and closeness if Allah so wills.

Letter 20

To Ziad bin Abih (son of his unknown father), when Abdullah bin Abbas was the Governor of Basrah, the suburbs of Ahwaz, Persia and Kerman while Ziad was his deputy in Basrah.

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. Wasalaam.

Letter 21

Also to Ziad

Give up lavishness and be moderate. Every day remember the coming day. Hold back from the funds what you need and send forward the balance for the day of your need. Do you expect that Allah may give you the reward of the humble while you yourself remain vain in His view? And do you covet that He may give you the reward of those practising charity while you enjoy comforts and deny them to the weak and the widows? Certainly, a man is awarded according as he acts and meets what he has sent forward. Wasalaam.

Letter 22

To Abdullah bin Abbas. Abdullah bin Abbas used to say, "Apart from the Prophet's sayings I did not derive greater benefit from any saying than this one."

Let it be known to you that sometimes a man gets pleased at securing a thing which he was not going to miss at all and gets displeased at missing a thing which he would not in any case get. Your pleasure should be about what you secure in respect of your next life and your grief should be for what you miss

in respect thereof. Do not be much pleased on what you secure from this world, nor get extremely grieved over what you miss out of it. Your worry should be about what is to come after death.

Will 23

Made shortly before his martyrdom when he had been fatally wounded by a blow from the sword of (Abd ar.Rahman) Ibn Muljam (the curse of Allah be upon him).

I enjoin upon you as my dying wish not to regard anything by way of partner with Allah, not to disregard the *sunnah* of Muhammad (pbuh), establish these two pillars and light these two lamps. You will then be free from evil. Yesterday I was your companion and today I am a lesson for you, while tomorrow I shall be leaving you. If I survive I shall be the master of my blood (to avenge or not to avenge it), and if I die then death is a promised event. If I forgive, it is for me a means of nearness (to Allah) and for you a good act. Therefore, do forgive.

What! Love you not that Allah should forgive you? (Quran, 24:22)

By Allah, this sudden death is not an event that I dislike, nor is it an accident that I hate. I am just like a night traveller who reaches the spring (in the morning) or like or seeker who secures (his aim):

And whatever is with Allah is the best for the righteous ones. (Quran, 3:198)

Will 24

Imam's will as to how his property should be dealt with. He wrote it on return from Siffin.

This is what Ali ibne Abi Talib, the slave of Allah has laid down about his property, in pursuance of seeking Allah's pleasure so that He may by virtue of it give him entry into Paradise and accord him peace.

A part of the same will: It will be administered by Hasan bin Ali. He will take from it a suitable portion for his livelihood and spend it on charity. If something happens to Hasan, and Husayn survives he will administer it after Hasan, and deal with it accordingly. In the charitable estate of the two sons of Fatimah they have the same rights as the all (other) sons of `Ali. I have laid down the (functions of) administration of the two sons of Fatimah in order to seek the pleasure of Allah and nearness to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) with due regard for his honour and consideration of his kinship.

It is obligatory on him who administers it that he retains the estate, and spends it as he has been ordered and instructed. He should not sell the seedlings in the plantations of these villages till the land changes its face by turning them into plants. As for those of my slave girls who were under me, if any one of them has a child or is pregnant, she will be retained for the sake of the child and will form part of his share. If the child dies and she survives, then she is free, bondage is removed from her and liberty is given to her.

Instruction 25

Imam used to write to whoever he appointed for collection of zakat and charities. We have recorded a few portions of it here to show that he always erected the pillars of right and created examples of justice in all matters, small or big, delicate or serious.

Move on with 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 like 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 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 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 animals 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 a well wisher, God-fearing, trustworthy and watchful, and is not harsh on Muslims' property, nor makes them run too much, nor tires them, nor labours 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 you pass a water spring stay the camels there for drinking and do 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 dis-

tribute them according to the (commands of) the Book of Allah and the *sun-nah* of His Prophet (pbuh). Certainly, this will be a great source of reward for you and a means to secure guidance, if Allah so wills.

Instruction 26

Given to one of his officers whom he sent for the collection of zakat and charities.

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. Also order that he should not harass them, should not be harsh on them and 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 discharge your rights. So, you should discharge their rights. If you do not do so you will have the largest number of enemies on Judgement Day. 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) travellers. 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 most ugly deceit is the deceit towards the Muslim leaders. Wasalaam.

Instruction 27

Given to Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, when Imam 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 favour and the low should not be despondent of your justice to them. Allah will certainly question you, O 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.

Know, O creatures of Allah, that the God-fearing have shared the joys of this transient world as well as the next coming world, for they shared with the people of this world in their worldly matters while their people did not share with them in the matters of the next world. They lived in this world in the best manner of living and ate the choicest food and consequently they en-

joyed herein all that the people with ease of life enjoyed, and secured from it what the haughty and the vain secured. Then, they departed from it after taking provision enough to take them to the end of their journey and after doing a profitable transaction. They tasted the pleasure of renouncing the world in this world, and they firmly believed that on the coming day in their next life they would be neighbours of Allah, where their call would not be repulsed nor would their share of pleasure be small.

Therefore, O Creatures of Allah, be afraid of death and its measures and keep ready all that is needed for it. It will come as a big event and great affair, either as good in which there will never be any evil, or an evil in which there will never be good. Who is nearer to Paradise than he who works towards it, and who is nearer to Hell than he who works for it? You are being chased by death. If you stop, it will catch you, and if you run away from it, it will grip you. It is more attached to you than your reflection.

Death is tied to your fore-locks while the world is being wrapped up from behind you. Therefore, fear Fire whose hollow is deep, flames are severe and punishment is novel. It is a place where there is no mercy. No call is heard in it. No pain is healed in it. If it is possible for you to have severe fear of Allah and to rest hope in Him, then do both these things because every individual can have hope in His Lord to the extent of his fear of His Lord. Certainly, the most hopeful person with Allah is he who fears Him most.

O Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, know that I have given you charge of Egypt which is my biggest force. So you are duty-bound to oppose your passions and serve as a shield against your religion even though you may get only an hour in the world; and do not enrage Allah for pleasing others because (Allah) is such that He may take the place of others, but others cannot take the place of Allah. Say prayers at the appointed time. Do not say it earlier for the sake of leisure nor delay it on account of pre-occupation. Remember that every act of yours is dependent on your prayer.

A part of the same instruction : The leader of guidance and the leader of destruction cannot be equal, nor the friend of the Prophet and the enemy of the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has told me that: "In respect of my people I am afraid neither of a believer nor of an unbeliever. As for the believer Allah will afford him protection because of his belief and as for the unbeliever, Allah will humiliate him because of his unbelief. But I am afraid about everyone of you who is a hypocrite in his heart and learned of speech. He speaks what you hold good but does what you dislike."

Letter 28

In reply to Muawiya, and it is one of his most eloquent writings

Your letter reached me where you recall that Allah chose Muhammad (pbuh) for His religion and helped him through those companions who helped him.

Strange things about you have remained concealed (by irony of fate) from us, since you have started telling us of Allah's trials for us and His bounties to us through our Prophet. In this matter, you are like the person who carries dates to Hajar, or who challenges his own master to a duel in archery.

You think that so-and-so are the most distinguished persons in Islam. You have said such a thing which if it be true, you have nothing to do with it, but if it be not so, then its defect will not affect you. What are you to do with the question of who is better and who is worse, or who is the ruler and who is the ruled? What have the freed ones and their sons to do with distinguishing between the first muhajirs and determining their position or defining their ranks. What a pity! the sound of an arrow is being produced by what is not a real arrow, and he against whom the judgement is to be passed is sitting in judgement. O man, why do you not see your own lameness and remain within bounds, and why do not you realize the shortness of your measure and stay back where destiny has placed you? You have no concern with the defeat of the defeated or the victory of the victor.

You are wandering in bewilderment and straying from the right path. Do you not realize it? I am not giving you any news: I am just recounting Allah's bounty, namely that a number of people from among the muhajirs and ansar fell as martyrs, and that each of them is distinguished (on that account), but when one of us secured martyrdom he was named the Chief of all martyrs, and the Messenger of Allah (pbuh.) gave him the peculiar honour of saying seventy Takbeers (Allahu Akbar) during his funeral prayer. Do you not know that a number of people lost their hands in the way of Allah, and that everyone is distinguished (on that account), but when the same thing occurred to one of us he was given the name "the flier in Paradise"; and "the two winged". If Allah had not forbidden self-praise, the writer would have mentioned numerous distinctions which the believer knows full well and which the ears of hearers do not wish to forget.

Better leave those whose arrows miss the mark. We are the direct recipients of our Lord's favours while others receive favours from us after that. In spite of our old established honour and our well-known superiority over your people, we did not stay away from mixing with you and married and got married (among you) like equals although you were not so. And how could you be so when the position is that) among us is the Prophet while among you is the opposed, among us is the lion of Allah while among you is the lion of the opposing groups, among us are the two masters of the youth of Paradise while among you are the children of Hell, among us is the choicest of all the women of the worlds while among you is the bearer of firewood, and many more distinctions on our side and shortcomings on your side.

Our Islam is well-known and our (greatness in the) pre-Islamic period too cannot be denied. Whatever remains has been mentioned in the words of Allah:

"... And blood relations have the better claim in respect of one to the other,

according to the Book of Allah...”(Quran, 33:6)

He also says: “*Verily, of men the nearest to Abraham are surely those who followed him and this Prophet and those who believe; and verily, Allah, is the Guardian of the faithful. (Quran, 3:68)*

Thus, we are superior firstly because of kinship and secondly because of obedience. When at Saqifah, the muhajir contended kinship with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) against the ansar, they scored over them. If that success was based on kinship then the right would be ours better than yours. Otherwise, the ansar's contention stands. You think that I have been jealous of every caliph and have revolted against them. Even if this be so, it is not an offence against you and therefore no explanation is due to you.

This is a matter for which no blame comes to you have said that I was dragged like a camel with a nose string to swear allegiance (to Abu Bakr at Saqifah). By Allah, you had intended to revile me but you have praised me, and to humiliate me but have yourself been humiliated. What humiliation does it mean for a Muslim to be the victim of oppression so long as he does not entertain any doubt in his religion, nor any misgiving in his firm belief! This argument of mine is intended for others, but I have stated it to you only in so far as it was appropriate.

Then you recalled my position with Uthman, and in this matter an answer is due to you because of your kinship with him. So (tell me), which of us was more opposed towards Uthman and who did more to bring about his killing; or who offered him his support but he made him sit down and stopped him; or who was he whom he called for help but turned his face from him and drew his death near him till fate over took him? No, no; by Allah:

Indeed know Allah those who hinder others among you and those who say unto their brethren "Comehither unto us", and they come not to fight but a little. (Quran, 33;18)

I am not going to offer my excuse for reproving him for (some of) his innovations, for if my good counsel and guidance to him was a sin then very often a person who is blamed has no sin and sometimes the only reward a counselor reaps is suspicion (of evil). I desired naught but reform what I am able to (do); and my guidance is not but with Allah;

On Him (alone) do I rely, and unto Him (alone) do I turn. (Quran, 11:88)

You have mentioned that for me and for my followers you have only the sword. This makes even a weeping person laugh. Did you ever see the descendants of Abdul Muttalib running away from battle, or being frightened by swords, "Wait a little till Hamal joins the battle" shortly, then he whom you are seeking will seek you and he whom you think to be far away will approach near you. I am (shortly) speeding towards you with a force of mu-

hajir and ansar and those who follow them in virtue. Their number will be great and their dust will spread all round. They will be wearing their shrouds and their most coveted desire is to meet Allah. They will be accompanied by the descendants of those who took part in the battle of Badr, and they will have Hashimite swords whose cut you have already seen in the case of your brother, maternal uncle, your grandfather and your kinsmen.

Nor are they far distant from the unjust ones. (Quran, 11:83)

Letter 29

To the people of Basra

Whatever disunity and schism you have is not hidden to you. I have forgiven your wrong-doers and held back my sword from those who ran away. I received everyone who came to me from among you. If devastating matters and wrong and silly views are prompting you to break the pledge with me and to oppose me then (listen) I have kept ready my horses and put saddles (on my riding camels), and if you force me to advance towards you I shall come down in such a manner that before it the battle of Jamal too would appear like the last licking of the tongue. At the same time I know the high position of the obedient among you and the right of the sincere without confusing the sinless with the offenders or the faithful with the pledge-breakers.

Letter 30

To Muawiyah

Fear Allah regarding what you have amassed and find your true right there, and turn to understand for what you will not be excused on grounds of ignorance. Certainly, for (following) obedience there are clear signs, shining ways, straight highways and a fixed aim. The shrewd proceed towards them while the mean turn away from them. Whoever turns his face from them deviates from the right and gropes in bewilderment. Allah takes away His bounty from him and afflicts him with His chastisement. Therefore, beware of yourself. Allah has already shown you your way and the end where your affairs will terminate. You are speeding towards the aim of loss and the position of unbelief. Your ego has pushed you towards evil, thrown you into misguidance conveyed you to destruction and created difficulties in your way.

Will 31

He wrote for Hasan (his son), when Imam encamped at Hadirin on his way back from Siffin.

From the father who is (shortly) to die, who acknowledges the hardships of the times, who has turned away from life, who has submitted himself to the (calamities of) time, who realizes the evils of the world, who is living in the abodes of the dead and is due to depart from them any day; to the son who yearns for what is not to be achieved, who is treading the path of those who

have died, who is the victim of ailments, who is entangled in the (worries of the) days, who is a target of hardships, a slave of the world, a trader of its deception, a debtor of wishes, a prisoner of mortality, an ally of worries, a neighbour of grief, a victim of distresses, who has been overpowered by desires, and who is a successor of the dead.

Now (you should know that) what I have learnt from the turning away of this world from me, the onslaught of time over me and the advancing of the next world towards me is enough to prevent me from remembering anyone except myself and from thinking beyond myself. But when I confined myself to my own worries leaving the worries of others, my intelligence saved me and protected me from my desires. It clarified to me my affairs and led me to seriousness wherein there was no trickery and truth which was not tarnished by falsehood. Here, I found you a part of myself, rather I found you my whole, so much so that if anything befell you, it was as though it befell me and if death came to you it was as though it came to me. Consequently, your affairs meant to me what my own matters meant to me. So, I have written this piece of advice (to you) as an instrument of seeking help through it, whether I remain alive for you or cease to exist.

I advise you to fear Allah, O my child, abide by His commands, fill your heart with remembrance of Him and cling to hope from Him. No connection is more reliable than the connection between you and Allah provided you take hold of it. Enliven your heart with preaching, kill it by denial, energise it with firm belief, enlighten it with wisdom, humiliate it by recalling death, make it believe in mortality, make it see the misfortunate of this world, make it fear the authority of the time and the severity of some changes during the nights and the days, place before it the events of past people, recall to it what befell those who were before you and walk among their cities and ruins, then see what they did and from what they have gone away and where they have gone and stayed. You will find that they departed from (their) friends and remain in loneliness. Shortly, you too will be like one of them. Therefore, plan for your place of stay and do not sell your next life with this world.

Give up discussing what you do not know and speaking about what does not concern you. Keep off track from which you fear to go astray because refraining (from moving) when fear of straying is better than embarking on dangers. Ask others to do good; you will thus be among good doers. Desist others from evil with your action as well as speech and keep off, to the best of your ability, from he who commits it. Struggle for Allah as is His due; and the insults of a reviler should not stop you in matters of Allah. Leap into dangers for the sake of right wherever it be. Acquire insight into religious law. Accustom yourself to endure hardships since the best trait of character is endurance in matters of right. In all affairs resign yourself to Allah, because you will thus be resigning yourself to a secure shelter and a strong protector. You should ask only from your Lord because in His hand is all the giving and depriving. Seek good (from Allah) as much as you can. Understand my advice and do not turn away from it, because the best saying is that which benefits. Know that there is no good in that knowledge which does not benefit,

and if knowledge is not made use of then its acquisition is not justified.

O my child, when I noticed I was of goodly age and noticed I was increasing in weakness I hastened with my will for you and wrote down prominent points of it in case death overtook before I divulged to you what I have in my heart, or in case my wit be affected as my body has been affected, or forces of passions or mischief of the world overtake you making you like a stubborn camel. Certainly, the heart of a young man is like uncultivated land. It accepts whatever is strewn on it. So, I hastened to mould you properly before your heart hardened up and your mind became occupied, so you might be ready to accept through your intelligence the results of the experience of others and be saved from going through these experiences yourself. In this way, you would avoid the hardship of seeking them and the difficulties of experimenting. Thus, you are getting to know what we had experienced and even those things are becoming clear to you which we might have missed.

O my child, even though I have not reached the age which those before me have, yet I looked into their behaviour and thought over events of their lives. I walked among their ruins till I was as one of them. In fact, by virtue of those of their affairs that have become known to me it is as though I have lived with them from the first to the last. I have therefore been able to discern the impure from the clean and the benefit from the harm.

I have selected for you the choicest of those matters and collected for you their good points and have kept away from you their useless points. Since I feel for your affairs as a living father should feel and I aim at giving you training, I thought it should be at a time when you are advancing in age and new on the stage of the world, possessing upright intention and clean heart and that I should begin with the teaching of the Book of Allah, and its interpretation, the laws of Islam and its commands, its lawful matters and unlawful matters and that I should not go beyond these for you. Then I feared lest you should get confused as other people had been confused on account of their passions and (different) views. Therefore, in spite of my dislike for you being so warned, I thought it better for me to make this position strong rather than leave you in a position where I do not regard you safe from falling into destruction. I hoped that Allah would help you in your straightforwardness and guide you in your resoluteness. Consequently, I wrote this piece of my will for you.

Know O my child, what I love most for you to adopt from my will is to fear Allah, to confine yourself to what Allah has made obligatory on you, and to follow the actions of your forefathers and the virtuous people of your household, because they did not fall short in seeing for themselves what you will see for yourself, and they did about their affairs as you would like to think (about your affairs). Thereafter, their thinking led them to discharge the obligations they came to know of and to desist from what they were not required to do. If your heart does not accept this without acquiring knowledge as they acquired it, then your search should first be by way of understanding and learning and not by falling into doubts or getting entangled in quarrels.

And before you probe into this, you should begin by seeking your Allah's help and turning to Him for competence and keeping aloof from everything that throws you into doubt or flings you towards misguidance. When you have made sure that your heart is clean and humble and your thoughts have come together and you have only one thought which is about this matter, then you will see what I have explained to you; but if you have not been able to achieve that peace of observation and thinking which you would like to have, then know that you are only stamping the ground like a blind she-camel and falling into darkness while a seeker of religion should not grope in the dark or create confusion. It is better to avoid this.

Appreciate my advice, O my child, and know He Who is the Master of death is also the Master of life, that the Creator causes death as well; that He Who destroys is also the restorer of life and that He Who inflicts disease is also the curer. This world continues in the way Allah has made it with regard to its pleasures, trials, rewards on the Day of Judgement and all that He wishes and you do not know. If anything of this advice is not understood by you then attribute it to your ignorance of it, because when you were first born you were born ignorant. Thereafter, you acquired knowledge. There are many matters of which you are ignorant and in which your sight first wonders and your eye wanders then after this you see them. Therefore, cling to Him Who created you, fed you and put you in order. Your worship should be for Him, your eagerness should be towards Him and your fear should be of Him.

Know O my child, that no one received messages from Allah, the Glorified, as the Prophet (pbuh) did. Therefore, regard him as your forerunner and leader towards deliverance. Certainly, I shall spare no effort in giving you advice and surely even if you try, you cannot acquire that insight for your welfare as I have for you.

Know O my child, if there had been a partner with your Lord, his messengers too should have come to you and you would have seen signs of his authority and power and have known his deeds and qualities. But He is only One God as He has described Himself. No one can dispute with Him in His authority. He is from ever and will be for ever. He is before all things without any beginning. He will remain after all things without any end. He is far too great to have His divinity proved by the encompassing heart or eye. When you have understood this then you should do what is done by him who is like you by way of his low position, his lack of authority, his increasing incapability, and his great need of his Lord for seeking His obedience, fearing His chastisement and apprehending His anger, because He does not command you save for virtue and does not refrain you save from evil.

O my child, I have informed you about the world, its condition, decay and its passing away and I have informed you of the next world and of what has been provided in it for its people. I have recounted to you parables about it so that you may draw instruction from them and act upon them. The example of those who have understood the world is like those travellers who, being disgusted with drought-stricken places set off for greenery and a fruitful place.

Then they endure difficulties on the way, separation from friends, hardships of the journey and unwholesome food in order to reach their fields of plenty and place of stay. Consequently, they do not feel any pain in all this and do not regard any expenditure to be waste. Nothing is more lovable to them than what takes them near their goal and carries them closer to their place of stay. (Against this), the example of those who are deceived by this world is like the people who were in a green place but they became disgusted with it and went to a drought-stricken place. Therefore, for them nothing is more detestable or abominable than to leave the place where they were to go to a place which they will reach unexpectedly and for which they are heading.

O my child, 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. Do not talk about what you do not know even though what you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you.

Know that self- admiration is contrary to propriety (of action) and is a calamity for the mind. Therefore, increase your striving and do not become a treasurer for (wealth to be inherited by) others. When you have been guided on the right path humble yourself before Allah as much as you can.

Know in front of you lies a road of long distance and severe hardship and you cannot avoid seeking it. Take your requirements of provision keeping the burden light. Do not load your back beyond your power lest its weight become a mischief for you. Whenever you come across a needy person who can carry for you your provision to hand it back to you on the Day of Judgement when you will need it, then accept him as a good opportunity and get him to carry it. Put in that provision as much-as you are able to, for it is likely that if you may need him (afterwards), you may not get hold of him. If a person is willing to borrow from you in the days of your affluence to pay it back to you at the time of your need then make use of this opportunity.

Know that in front of you lies an impassable valley wherein the light-burdened man will be in a better condition than the heavy-burden one, and the slow- paced would be in a worse condition than the swift-paced. Your terminating point at the other end of this passage will necessarily be either Paradise or Hell. Therefore, investigate for yourself before alighting, and prepare the place before getting down, because after death there can be no preparation nor return to this world.

Know that He Who owns the treasuries of the heavens and of the earth has permitted you to pray to Him and has promised you acceptance of the prayer. He has commanded you to beg from Him in order that He may give you and to seek His mercy in order that He may have mercy on you. He has not placed any thing between you and Him that may veil Him from you. He has

not required you to get a mediator for you to Him, and if you err, He has not prevented you from repentance. He does not hasten with punishment. He does not taunt you for repenting, nor does He humiliate you when humiliation is more appropriate for you. He has not been harsh in accepting repentance. He does not severely question you about your sins. He does not disappoint you of His mercy. Rather He regards abstention from sin as a virtue. He counts your one sin as one while He counts your one virtue as ten.

He has opened for you the door of repentance. Therefore, whenever you call Him He hears your call, and whenever you whisper to Him He knows the whisper. You place before Him your needs, unveil yourself before Him, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs and ask from the treasuries of His mercy that which no one else has power to give, namely length of life, health of body and increase in sustenance. Then He has placed the keys of His treasuries in your hands in the sense that He has shown you the way to ask Him.

Therefore, wherever you wish, open the doors of His favour with prayer, and let abundant rains of His mercy fall on you. Delay in acceptance of prayer should not disappoint you because grant of prayer is according to the measure of (your) intention. Sometimes acceptance (of prayer) is delayed with a view to its being a source of greater reward to the asker and of better gifts to the expectant. Sometimes you ask for a thing but it is not given to you, and a better thing is given to you later, or a thing is taken away from you for some greater good of yours, because sometimes you ask for a thing which contains ruin for your religion if it is given to you. Therefore, your request should be for things whose beauty should be lasting and whose burden should remain away from you. As for wealth it will not last for you nor will you live for it.

O my child, know that you have been created for the next world, not for this world, for destruction (in this world) not for lasting, and for dying not for living. You are in a place which does not belong to you, a house for making preparations and a passage towards the next world. You are being chased by death from which the runner -away cannot escape, as it would surely overtake him. So, be on guard against it lest it overtakes you at a time when you are in a sinful state and you are thinking of repenting but it creates obstruction between you and repentance. In such a case you will ruin yourself.

O my child, remember death very much and the place where you have to go suddenly and reach after death, so that when it comes you are already on your guard against it and have prepared yourself for it and it does not come to you all of a sudden and surprise you. Beware, lest you become deceived by the leanings of the people towards worldly attraction and their rushing upon it. Allah has warned you about it and the world has informed you of its mortal character and unveiled to you its evils.

Surely, those (who go) after it are like barking dogs or devouring carnivore who hate each other. The stronger among them eat away the weaker and the big among them tramples over the small. Some are like tied cattle and some

like untied cattle who have lost their wits and are running in unknown directions. They are flocks of calamities wandering in rugged valleys. There is no herdsman to detain them nor any tenderer to take them to grazing. The world has put them on the track of blindness and taken away their eyes from the beacons of guidance. They have therefore perplexed in its bewilderings and sunk in its pleasures. They took it as a god so it played with them. They too played with it and forgot what is beyond it.

Darkness is disappearing gradually. Now it is as though travellers have got down and the hasteners will soon meet. Know, O my child, that everyone who is riding on the carriage of night and day is being carried by them even though he may be stationary, and he is covering the distance even though he is staying and resting.

Know with certainty you cannot achieve your desire and exceed your destined life. You are on the track of those before you. Therefore, be humble in seeking and moderate in earning because often seeking leads to deprivation. Every seeker of livelihood does not get it, nor is everyone who is moderate in seeking deprived. 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. Do not be the slave of others for Allah had made you free. There is no good in good which is achieved through evil and no good in comfort that is achieved through (disgracing) hardship.

Beware lest bearers of greed should carry you and make you descend down to the springs of destruction. If you can manage that there be no wealthy person between yourself and Allah, do so, because in any case you will find what is for you and get your share. A little received directly from Allah the Glorified, is more dignified than that which is more but is received through (the obligation of) His creatures, although (really) all is from Allah.

It is easier to rectify what you miss by silence than to secure what you lose by speaking. Whatever is in a pot can be retained by closing the lid. I should prefer you to retain what is in your hands rather to seek what is in other's hands. Bitterness of disappointment is better than seeking from people. Manual labour with chastity is better than the riches of a vicious life. A man is the best guard of his own secrets. Often a man strives for what harms him. He who speaks much speaks nonsense. Whoever ponders perceives. Associate with people of virtue; you will become one of them. Keep aloof from people of vice; you will remain safe from them. The worst food is that which is unlawful. Oppressing the weak is the worst oppression.

Where leniency is unsuitable, harshness is lenience. Often cure is illness and illness is cure. Often the ill-wisher gives correct advice while the well-wisher cheats. Do not depend upon hopes because hopes are the mainstay of fools. It is wise to preserve one's experience. Your best experience is that which teaches you a lesson. Make use of leisure before it changes into (the hour of) grief. Every seeker does not achieve (what he seeks); and every departed does not return. To lose provision and to earn evil for the Day of Judgement

means ruin. Every matter has a consequence. What is destined for you will shortly come to you. A trader undertakes a risk. Often a small quantity is more beneficial than a large quantity. There is no good in an ignoble helper, nor in a suspicious friend. Be compliant with the world as long as it is in your grip. Do not put yourself to risk as regards anything in expectation for more than that. Beware lest the feeling of enmity should overpower you.

Bear yourself towards your brother in such a way that if he disregards kinship you keep to it; when he turns away be kind to him and draw near to him; when he withholds spend for him; when he goes away approach him; when he is harsh be lenient; when he commits wrong think of (his) excuse for it, so much so as though you are a slave of him and he is the benevolent master over you. But take care that this should not be done inappropriately, and that you should not behave so with an undeserving person. Do not take the enemy of your friend as a friend because you will thus antagonize your friend. Give true advice to your brother, be it good or bitter. Swallow your anger because I did not find a sweeter thing than it in the end, and nothing more pleasant in consequence. Be lenient to him who is harsh to you for it is likely that he will shortly become lenient to you. Treat your enemy with favours, because this is sweeter of the two successes (the success of revenge and the success of doing favour).

If you intend to cut yourself off from a friend leave some scope for him from your side by which he may resume friendship if it occurs to him some day. If anyone has a good idea about you prove it to be true. Do not disregard interests of your brother depending upon your terms with him, for he is not your brother if you disregard his interests. Your household should not become the most miserable people through you. Do not lean towards him who turns away from you. Your brother should not be more firm in his disregard of kinship than you in paying regard to it, and you should exceed in doing good to him than is evil to you. Do not feel too much the oppression of a person who oppresses you, because he is only busy in harming himself and benefiting you. The reward of him who pleases you is not that you displease him.

Know O my child, that livelihood is of two kinds - a livelihood that you seek and a livelihood that seeks you, which is such that if you do not reach it, it will come to you. How bad it is to bend down at the time of need and to be harsh in riches. You should have from this world only that with which you can adorn your permanent abode. If you cry over what has gone out of your hands then also cry for what has not at all come to you. Infer about what has not yet happened from what has already happened, because occurrences are ever similar. Do not be like those whom preaching does not benefit unless you inflict pain on them, because the wise take instruction from teaching while beasts learn only from beating.

Ward off from yourself the onslaught of worries by firmness of endurance and purity of belief. He who gives up moderation commits excess. A companion is like a relation. A friend is he whose absence also proves the friendship. Passion is a partner of distress. Often the near ones are remoter than the

distant ones, and often the distant ones are nearer than the near ones. A stranger is he who has no friend. He who transgresses right narrows his own passage. He who stays in his position remains constant upon it. The most trustworthy intermediary is that which you adopt between yourself and Allah the Glorified. He who does not care for your interests is your enemy. When greed leads to ruin deprivation is an achievement. Not every defect can be reviewed, and not every opportunity recurs.

Often a person with eyes misses the track while a blind person finds the correct path. Delay an evil because you will be able to hasten it whenever you desire. The disregard of kinship of the ignorant is equal to the regard for kinship of the wise. Whoever takes the world to be safe, it will betray him. Whoever regards the world as great, it will humiliate him. Every one who shoots does not hit. When authority changes the time changes too. Consult the friend before adopting a course and the neighbour before taking a house. Beware, lest you mention in your speech what may rouse laughter even though you may be relating it from others.

Do not consult women because their view is weak and their determination unstable. Cover their eyes by keeping them under the veil because strictness of veiling keeps them for long. Their coming out is not worse than your allowing an unreliable man to visit them. If you can manage that they should not know anyone other than you, do so. Do not allow a woman matters other than those about herself, because a woman is a flower not an administrator. Do not pay her regard beyond herself. Do not encourage her to intercede for others. Do not show suspicion out of place, because this leads a correct woman to evil and a chaste woman to deflection. For everyone among your servants fix a work for which you may hold him responsible. In this way, they will not fling the work one over the other. Respect your kinsmen because they are your wings with which you fly, the origin towards which you return and your hands with which you attack. Place your religion and your world at Allah's disposal and beg Him to ordain the best for you in respect of the near and the far, this world and the next. Wasalaam.

Letter 32

To Muawiya

You have ruined a large group of people whom you have deceived by your misguidance, and flung into currents of your sea where darkness covered them and misgivings are tossing them. As a result they have strayed from the right path and turned on their backs. They turned their backs and pushed forward except those wise ones who came back because left you after understanding you and ran towards Allah away from your assistance when you put them to troubles and strayed them from the middle path. Therefore, O Muawiya, fear Allah about yourself and take away your rein from Satan, since this world is shortly to be cut off from you and the next is near you.

Letter 33

To Quthm bin Abbas, his Governor of Mecca

My spy in the West has written to me, telling me some people of Syria have been sent for Hajj who are blind of heart, deaf of ears and devoid of eyesight. They seek right through wrong, obey men in disobeying Allah, claim the milk of the world in the name of religion, and trade in the pleasures of this world by forsaking the rewards of the virtuous and the God-fearing. No one achieves good except he who acts for it, and no one is awarded the recompense of evil except he who commits it. Therefore, behave yourself in your duties like an intelligent, experienced, well-wishing and wise man who follows his superior and is obedient to his Imam. You should avoid what you may have to explain. Do not rise up in riches nor lose courage in distress.

Letter 34

To Muhammad bin Abi Bakr on coming to know that he had taken over the Position of (Malik) al-Ashtar as Governor of Egypt after the latter had died on his way to Egypt.

I have come to know of your anger at the posting of Ashtar in your place, but I did not do so because of any shortcoming on your part or to get you to increase your efforts, but when I had taken away what was under your authority I would have placed you at a position which would have been less exacting and more attractive to you.

The man whom I have made Governor of Egypt was my well-wisher, and very harsh and vengeful towards our enemies. May Allah have mercy on him, as he has finished his days and met his death. I am quite pleased with him. May Allah too accord him His pleasure, and multiply his reward. Now get ready for your enemy and act according to your intelligence. Prepare for fighting him who fights you and calling to the path of Allah. Seek Allah's help exceedingly. If Allah wills He will assist you in what worries you and help you with what befalls you.

Letter 35

To Abdullah bin Abbas after Muhammad bin Abi Bakr had been killed.

Now, Egypt has been conquered and Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, may Allah have mercy on him, has been martyred. We seek his reward from Allah. He was a son who was a well wisher, hard worker, sharp sword and a fortress of defence. I had roused the people to join him and ordered them to reach him to help before this incident. I called to them secretly as well as openly repeatedly. Some of them came half-heartedly, some put up false excuses and some sat away leaving me. I ask Allah, to give me early relief from them, for by Allah, had I not been yearning to meet the enemy for martyrdom and not prepared myself for death, I would not have liked to be with these people for a single day nor ever to face the enemy with them.

Letter 36

To his brother Aqieel bin Abi Talib, in reply to his letter which contained a reference to the army Ameerul Momineen had sent to some enemy.

I sent towards him a large army of Muslims. When he came to know of it he fled away and retreated repenting. They met him on the way when the sun was about to set. They grappled for a while like nothing. It was about an hour and he rescued himself half-dead as he had almost been taken by the neck and only the last breath remained in him. In this way, he escaped in a panic.

Leave the Quraysh in their rushing into misguidance, their galloping in disunity and their leaping over destruction. They have joined together to fight me as they had joined to fight the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) before me. I wish the Quraysh will get the reward of their treatment of me. For they disregarded my kinship and deprived me of the power due to me from the son of my mother (the Holy Prophet).

As for your enquiry about my opinion to fight till I die, I am in favour of fighting those who regard fighting lawful. The crowd of men around me does not give me strength nor does their dispersal from me cause any loneliness. Surely, do not consider the son of your father weak or afraid, even though all people have forsaken him, bow down submissively before injustice or hand over his reins into the hand of the puller, or allow his back to be used by the rider to sit upon. But he is as the man of Banu Salim has said:

If you enquire how I am, then listen that I am enduring and strong against the vicissitudes of time. I do not allow myself to be grieved lest the foe feels joyful and the friend feels sorry.

Letter 37

To Muawiya

Glory be to Allah! How staunchly you cling to innovated passions and painful bewilderment along with ignoring the facts and rejecting strong reasons which are liked by Allah and serve as pleas for the people. As regards your prolonging the question of Uthman's murder the position is that you helped Uthman when it was really your own help while you forsook him when he was in need of help. Wasalaam.

Letter 38

To the people of Egypt when he appointed (Malik) al-Ashtar as their Governor.

From the slave of Allah, Ali, Ameerul Momineen to the people who became wrathful for the sake of Allah when He was disobeyed on His earth and His rights were ignored and oppression had spread its coverings over the virtuous as well as the vicious, on the local as well as the foreigner. Consequently, no good was acted upon nor any evil was avoided.

Now, I have sent to you a man from among the servants 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 bin Harith, of (the tribe) Muzhij. Therefore, listen to him and obey his orders that accord with right, because he is one of the swords of Allah, whose edge is not dull and which does not miss its victim. If he orders you to advance, advance, and if he orders you to stay, stay, because he surely neither advances or attacks nor puts anyone backward or forward save with my command. I have preferred him for you rather than for myself because of his being your well-wisher and the severity of his harshness over your enemies.

Letter 39

To Amr bin A'as

You have surely made your religion subservient to the worldly seekings of a man whose misguidance is not a concealed affair and whose veil has been torn away. He mars an honourable man with his company and befools those who keep his society. You are following in his footsteps and seeking his favours like the dog that follows the lion looking at his paws and waiting for whatever remnants of his prey fall down to him.

In this way, you have ruined your world as well as the next life, although if you had stuck to the right, you would have got what you were after. If Allah grants me power over you and Ibne Abi Sufyan (Muawiya), I shall award you both recompense of what you have done, but if you escape and survive then hereafter there is only evil for you both. Wasalaam.

Letter 40

To one of his officers

Now, I have come to know such a thing about you that if you have done so then you have displeased your Lord, disobeyed your Imam and betrayed your trust. I have come to know that you have razed the ground and taken away whatever was under your feet and devoured what ever was in your hands. Send me your account and know that the accounting to Allah will be severer than that to the people.

Letter 41

To one of his officers

Now, I had made you a partner in my trust, and made you my chief man. And for me no other person from my kinsmen was more trustworthy than you in the matter of sympathizing with me, assisting and respecting my trusts. But when you saw that time had attacked your cousin, the enemy had waged war,

the trust of the people was being humiliated, and the whole community was trackless and disunited, you turned your back against your cousin and forsook him when others forsook him, you abandoned him when others abandoned him, and you betrayed him when others betrayed him. Thus, you showed no sympathy to your cousin, nor discharged the trust.

It seems as if you do not want (to please) Allah by your *jihad*, and as if you do not stand upon a clear sign from your Lord, and as if you have been playing tricks with this *ummah* to earn (the pleasure of) this world and watching for the moment of their neglectfulness to usurp their share of the wealth. As soon as it was possible for you to misappropriate the *ummah's* trust, you hastened to turn around and attack (them), and made a swift leap to snatch away whatever you could from their property meant for their widows and their orphans as a wolf snatches a wounded and helpless goat. Then, you happily loaded it off to the Hijaz without feeling guilty for having appropriated it. Allah's woe be to your ill-wishers; it was as though you were sending to your family what you had inherited from your father and mother.

Glory be to Allah! Do you not believe in Day of Judgement, or not fear the exaction of account? O you who were counted by us among the men possessed of mind, how can you enjoy food and drink when you know that you are eating the unlawful and drinking the unlawful. You are purchasing slavemaids and wedding women with the money of the orphans, the poor, the believers and the participants in jihad to whom Allah had dedicated this money and through whom He had strengthened these cities. Fear Allah and return to these people their properties. If you do not do so and Allah grants me power over you I shall excuse myself before Allah about you and strike you with my sword with which I did not strike anyone but that he went to hell.

By Allah, even if Hassan and Hussain had done what you did there would have been no leniency with me for them and they could not have won their way with me till I had recovered from them the right and destroyed the wrong produced by their unjust action. I swear by Allah, the Lord of all beings, that I would not be pleased to regard their money which you have appropriated as lawful for me and to leave it to my successors by way of inheritance. Mind yourself and consider for a while as though you had reached the end of life and had been buried under the earth.

Then your actions will be presented before you in the place where the oppressor cries "Alas" while he who wasted his life yearns for return (to the world), but time was none to escape. (Quran, 38:3)

Letter 42

To Umar bin Abi Salamah al-Makhzumi (foster son of the Holy Prophet from Umm al-mu'minin, Umm Salamah) who was Ameerul Momineen's Governor of Bahrain, hut whom he removed and replaced by Nu'man bin Ajlan az-Zuraqi.

Now, I have posted Nu'man bin Ajlan az-Zuraqi at Bahrain and have released

you from that position without anything bad from you nor reproach on you, because you managed the governorship well and discharged the obligations. Therefore, proceed to me when you are neither suspected nor rebuked, neither blamed nor guilty. I have just intended to proceed towards the recalcitrant of Syria and desired that you should be with me because you are among those on whom I rely in fighting the enemy and erecting the pillars of religion, if Allah wills.

Letter 43

To Masqalah bin Hubayrah ash-Shaybani, the Governor of Ardashir Khurrah (Iran).

I have come to know concerning you a matter which if you have done it you have displeased your Allah and disobeyed your Imam. You are distributing among the Arabs (Bedouins) of your kin who tend towards you the property of the Muslims which they collected by dint of their spears and horses and on which their blood was shed. By Allah Who germinated the seed and created living beings, if this is true you will be humbled in my view and you will become light in weight. 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 losers by the way of (your) actions. 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.

Letter 44

To Ziad ibn Abih when Ameerul Momineen had come to know that Mnawiya had written to Ziad to deceive him and to attach him to himself in kinship.

I have learnt that Muawiya has written to you to deceive your wit and blunt your sharpness. You should be on guard against him because he is the Satan who approaches a believer from the front and from the back, from the right and from the left, to catch him suddenly in the hour of his carelessness and overcome his intelligence. In the days of Umar bin Khattab, Abu Sufyan happened to utter a thoughtless point which was an evil suggestion of Satan, from which neither kinship is established nor entitlement to succession occurs. He who relies on it is like the uninvited guest to a drink-party or like the dangling cup (tied to a saddle).

Letter 45

To Uthman ibn Hunayf al-Ansari who was Imam's Governor of Basrah, when he came to know that the people of that place had invited Uthman to a banquet and he had attended.

O Ibne 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 colours were being chosen for you and big bowls were being given to you. I never thought 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 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 cloth 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, because, by Allah, I have not treasured any gold out of your world nor amassed plentiful wealth nor collected any clothes other than the two shabby sheets.

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: Fadak or 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 openings. I try to keep myself engaged in piety so that one 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 take me to choosing good meals while in the Hijaz or in Yamamah 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 for dried leather.

Shall I be content with being called Ameerul Momineen (Commander of the Believers), although I do not share with the people the hardships of the world? Or shall I 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 his fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to swallow. It fills 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?

I see as if one of you would say that if this is what the son of Abu Talib eats then weakness must have made him unfit to fight his foes and encounter the brave. Remember that the tree of the forest is the best for timber, while green twigs have soft bark, and the wild bushes are very strong for burning and slow in dying off. My relation with the Messenger of Allah is that of one branch with another, or of the wrist with the forearm. By Allah, if the Arabs join together to fight me I will not run away from them and if I get the opportunity I will hasten to catch them by their necks. I shall surely strive to relieve the earth of this man of perverse mind and uncouth body, till the bits of earth are removed from the grain.

A part of the same which is the end of the letter : Get away from me, O world. Your rein is on your own shoulders as I have released myself from your ditches, removed myself of your snares and avoided walking into your slippery places. Where are those whom you have deceived by your jokes? Where are those communities whom you have enticed with your embellishments? They are all confined to graves and hidden in burial places.

By Allah, if you had been a visible personality and a body capable of feeling, I would have awarded you the penalties 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. Indeed whoever stepped on your slippery place slipped, whoever rode your waves was drowned, and whoever evaded your snares received in ward 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 you may drive me away. I swear by Allah an oath wherein I, except the will of Allah, that I shall so train myself 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 who fill their stomachs from the pasture land and lie down, or as the goats graze, eat the green grass 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 a pillow, along with those who keep their eyes wakeful in fear of the Day of Judgement, whose bodies are ever away from beds, whose lips are humming in remembrance of Allah and whose sins have been erased through their prolonged beseechings for forgiveness.

They are the party of Allah; *Be it known, verily the party of Allah alone shall be the successful ones (Quran, 58:22)*. Therefore, O, Ibne Hunayf, fear Allah and be content with your own loaves so that you may escape Hell.

Letter 46

To One of his Officers

Now, you are 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 behaviour) with them. Treat them equally in looking at them with half eyes or full eyes, in signalling and in greeting so that the great should not expect transgression on your part and the weak should not lose hope in your justice. Wasalaam.

Will 47

For Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (peace be upon them) when Abd ur Rahman Ibne Muljam (the curse of Allah be upon him) struck him (fatally with a sword).

I advise you to fear Allah and that you should not hanker after the (pleasures of this) world even though it may run after you. Do not be sorry for anything of this world that you have been denied. Speak the truth and act (in expectation) for reward. Be an enemy of the oppressor and helper of the oppressed.

I advise you (both) and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches, to fear Allah, to keep your affairs in order, and to maintain good relations among yourselves for I have heard your grandfather (the Holy Prophet - pbuh) saying, "Improvement of mutual differences is better than general prayers and fasting."

(Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of orphans. So do not allow them to starve and they should not be ruined in your presence. (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of your neighbours, because they were the subject of the Prophet's advice. He went on advising in their favour till we thought he would allow them a share in inheritance.

(Fear) Allah, keep Allah in view in the matter of the Quran. No one should excel you in acting upon it. (Fear) Allah, keep Allah in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion. (Fear) Allah, keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka'aba). Do not forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned you will not be spared. (Fear) Allah (and) keep Allah in view in the matter of jihad with the help of your property, lives and tongues in the way of Allah.

You should keep to a respect for kinship and spending for others. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations. Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then if you will pray, the prayers will not be granted.

Then he said: O sons of Abdul Muttalib, you should not shed blood of Muslims shouting "Ameerul Momineen has been killed." Beware, do not kill on account of me except my killer. Wait till I die by his existing stroke. Then strike him one stroke for his stroke and do not dismember the limbs of the man, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying, "Avoid cutting limbs even though it may be a rabid dog."

Letter 48

To Muawiya

Surely, revolt and falsehood abase a man in his religious as well as worldly matters and manifest his shortcomings before his critic. You know that you cannot catch what is destined to remain away from you. Many people had aims other than right and began to swear by Allah (that they will attain their goal) but He falsified them. Therefore, fear the Day when happy is he who made his end happy (by good actions) while repentant is he who allowed Satan to lead him and did not resist him. You called us to a settlement through the Quran although you were not a man of the Quran, and we responded to the Quran through its judgement, and not to you. Wasalaam.

Letter 49

To Muawiya

This world turns away from the next one. Its devotee achieves nothing from it except it increases his greed and coveting for it. Its devotee is not satisfied with what he gets from it because of what he has not got. Eventually, there is separation from what has been amassed, and breaking of what has been strengthened. If you take lessons from the past, you can be safe in the future.

Letter 50

To the officers of his army

From the servant of Allah, Ali, Ameerul Momineen to Officers 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 behaviour towards those under him, and the riches Allah has bestowed on him should increase him in nearness to his people and kindness over his brethren.

Beware, it is obligatory for you on me that I should not keep anything secret from you except during war, nor should I decide any matter without consulting you except the commands of religion, nor should I ignore fulfilment of any of your rights nor desist till I discharge it fully, and that for me all of you should be equal in rights. When I have done all this, it becomes obligatory on you to thank Allah for this and to obey me, and you should not hold back when called, nor shirk good acts, and you should face hardships for the sake of right. If you do not remain steadfast in this, there will be no one more humiliated in my view than the one among you who has deviated, and then I will increase the punishment for him, wherein no one will get any concession from me. Take this (pledge) from your officers and accord to them such behaviour from your side by which Allah may improve your matters.

Letter 51

To his collectors of (land) tax

From the servant of Allah Ali, Ameerul Momineen to the tax collectors: He who does not fear where he is going, does not send forward for himself that which could protect him. You should know that the obligations laid on you are few, while their reward is much. 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. Behave yourselves justly with the people and act with endurance with regard to their needs, because you are the treasurers of the people, representatives of the community and the ambassadors of the Imams.

Do not deprive anyone of his needs and do not prevent him from (securing) his requirements. For the collection of tax from the people do not sell their winter or summer clothes, nor cattle with which they work, nor slaves. Do not whip anyone for the sake of one Dirham. Do not touch the property of any person whether he be one who prays (Muslim) or a protected unbeliever, unless you find a horse or weapons used for attack against Muslims, because it is not proper for the Muslims to leave these things in the hands of the enemies of Islam to enable them to have power over Islam.

Do not deny good counsel to yourself, good behaviour to the army, succour to the subjects and strength to the religion of Allah. Strive in the way of Allah as is obligatory on you, because Allah desires us and you to be thankful to Him as best as we can and that we should help Him to the best of our power. And there is no power save with Allah.

Letter 52

To the Governors of various places concerning prayers

Now, say the Zuhr prayers with the people when the shade of the wall of the goats' pen is equal to the wall. Say the Asr prayers with them when the sun is still shining in a portion of the day enough for covering the distance of two farsakhs (about six miles). Say the Maghrib prayers when he who is fasting ends the fast and the pilgrim rushes (from Arafat) to Mina. Say the Isha'a prayers with them when twilight disappears and up to one third of the night. Say the morning prayers with them when a man can recognize the face of his companion. Say the prayers with the people as the weakest of them would do and do not be a source of trouble to them.

Instructions 53

Written for Malik al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, when the position of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr had become disturbed, and Imam had appointed Ashtar as Governor of Egypt and surroundings; it is the longest document and contains the greatest number of beautiful sayings.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This is what Allah's servant `Ali, Ameerul Momineen, has ordered Malik bin al-Harith al-Ashtar in his instrument (of appointment) for him when he made him Governor of Egypt for the collection of its revenues, fighting against its enemies, seeking the good of its people and making its cities prosperous.

He has ordered him to fear Allah, to prefer obedience to Him, and to follow what He has commanded in His Book (Quran) out of His obligatory and elective commands, without following which one cannot achieve virtue, nor (can one) be evil save by opposing them and ignoring them, and to help Allah the Glorified, with his heart, hand and tongue, because Allah whose name is Sublime takes the responsibility for helping him who helps Him, and for protecting him who gives Him support.

He also orders him to break his heart off from passions, and to restrain it at the time of their increase, because the heart leads towards evil unless Allah has mercy.

Then, know O Malik that I have sent you to an area where there have been governments before you, both just as well as oppressive. People will now watch your dealings as you used to watch the dealings of the rulers before you, and they (people) will criticise you as you criticised them (rulers). Surely, the virtuous are known by the reputation that Allah circulates for them through the tongues of His creatures. Therefore, the best collection with you should be the collection of good deeds. So, control your passions and check your heart from doing what is not lawful for you, because checking the heart means detaining it just half way between what it likes and dislikes.

Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them, since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation. They will commit slips and encounter mistakes. They may act wrongly, wilfully or by neglect. So, extend to them your forgiveness and pardon, in the same way as you would like Allah to extend His forgiveness and pardon to you, because you are over them and your responsible Commander (Imam) is over you while Allah is over him who has appointed you. He (Allah) has sought you to manage their affairs and has tried you through them.

Do not set yourself to fight Allah because you have no power before His power and you cannot do without His pardon and mercy. Do not repent of forgiving or be merciful in punishing. Do not act hastily during anger if you can find way out of it. Do not say: "I have been given authority, I should be obeyed when I order," because it engenders confusion in the heart, weakens the religion and takes one near ruin. If the authority in which you are placed produces pride or vanity in you then look at the greatness of the realm of Allah over you and His might the like of which might you do not even possess over yourself. This will curb your haughtiness, cure you of your high temper

and bring back to you your wisdom which had gone away from you. Beware of comparing yourself to Allah in His greatness or likening yourself to Him in His power, for Allah humiliates every claimant of power and disgraces every one who is haughty.

Do justice for Allah and justice towards people, as against yourself, your near ones and those of your subjects for whom you have a liking because if you do not do so you will be oppressive, and when a person oppresses creatures of Allah then, instead of His creatures, Allah becomes his opponent, and when Allah is the opponent of a person He tramples his plea; and he will remain in the position of being at war with Allah until he gives it up and repents. Nothing is more inducive of the reversal of Allah's bounty or for the hastening of His retribution than continuance in oppression, because Allah hears the prayer of the oppressed and is on the look out for the oppressors.

The way most coveted by you should be that which is the most equitable for the right, the most universal by way of justice, and the most comprehensive with regard to the agreement among those under you, because the disagreement among the common people sweeps away the arguments of the chiefs while the disagreement among the chiefs can be disregarded when compared with the agreement of the common people. No one among those under you is more burdensome to the ruler in the comfort of life, less helpful in distress, more disliking of equitable treatment, more tricky in asking favours, less thankful at the time of giving, less appreciative of reasons at the time of refusal, and weaker in endurance at the time of discomforts of life than chiefs. It is the common people of the community who are the pillars of the religion, the power of the Muslims and the defence against the enemies. Your leanings should therefore be towards them and your inclination with them.

The one among people under you who is furthest from you and worst of them in your view should be he who is most inquisitive of shortcomings of the people, because people do have shortcomings and the ruler is the most appropriate person to cover them. Do not disclose whatever of it is hidden from you because your obligation is to correct what is manifest to you, while Allah will deal with whatever is hidden from you. Therefore, cover shortcomings so far as you can; Allah would cover those of your shortcomings which you would like to remain under cover from your subjects. Unfasten every knot of hatred in the people and cut away from yourself the cause of every enmity. Feign ignorance from what is not clear to you. Do not hasten to second a backbiter, because a backbiter is a cheat although he looks like those who wish well.

Do not include among those you consult a miser who would keep you back from being generous and caution you against destitution, nor a coward who would make you feel too weak for your affairs, nor a greedy person who would make beautiful to you the collection of wealth by evil ways. This is because although miserliness, cowardice and greed are different qualities, yet they are common in having an incorrect idea about Allah.

The worst minister for you is he who has been a minister for mischievous persons before you, and who joined them in sins. Therefore, he should not be your chief man, because they are abettors of sinners and brothers of the oppressors. You can find good substitutes for them who will be like them in their views and influence, while not being like them in sins and vices. They have never assisted an oppressor in his oppression or a sinner in his sin. They will give you the least trouble and the best support. They will be most considerate towards you and the least inclined towards others. Therefore, make them your chief companions in privacy as well as in public.

Then, more preferable among them for you should be those who openly speak better truths before you and who support you least in those of your actions which Allah does not approve in His friends, even though they may be according to your wishes. Associate yourself with God-fearing and truthful people; then educate them, so that they should not praise you or please you by reason of an action you did not perform, because an excess of praise produces pride and drives you near haughtiness.

The virtuous and the vicious should not be in equal position before you because this means dissuasion of the virtuous from virtue and persuasion of the vicious to vice. Keep everyone in the position which is his. You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behaviour towards them, lighten their hardships, and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles. You should therefore, in this way follow a course by which you will leave a good impression with your subjects, because such good ideas will relieve you of great worries. Certainly, the most appropriate for good impression of you is he to whom your behaviour has not been good.

Do not discontinue the good lives in which the earlier people of this community had been acting, by virtue of which there was general unity and through which the subjects prospered. Do not innovate any line of action which injures these earlier ways because (in that case) the reward for those who had established those ways will continue, but the burden for discontinuing them will be on you. Keep on increasing your conversations with the scholars and discussions with the wise to stabilize the prosperity of the areas under you, and to continue with that in which the earlier people had remained steadfast.

Know that people consist of classes who prosper only with the help of one another, and are not independent of one another. Among them are the army of Allah, then the secretarial workers of the common people and the chiefs, then the dispensers of justice, then those engaged in law and order, then the payers of head and land tax from the protected unbelievers and the common Muslims, then there are the traders and the men of industry and then the lowest class of the needy and the destitute. Allah has fixed the share of every one of them and laid down His precepts about the limits of each in His Book and *sunnah* of His Prophet by way of a settlement which is preserved with us.

Now the army is, by the will of Allah, the fortress of subjects, the ornament

of the ruler, the strength of religion and means of peace. The subjects cannot exist without them while the army can be maintained only by funds fixed by Allah in revenues, through which they acquire the strength to fight the enemies, on which they depend for their prosperity, and with which they meet their needs. These two classes cannot exist without the third class namely the judges, the executives and the secretaries who pass judgements about contracts, collect revenues and are depended upon in special and general matters.

And these classes cannot exist except with the traders and men of industry, who provide necessities for them, establish markets and make it possible for others not to do all this with their own hands. Then is the lowest class of the needy and the destitute support of and help for whom is an obligation, and everyone of them has livelihood in the name of Allah. Everyone of them has a right on the ruler according to what is needed for his prosperity. The ruler cannot acquit himself of the obligations laid on him by Allah in this matter except by striving and seeking help from Allah and by training himself to adhere to the right and by enduring on that account all that is light or hard.

Put in command of your forces the man who in your view is the best well-wisher of Allah, His Prophet and your Imam. The most chaste of them in heart and the highest of them in endurance is he who is slow in getting enraged, accepts excuses, is kind to the weak and is strict with the strong; violence should not raise his temper and weakness should not keep him sitting.

Also associate with considerate people from high families, virtuous houses and decent traditions, then people of courage, valour, generosity and benevolence, because they are repositories of honour and springs of virtues. Strive for their matters as parents strive for their child. Do not regard anything that you do to strengthen them as big nor consider anything that you have agreed to do for them as little (so as to give it up), even though it may be small, because this will make them your well-wishers and create a good impression of you. Do not neglect to attend to their small matters, confining yourself to their important matters, because your small favours will also be of benefit to them while the important ones are such that they cannot ignore them.

That commander of the army should have such a position before you that he 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. Your kindness to them will turn their hearts to you. The most pleasant thing for the rulers is the establishment of justice in their areas and the manifestation of the love of their subjects, but the subjects' love manifests itself only when their hearts are clean. Their good wishes prove correct only when they surround their commanders (to protect them). Do not regard their positions to be a burden over them and do not keep watching for the end of their tenure. Therefore, be broad-minded in regard to their desires, continue praising them and recounting the good deeds of those who have shown such deeds, because the mention of good actions shakes the brave and rouses the weak, if Allah so wills.

Appreciate the performance of every one of them, do not attribute the performance of one to the other, and do not minimize the reward below the level of the performance. The high position of a man should not lead you to regard his small deeds as big, nor should the low position of a man make you regard his big deeds as small.

Refer to Allah and His Prophet the affairs which worry you and matters which appear confusing to you, because, addressing the people whom Allah wishes to guide, He said:

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Prophet and those vested with authority from among you: and then if you quarrel about anything refer it to Allah and the Prophet if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day (of Judgement). (Quran, 4:59)

Referring to Allah means to act according to what is clear in His Book and referring to the Prophet means to follow his unanimously agreed *sunnah* in regard to which there are no differences.

For the settlement of disputes among people select him who is the most distinguished of your subjects in your view. The cases should not vex him, disputation should not enrage him, he should not insist on any wrong point, and should not grudge accepting the truth when he perceives it; he should not lean towards greed and not content himself with a cursory look without going thoroughly into it. He should be most ready to stop (to ponder) on doubtful points, most regardful of arguments, least disgusted at the quarrel of litigants, most patient at probing into matters and most fearless at the time of passing judgement. Praise should not make him vain and elation should not make him lean (to any side). Such people are very few.

Then, very often check his decisions and allow him so much money (as remuneration) that he has no excuse worth hearing (for not being honest) and there remains no occasion for him to go to others for his needs. Give him that rank in your audience for which no one else among your chiefs aspires, so that he remains safe from the harm of those around you. You should have a 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.

Thereafter, look into the affairs of your executives. Give them appointment after tests and do not appoint them according to partiality or favouritism, because these two things constitute sources of injustice and unfairness. Select from among them those who are people of experience and modesty, hailing from virtuous houses, having been previously in Islam, because such persons possess high manners and untarnished honour. They are the least inclined towards greed and always have their eyes on the ends of matters.

Give them an abundant livelihood (by way of salary) because this gives them the strength to maintain themselves in order and not to have an eye upon the funds in their custody, and it would be an argument against them if they diso-

beyed your orders or misappropriated your trust. You should also check their activities and have people who report on them who should be truthful and faithful, because your watching their actions secretly will urge them to preserve trust with and to be kind to the people. Be careful of assistants. If any one of them extends his hands towards misappropriation and the reports of your reporters reaching you confirm it, that should be regarded enough evidence. You should then inflict corporal punishment on him and recover what he has misappropriated. You should put him in a place of disgrace, blacklist him with misappropriation and make him wear the necklace of shame for his offence.

Look after the revenue affairs in such a way that those engaged in it remain prosperous because in their prosperity lies the prosperity of all others. The others cannot prosper without them, because all people are dependent on revenue and its payers. You should keep an eye on the cultivation of the land more than on the collection of revenue because revenue cannot be had without cultivation and whoever asks for revenue without cultivation, ruins the area and brings death to the people. His rule will not last only a moment.

If they complain of heaviness (of revenue) or diseases, or dearth of water, or excess of water or a change in the condition of land either due to flood or drought, you should remit the revenue to the extent that you hope will improve their position. The remission granted by you for removal of distress from them should not be grudged by you, because it is an investment which they will return to you in the shape of the prosperity of your country and the progress of your domain in addition to earning their praise and happiness for meeting out justice to them.

You can depend upon their strength because of the investment made by you in them through catering to their convenience, and can have confidence in them because of the justice extended to them by being kind to them. After that, circumstances may so turn that you may have to ask for their assistance, when they will bear it happily, for prosperity is capable of hearing 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 officers concentrate on the collection (of money), having little hope for continuance (in their posts) and deriving no benefit from objects of warning.

You should take care of your secretarial workers. Put the best of them in charge of your affairs. Entrust those of your letters which contain your policies and secrets to him who possesses best character, who is not elated by honours, lest he dares speak against you in common audiences. He should also not be negligent in presenting communications of your officers before you and issuing correct replies to them on your behalf and in matters of your receipts and payments. He should not make any damaging agreement on your behalf and not fail in repudiating an agreement against you. He should not be ignorant of the extent of his own position in matters because he who is ignorant of his own position is more ignorant of the position of others.

Your selection of these people should not be on the basis of your understanding, confidence and your good impression, because people catch the ideas of the officers through affectation and personal service and there is nothing in it which is like well-wishing or trustfulness. You should rather test them by what they did under the virtuous people before you. Take a decision in favour of one who has a good name among the common people and is the most renowned in trustworthiness, because this will be a proof of your regard for Allah and for him on whose behalf you have been appointed to this position (your Imam). Establish one chief for every department. He should not be incapable of big matters, and a rush of work should not perplex him. Whenever there is a defect in your secretaries which you overlook, then you will be held responsible for it.

Now take some advice about traders and industrialists. Give them good counsel whether they be settled (shop-keepers) or traders or physical labourers because they are sources of profit and the means of the 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, for they are peaceful and there is no fear of revolt from them, and they are quite without fear of treason.

Look after their affairs before yourself or wherever they may be in your area. Know, along with this, most of them are very narrow-minded, and awfully avaricious. They hoard goods for profiteering and fix high prices for goods. This is a source of harm to the people and a blot on the officers in charge. Stop people from hoarding, because the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) has prohibited it. The sale should be smooth, with correct weights and prices, not harmful to either party, the seller or the purchaser; whoever commits hoarding after you prohibit it, give him exemplary but not excessive punishment.

(Fear) Allah and keep Allah in view in respect of the lowest class, consisting of those who have few means: the poor, the destitute, the penniless and disabled; because in this class are both the discontented and those who beg. Take care for the sake of Allah of His obligations towards them for which He has made you responsible. Fix for them a share from public funds and a share from crops of lands taken over as booty for Islam in every area, because in it the remote ones have the same shares as the near ones. All these people are those whose rights have been placed in your charge. Therefore, a luxurious life should not keep you away from them. You cannot be excused for ignoring small matters because you were deciding big problems. Consequently, do not be unmindful of them, nor turn your face from them out of vanity.

Take care of the affairs of those of them who do not approach you because they are of unsightly appearance or those whom people regard as low. Appoint for them some trusted people who are God-fearing and humble. They should inform you of these people's conditions. Then deal with them with a sense of responsibility to Allah on the day you will meet Him, because of all the subjects these people are the most deserving of equitable treatment, while

for others also you should fulfil their rights so as to render account to Allah.

Take care of orphans and aged who have no means (of livelihood) nor are ready for begging. This is heavy on officers; in fact, every right is heavy. Allah lightens it for those who seek the next world and so they endure (hardships) upon themselves and trust on the truthfulness of Allah's promise to them. Fix a time for complainants wherein you make yourself free for them, and sit for them in common audience and feel humble therein for the sake of Allah who created you.

(On that occasion) you should keep away your army and your assistants such as the guards and the police so that anyone who like to speak may speak to you without fear, because I have heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) say in more than one place, "The people among whom the right of the weak is not secured from the strong without fear will never achieve purity." Tolerate their awkwardness and inability to speak. Keep away from you narrowness and haughtiness; Allah would, on this account, spread over you the skirts of His mercy and assign the reward of His obedience for you. Whatever you give, give it joyfully, but when you refuse, do it handsomely and with excuses.

Then there are certain matters which you cannot avoid performing yourself. For example, replying to your officers when your secretaries are unable to do so, or disposing of the complaints of the people when your assistants shirk them. Finish every day the work meant for it, because every day has its own work. Keep for yourself the better and greater portion of these periods for the worship of Allah, although all these items are for Allah provided the intention is pure and the subjects prosper thereby.

The particular thing by which you should purify your religion for Allah should be the fulfilment of those obligations which are especially for Him. Therefore, devote to Allah some of your physical activity during the night and the day, and whatever (worship) you perform for seeking nearness to Allah should be complete, without defect or deficiency, whatsoever physical exertion it may involve. When you lead the prayers for the people it should be neither (too long to be) boring nor (too short to be) wasteful, because among the people there are the sick as well as those who have needs of their own. When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) sent me to Yemen I enquired how I should offer prayers with them and he replied, "Say the prayers as the weakest of them would say, and be considerate to the believers."

Then, do not keep yourself secluded from the people for a long time, because the seclusion of those in authority from the subjects is a kind of narrow-sightedness and causes ignorance about their affairs. Seclusion from them also prevents them from the knowledge of those things which they do not know and as a result they begin to regard big matters as small and small matters as big, good matters as bad and bad matters as good, while the truth becomes confused with falsehood. After all, a governor is a human being and cannot have knowledge of things which people keep hidden from him.

No writ is big on the face of truth to differentiate its various expressions from falsehood. Then you can be one of two kinds of men. Either you may be generous in granting rights; and then why this hiding in spite of discharging obligations and good acts that you perform? Or you are a victim of stinginess; in that case people will soon give up asking you since they will lose hope of generous treatment from you. In spite of that there are many needs of the people towards you which do not involve any hardship on you, such as the complaint against oppression or the request for justice in a matter.

Further, a governor has favourites and people of easy access to him. They misappropriate things, are high-handed and do not observe justice in matters. You should destroy the root of evil in people by cutting away causes of these defects. Do not make any land grants to your hangers on or supporters. They should not expect from you the possession of land which may cause harm to adjoining people over the question of irrigation or common services whose burden the grantees place on others. In this way, the benefit will be rather theirs than yours, and the blame will lie on you in this world and the next.

Allow rights to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. In this matter, you should be enduring and watchful even though it may involve your relations and favourites, and keep in view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you because its reward is handsome. If the subjects suspect you of high-handedness, explain to them your position openly and remove their suspicion with your explanation, because this would mean exercise for your soul and consideration to the subjects while this explanation will secure your aim of keeping them firm in truth.

Do not reject peace to which your enemy may call you and wherein there is the pleasure of Allah, because peace brings rest to your army and relief from your worries and safety for your country. After peace there is great apprehension from the enemy because often the enemy offers peace to benefit by your negligence. Be cautious and do not act by wishfulness in this matter.

If you conclude an agreement between yourself and your enemy or enter into a pledge with him then fulfil your agreement and discharge your pledge faithfully. Place yourself as a shield against whatever you have pledged because among the obligations of Allah there is nothing on which people are more strongly united despite the difference of their ideas and variation of their views than respect for fulfilling pledges. Besides Muslims, even unbelievers have abided by agreements because they realized the dangers which would come in the wake of violation (thereof). Therefore, do not deceive your enemy, because no one can offend Allah save the ignorant and the wicked. Allah made His agreement and pledged the sign of security which He has spread over His creatures through His mercy and an asylum in which they stay in His protection and seek the benefit of nearness to Him. Therefore, there should be no deceit, cunning or duplicity in it.

Do not enter into an agreement which may admit of different interpretations and do not change the interpretation of vague words after the conclusion and

confirmation (of the agreement). If an agreement of Allah involves you in hardship do not seek its repudiation without justification, because the bearing of hardships through which you expect relief and a handsome result is better than a violation whose consequence you fear, and that you fear that you will be called upon by Allah to account for it and you will not be able to seek forgiveness for it in this world or the next.

You should avoid shedding blood without justification, because nothing is more inviting of Divine retribution, greater in (evil) consequence, and more effective in the decline of prosperity and cutting short of life than the shedding of blood without justification. On the Day of Judgement Allah the Glorified, would commence giving His judgement among the people with the cases of bloodshed committed by them. Therefore, do not strengthen your authority by shedding prohibited blood because this will weaken and lower the authority, moreover destroy it and shift it. You cannot offer any excuse before Allah or before me for wilful killing because there must be the question or revenge in it. If you are involved in it be error and you exceed in the use of your whip or sword, or are hard in inflicting punishment, as sometimes even a blow by the fist or a smaller stroke causes death, then the haughtiness of your authority should not prevent you from paying the blood price to the successors of the killed person.

You should avoid self-admiration, having reliance in what appears good in yourself and love of exaggerated praise because this is one of the most reliable opportunities for Satan to obliterate the good deeds of the virtuous. Avoid showing (the existence of) obligation on your subjects for having done good to them or praising your own actions or making promises and then breaking them, because showing (the existence of) obligation destroys good, self-praise takes away the light of truth, and breaking promises earns the hatred of Allah and of the people. Allah the Glorified, says:

Most hateful is it unto Allah that you say what you do not. (Quran, 61:3)

Avoid haste in matters before their time, slowness at their proper time, insistence on them when the propriety of action is not known or weakens when it becomes clear. Assign every matter its proper place and do every job at the appropriate time.

Do not appropriate to yourself that in which the people have an equal share, nor be regardless of matters which have come to light with the excuse that you are accountable for others. Shortly, the curtains of all matters will be raised from your view and you will be required to render redress to the oppressed. Have control over (your) sense of prestige, any outburst of anger, the might of your arm and the sharpness of your tongue. Guard against all this by avoiding haste and by delaying severe action till your anger subsides and you regain your self-control. You cannot withhold yourself from this unless you bear in mind that you have to return to Allah.

It is necessary for you to recall how matters went with those who preceded

you, be it a government or a great tradition or a precedent of our Prophet (pbuh) or the obligatory commands contained in the Book of Allah. Then you should follow them as you have seen us acting upon them and should exert yourself in following that I have enjoined upon you in this document in which I have exhausted my pleas on you, so that if your heart advances towards its passions you may have no plea in its support.

I ask Allah through the extent of His mercy and greatness of His power of giving a good inclination that He may prompt me and you to advance a clear plea before Him and His creatures in a manner that may attract His pleasure along with handsome praise among the people, good effect in the country, an increase in prosperity and a heightening of honour; and that He may allow me and you to die a death of virtue and martyrdom. Surely, we have to return to Him. Peace be on the Messenger of Allah. Wasalaam.

Letter 54

To Talhah and az-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. If you two swore allegiance to me obediently, come back and offer repentance to Allah soon, but if you swore allegiance to me reluctantly, you have certainly given me cause for action, by showing your obedience and concealing your disobedience. By my life, you were not more entitled than other muhajirs to conceal and hide the matter. Your refusing allegiance before entering into it would have been easier than getting out of it after having accepted it.

You have indicated that I killed Uthman; then let someone from among the people of Medina who supported neither me nor you decide the matter between me and you. Then one of us shall face (the command of law) according to (their) involvement. You should give up your way now, when the great question before you is only one of shame, before you face the question of shame coupled with the Hell-fire. Wasalaam.

Letter 55

To Muawiyah

Now Allah, the Glorified, has made this world for what is to come hereafter, and put its inhabitants to trial as to which of you is good in action, and we have not been created for this world, nor ordered to strive for it, but been made to stay in it to stand trial therein. So, Allah has tried me with you and tried you with me. He has therefore made either of us a plea for the other.

Now, you have leapt on the world by a wrong interpretation of the Quran, and wanted me to account for what neither my hand nor tongue was responsible, but you and the Syrians put the blame on me, and your scholar incited against me the ignorant and one who is sitting incited the one who is standing. You should fear Allah- about yourself and not allow Satan to lead you. Turn your face towards the next world because that is our path and your path, and fear that Allah may not entangle you in any sudden infliction which may destroy the root as well as cut away the branches. I swear to you by Allah an oath which will not be broken that if destiny brings me and you together .

I shall steadfastly hold before you: Until Allah judges between us, and He is the Best of the judges. (Quran, 7:87)

Instructions 56

When Ameerul Momineen placed Shurayh ibn Hani (al- Madhhiji) at the head of the vanguard preceding towards Syria, he issued this document of instruction to him.

Fear Allah every morning and evening and remain apprehensive about yourself of this deceitful world and do not regard it safe in any case. Know that if for fear of some evil you do not refrain yourself from things which you love, then passions will fling you into a lot of harm. Therefore, be for yourself a refrainer and protector, and for your anger a suppressor and killer.

Letter 57

To the people of Kufa at the time of his march from Madina to Basrah

Now, I have come out of my city either as an oppressor or as the oppressed, either as a rebel or one against whom rebellion has been committed. In any case, to whomsoever this letter of mine reaches, I appeal to him in the name of Allah that he should come to me and if I am in the right he should help me; but if I am in the wrong then he should try to get me to the right according to his view.

Letter 58

Written to people describing what took place between him and people of Siffin

The whole thing began thus that we and the Syrians met in an encounter although we believe in one and the same Allah and the same Prophet, and our message in Islam is the same. We did not want them to add anything in the belief in Allah or in acknowledging His Messenger (pbuh) nor did they want us to add any such thing. In fact, there was complete unity except that we differed on the question of Uthman's blood while we were uninvolved in it. We suggested to them to appease the situation by calming the temporary irritation and pacifying the people till matters settled down and stabilized when we would gain strength to put matters right.

They however said they would settle it by war. Thus, they refused our offer and consequently war spread its wings and came to stay. Its flames rose and became strong. When the war had bitten us as well as them and pierced its talons into us as well as them, they accepted what we had proposed to them. So, we agreed to what they suggested and hastened to meet their request. In this way, the plea became clear to them and no excuse was left to them. Now, whoever among them adheres to this will be saved by Allah from ruin, and whoever shows obstinacy and insistence (on wrong) is the reverser whose heart has been blinded by Allah and evils will encircle his head.

Letter 59

To Aswad ibn Qutbah, the Governor of Hulwan

Now, if the actions of a governor follow the passions he will be greatly hampered in justice. 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. Exert yourself in what Allah has made obligatory on you, hoping for His reward and fearing His chastisement.

Know that this world is the place of trial. Whoever here wastes any hour of his time will repent it on the Day of Judgement, and nothing can ever make you too satisfied as not to need right. One of the rights on you is that you should protect yourself (from sins) and look after the subjects to your best. The benefit that will come to you from this will be greater than that which will accrue (to people) through you. Wasalaam

Letter 60

To the officers through whose jurisdiction the army passed

From the servant of Allah Ali, Ameerul Momineen to all the collectors of revenue and officers of the realm through whose area the army passes.

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. 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 within 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.

Letter 61

To Kumayl bin Ziyad an-Nakha'i, the Governor of Hait expressing displeasure on his inability to prevent the enemy forces that passed through his area from marauding.

Now, the neglecting by a man of what he has been made responsible for and doing what is to be done by others is a manifest weakness and a ruinous sight. Certainly, your advance on the people of Qarqisiya, and your leaving the arsenals over which we had set you, without anyone to protect them or to repulse the enemy force, savoured of shattered thinking. In this way, you served like a bridge for the enemy who came marauding on your allies while your arms were weak, you had no awe around you; you could not prevent the enemy from advancing; you could not break his might; you could not defend the people of your area and you could not discharge functions on behalf of your Imam.

Letter 62

To the people of Egypt sent through Malik al-Ashtar when he was made the Governor

Now, Allah the Glorified, deputed Muhammad (pbuh) as a warner for all the worlds and a witness for all the prophets. When the Prophet expired, the Muslims quarrelled about power after him. By Allah, it never occurred to me, and I never imagined, that after the Prophet the Arabs would snatch away the caliphate from his Ahlulbayt, nor that they would take it away from me after him, but I suddenly noticed people surrounding the man to swear him allegiance.

I therefore withheld my hand till I saw that many people were reverting from Islam and trying to destroy the religion of Muhammad (pbuh). I then feared that if I did not protect Islam and its people and there occurred in it a breach or destruction, it would mean a greater blow to me than the loss of power over you which was, in any case, to last for a few days of which everything would pass away as the mirage passes away, or as the cloud scuds away. Therefore, in these happenings I rose till wrong was destroyed and disappeared, and religion attained peace and safety.

A part of the same letter: By Allah, if I had encountered them alone and they had been so numerous as to fill the earth to the brim, I would not have worried or become perplexed. I am clear in myself and possess conviction from Allah about their misguidance and my guidance. I am hopeful and expectant that I will meet Allah and get His good reward. But I am worried that silly and wicked people will control the affairs of the entire community, with the result that they will grab the funds of Allah as their own property and make His people slaves, fight with the virtuous, and ally with the sinful.

Indeed, there is among them he who drank (wine) unlawfully and was whipped by way of punishment fixed by Islam, and there is he who did not accept Islam until he had secured financial gain through it. If this had not

been so I would not have insisted on gathering you, reprehending you, mobilizing you and urging you (for jihad) but if you refuse and show weakness I will leave you.

Do you not see that the boundaries of your cities have diminished, your populated areas have been conquered, your possessions have been snatched away and your cities and lands have been attacked. May Allah have mercy on you, get up to fight your enemy and do not remain confined to the earth, otherwise you will face oppression and suffer ignominy and your fate will be the worst. The warrior should be wakeful because he sleeps the enemy does not sleep.

Letter 63

To Ahu Musa al-Ash'ari, Governor of Kufa when Imam learnt he was dissuading people of Kufa from joining battle of Jamal when Imam had called them to fight along with him.

From the servant of Allah, Ameerul Momineen to Abdullah ibn Qays:

Now, I have come to know of words uttered by you which go in your favour as well as against you. So, when my messenger reaches you prepare yourself and get ready, come out of your den and call those who are with you. Then, if you are convinced of the truth get up but if you feel cowardice go away. By Allah, you will be caught wherever you may be and you will not be spared till you are completely upset and everything about you is scattered and till you are shaken from your seat. Then, you will fear from your front as you do from the rear.

What you hope is not a light matter, but it is serious calamity. We have to ride its camels, overcome its difficulties and level its mountains. Set your mind in order, take a grip on your affairs and acquire your share. If you do not like it then go away to where neither you are welcome nor can you escape from it. It is better that you be left alone and lie sleeping. Then no one will enquire where is so-and-so. By Allah, this is the case of right with the rightful person and we do not care what the heretics do. Wasalaam.

Letter 64

In reply to Muawiya

Certainly, we and you were on amiable terms as you say but difference arose between us and you the other day, when we accepted belief (*iman*) and you rejected it. Today the position is that we are steadfast (in belief) but you are creating mischief. Those of you who accepted Islam did so reluctantly and that too when all the chief men had accepted Islam and joined the Messenger of Allah- (pbuh).

You have stated that I killed Talhah and az-Zubayr, forced A'ishah out of her house and adopted residence between the two cities (Kufa and Basrah). These are matters with which you have no concern nor do they involve anything against you. Therefore, no explanation about them is due to you.

You also state that you are coming to me with a party of muhajirs and ansars, but hijrah came to an end on the day your brother was taken prisoner. If you are in a hurry, then wait a bit as I may come to meet you and that would be more befitting as that would mean that Allah has appointed me to punish you. But if you come to me it would be as the poet of Banu Asad said: They are advancing against summer winds which are hurling stones on them in the highlands and lowlands.

(Remember) I have still the sword with which I dispatched your grandfather, your mother's brother and your brother to one and the same place. By Allah, I know what you are. Your heart is sheathed and intelligence is weak. It is better to say you have ascended to where you view a bad scene which is against you, not in your favour, because you are searching a thing lost by someone, you are tending someone else's cattle and are hankering after a thing which is not yours nor have you any attachment with it. How remote are your words from your actions, and how closely you resemble your paternal and maternal uncles who were led by their wickedness and love for wrong to oppose Muhammad (pbuh) and in consequence they were killed as you know. They could not put up a defence against the calamity and could not protect their place of safety from the striking of swords which abound in the battle and which do not show weakness.

You have said a lot about killing of Uthman. You first join what the people have joined (allegiance) then seek a verdict about (accused) from me and I shall settle the matter between you and them according to the Book of Allah. But what you are aiming at is just the fake nipple given to a child in first days of stopping of nursing. Peace be on those who deserve it.

Letter 65

To Muawiya

This is the time that you should derive benefit by observing a clear view of the main matters, because you have been treading in the path of your forefathers in making wrong claims, spreading false and untrue notions, claiming for yourself what is far above you and demanding what is not meant for you, because you want to run away from right and to revolt against what is more fastened to your flesh and blood namely what has been heard by the depth of your ears and has filled your chest. And after forsaking right there remains nothing except clear misguidance, and after disregarding a (clear) statement there is nothing except confusion. You should therefore guard (yourself) against doubts and its ill-effects of confusion, because for a long time mischief has spread its veils and its gloom has blinded your eyes.

I have received your letter full of uncouth utterances which weaken the cause of peace and nonsensical expressions which have not been prepared with knowledge and forbearance. By reason of these things you have become like one who is sinking in a marsh or groping in a dark place. You have raised

yourself to a position which is difficult to approach and devoid of any signs . Even the royal kite cannot reach it. It is parallel to the Ayyuq (star Capella), in height.

May Allah forbid that you be in charge of people's affairs after my assuming authority as Caliph, or that I issue an edict or document granting you authority over any one of them. Therefore, from now onwards you guard yourself and be watchful, because if you oppose till the people of Allah rush upon you, then matters will be closed for you and whatever can be accepted from you today will not be accepted then. Wasalaam.

Letter 66

To `Abdullah bin Abbas

And then, sometimes a person feels joyful about a thing which he was not to miss in any case and feels grieved for a thing which was not to come to him at all. Therefore, you should not regard the attainment of pleasure and the satisfaction of the desire for revenge as the best favour of this world, but it should be the putting off of the (flame of) wrong and the revival of right. Your pleasure should be for what (good acts) you have sent forward; your grief should be for what you are leaving behind; and your worry should be about what is to befall after death.

Letter 67

To Qutham bin Abbas, his Governor of Mecca

Now, make arrangements for Hajj by the people, 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. 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.

See what has been collected with you of the funds of Allah (in the public treasury) and spend it over the persons with families, the distressed, the starving and the naked, at your end. Then, send the remaining to us for distribution to those who are on this side.

Ask the people of Mecca not to charge rent from lodgers, because Allah, the Glorified, says that: "*alike; for the dweller therein as well as the stranger*" (Quran, 22:25). "Akif" (the dweller) here means he who is living there while "Badi" (the stranger) means he who is not among the people of Mecca, comes for Hajj from outside. May Allah grant us and you promptitude for seeking His love (by doing good acts). Wasalaam.

Letter 68

To Salman Farsi before Ameerul Momineen's caliphate

The example of the world is like that of a snake which is soft in touch but whose poison is fatal. Therefore, keep yourself aloof from whatever appears good to you because of its short stay with you. Do not worry for it because of your conviction that it will leave you and that its circumstances are vicissitudes. When you feel most attracted towards it, shun it most, because whenever someone is assured of happiness in it, it throws him into danger; or when he feels secure in it, the world alters his security into fear.

Letter 69

To Harith al-Hamdani

Adhere to the rope of Quran and seek instructions from it. Regard its lawful as lawful and unlawful as unlawful. Testify the right that has been in the past. Take lesson for the present condition of this world from the past, because its one phase resembles the other, and its end is to meet its beginning, and the whole of it is to change and depart. Regard the name of Allah as too great to mention Him, save in matter of right. Remember more often death, and after death. Do not long for death except on a reliable condition.

Avoid every action which the doer likes for his own self but dislikes for the Muslims in general. Avoid every such action which is performed in secret and from which shame is felt in the open. Also avoid that action about which if the doer is questioned he himself regards it bad or offers excuses for it. Do not expose your honour to be treated as the subject of people's discussions. Do not relate to the people all that you hear, for that would amount to falsehood. Do not contest all that the people relate to you for that would mean ignorance. Kill your anger and forgive when you have power (to punish). Show forbearance in the moment of rage, and pardon in spite of authority; the eventual end will then be in your favour. Seek good out of every favour that Allah has bestowed on you, and do not waste any favour of Allah over you. The effect of Allah's favours over you should be visible on you.

Know the most distinguished among the believers is he who is the most forward of them in spending from himself, his family and his property, because whatever good you send forward Will remain in store for you and the benefit of whatever you keep behind will be derived by others. Avoid the company of the person whose opinion is unsound and whose action is detestable, because a man is judged after his companion.

Live in big cities because they are collective centres of Muslims. Avoid places of neglectfulness and wickedness and places where there are paucity of supporters for the obedience of Allah. Confine your thinking to matters which are helpful to you. Do not sit in marketing centres because they are the

meeting-places of Satan, and targets of mischief. Frequently look at those over whom you enjoy superiority because this is a way of giving thanks.

Do not undertake a journey on Friday until you have attended, except when you are going in the way of Allah, or in an excusable matter. Obey Allah in all affairs because Allah's obedience has precedence over all other things. Deceive your heart into worshipping, persuade it and do not force it. Engage it when it is free and merry, except as regards the obligations enjoined upon you, for they should not be neglected and must be performed at the five times. Be on guard lest death comes down upon you while you have fled away from your Lord in search of worldly pleasure. Avoid the company of the wicked because vice adjoins vice. Regard Allah as great, and love His lovers. Keep off anger because it is one large army from Satan's armies.

Letter 70

To Sahl bin Hunayf Ansari, his Governor of Madina about certain persons in Madina who had gone over to Muawiya.

Now, I have come to know certain persons from your side are stealthily going over to Muawiya. Do not feel sorry for their numbers so lost to you or for their help of which you are deprived. It is enough they 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.

Letter 71

To Mundhir bin Jarud Abdi who misappropriated certain things given in his administrative charge.

Now, the good behaviour 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 and are not retaining any provision for the next world. You are making this world by ruining your next life, and doing good to your kinsmen by cutting yourself off from religion.

If what has reached me about you is correct, then the camel of your family and the strap of your shoe is better than yourself. A man with qualities like yours is not fit to close a hole in the ground, nor for performing any deed, nor for increasing his position, nor for taking him as a partner in any trust, nor for

trusting him against misappropriation. Therefore, proceed to me as soon as this letter of mine reaches you if Allah so wills.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: al-Mundhir ibn Jarud al-'Abdi is he about whom Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) said that: He looks very often at his shoulders, feels proud in his garments (appearance) and usually blows away (dust) from his shoes.

Letter 72

To Abdullah bin Abbas

Now, you cannot go farther than the limit of your life, nor can you be given a livelihood which is not for you. Remember this life consists of two days- a day for you and a day against you, and that the world is a house of (changing) authorities. Whatever in it is for you will come to you despite your weakness; and whatever in it turns against you cannot be brought back despite your strength.

Letter 73

To Muawiya

Now, exchanging replies and listening to your letters, my view has been weak and my intelligence has been erring. When you refer your demands to me and expect me to send you written replies, you are like one who is in deep slumber while his dreams contradict him, or one who stands perplexed and overwhelmed, not knowing whether whatever comes to him is for him or against him.

You are not such a man but you are like him (as you are worse than him). I swear by Allah that, had it not been for (my) giving you time, you would have faced from me catastrophe that would have crushed the bones and removed the flesh. Know that Satan has prevented you from turning to good actions and listening to the words of counsels. Peace be upon those who deserve it.

Letter 74

Written by Imam as a protocol between tribes of Rabi'ah and people of Yemen. Taken from the writing of Hisham ibn (Muhammad) al-Kalbi.

This indenture contains what people of Yemen, including townsmen and nomads, and tribes of Rabi'ah, including townsmen and nomads, have agreed upon: they will adhere to Book of Allah, will call to it and order according to it and respond to whoever calls to it and orders according to it. They will not sell it for any price nor accept any alternative for it. They will join hands against anyone who opposes it and abandons it. They will help one another. Their voice will be one. They will not break their pledge on account of re-

buke of a rebuker, wrath of an angry person, humiliating treatment of one group to the other, or use of abusive terms by one party against the other. This pledge is binding on those of them who are present and those of them who are absent; those of them who are forbearing and those of them who are foolish; those of them who are learned and those of them who are ignorant. Along with this the pledge of Allah is also binding on them, and the pledge of Allah is to be accounted for. Written by Ali bin Abi Talib.

Letter 75

To Muawiya, soon after Imam was sworn in. (Muhammad ibn `Umar) al-Waqidi has mentioned this in his "Kitab al-Jamal"

From the servant of Allah, Ali Ameerul Momineen to Muawiya son of Abu Sufyan: Now, you are aware of my excuses before you people and my shunning you till that happened which was inevitable and which could not be prevented. The stroy is long and much is to be said. What was to pass has passed and what was to come has come. Therefore, secure (my) allegiance from those who are with you and come in a deputation of your people to me. Wasalaam.

Instruction 76

Given to Abdullah bin Abbas at the time of his appointment as his Governor of Basrah.

Meet people with a broad face, allow them free audience and pass generous orders. Avoid anger because it is a augury of Satan. Remember that whatever takes you near Allah takes you away from the Fire (of Hell), and whatever takes you away from Allah takes you near the Fire.

Instruction 77

Given to Abdullah bin Abbas, at the time of his being deputed to confront the Kharijites.

Do not argue with them by the Quran because the Quran has many faces. You would say your own and they would say their own; but argue with them by the *sunnah*, because they cannot escape from it.

Letter 78

To Abu Musa al-Ashari in reply to his letter regarding the two arbitrators. Sa`id ibn Yahya al-Umawi has mentioned this in his "Kitab al-maghazi".

Certainly, many people have turned away from many a 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 (incurable). Remember that no person is more covetous

than I for the unity of the *ummah* of Muhammad (pbuh) and their solidarity. I seek through it good reward and an honourable place to return to.

I shall fulfil what I have pledged upon myself even though you may go back from the sound position that existed when you left me last, because wretched is he who is denied the benefit of wisdom and experience. I feel enraged if anyone speaks wrong, or if I should worsen a matter which Allah has kept sound. Therefore, leave out what you do not understand, because wicked people will be conveying to you vicious things. Wasalaam.

Letter 79

To the army officers when Ameerul Momineen became Caliph.

Now, what ruined those before you was that they denied people their rights and then they had to purchase them (by bribes), and they led the people to wrong and they followed it.

SAYINGS

Selections of Sayings

Selections from wise sayings and preachings of Ameerul Momineen including his replies to questions and short utterances uttered for diverse purposes.

Ameerul Momineen, peace be upon him, said:

1. During civil disturbance be like an adolescent camel who has neither a back strong enough for riding nor udders for milking.
2. He who adopts greed as a habit devalues himself; he who discloses his hardship agrees to humiliation; and he who allows his tongue to overpower his soul debases the soul.
3. Miserliness is shame; cowardice is a defect; poverty disables an intelligent man from arguing his case; and a destitute person is a stranger in his home town. Incapability is a catastrophe; endurance is bravery; abstinence is riches; self-restraint is a shield (against sin).
4. The best companion is submission (to Allah's will). Knowledge is a venerable estate; good manners are new dresses; and thinking is clear mirror.
5. The bosom of the wise is the safe of his secrets; cheerfulness is the bond of friendship; effective forbearance is the grave of shortcomings and mutual reconciliation is the covering for shortcomings.
6. He who admires himself attracts many opponents against him, charity is an effective cure, and the actions of people in their present life will be before their eyes in the next life.
7. How wonderful is man that he speaks with fat, talks with a piece of flesh, hears with a bone and breathes through a hole.
8. When this world advances towards anyone (with its favours) it attributes to him other's good; and when it turns away from him it deprives him of his own good.
9. Meet people in such a manner that if you die they should weep for you and if you live they should long for you.
10. When you gain power over your adversary pardon him by way of thanks for being able to overpower him.
11. The most helpless of all men is he who cannot find a few brothers during his life, but still more helpless. is he who finds such a brother but loses him.
12. When you get (only) small favours do not push them away through lack of gratefulness.

13. He who is abandoned by near ones is dear to remote ones.
14. Every mischief monger cannot even be reproved.
15. All matters are subject to destiny so much so that sometimes death results from effort.
16. *Imam was asked to explain the saying of Prophet that "banish your old age (by hair dye) and do not acquire resemblance to Jews." Imam replied, "The Prophet (pbuh) said this at a time when the religion was confined to a few, but now that its expanse has widened and it is firmly settled everyone is free in his action.*
17. *Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) said about those who avoided fighting on his side: They abandoned right but did not support wrong.*
18. He who gallops with loose rein collides with death.
19. Forgive the shortcomings of considerate people because when they fall into error Allah raises them up.
20. The consequence of fear is disappointment and of bashfulness is frustration. Opportunity passes away like the cloud. Therefore, make use of good opportunities.
21. We have a right. If it is allowed to us well and good, otherwise, we will ride on the hind part of the camel (like lowly people) even though the night journey may be long.
22. He whose deeds accord (him) a back position cannot be given a front position because of his lineage.
23. To render relief to the grief-stricken and to provide comfort in hardship means the atonement of great sins.
24. O son of Adam, when you see that your Lord, the Glorified, bestows His favours oil you while you are disobeying Him, you should fear Him.
25. Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart it manifests itself through unintentional words from his tongue and (in) the expressions of his face.
26. Keep walking in your sickness as long as you can.
27. The best abstemiousness is to conceal it.
28. When you are running away from the world and death is approaching, there is no question of delay in the encounter.
29. Fear! Fear! By Allah, He has hidden your sins so much so as though He has forgiven.
30. *Imam was asked about faith when he said: Faith stands on four supports: on endurance, conviction, justice and jihad (fighting in the way of Allah).*

Endurance again has four aspects: eagerness, fear, abstention (from the world) and anticipation (of death). So, whoever is eager for Paradise will ignore the passions; whoever fears the Fire (of Hell) will refrain from prohibited acts; whoever abstains from the world takes hardships lightly; and whoever anticipates death will hasten towards good deeds.

Conviction also has four aspects: prudent perception, intelligence and understanding, drawing lessons from instructive things and following the precedents of past people. So, whoever perceives with prudence, wise knowledge will be manifest to him, and to whomsoever wise knowledge becomes manifest he appreciates instructive objects, and whoever appreciates instructive objects he is just like past people.

Justice also has four aspects: keen understanding, deep knowledge, a good power of decision and firm forbearance. Therefore, whoever understands comes to acquire depth of knowledge; whoever acquires depth of knowledge drinks from the spring of judgement; and whoever exercises forbearance never commits evil actions in his affairs and leads a praiseworthy life among the people.

Jihad also has four aspects: ask others to do good, keep away others from doing evil, fight (in way of Allah) sincerely and firmly on all occasions, and detest the vicious. So, whoever asks others to do good provides strength to believers; whoever desists others from evil humiliates unbelievers; whoever fights sincerely on all occasions discharges all obligations; and whoever detests the vicious and becomes angry for the sake of Allah, then Allah will be angry in favour of him and will keep him and will keep him pleased on the Day of Judgement.

31. Unbelief stands on four supports: hankering after whims, mutual quarrelling, deviation from truth, and dissension. So, whoever hankers after whims does not incline towards right: whoever quarrels much on account of ignorance remains permanently blinded from right; whoever deviates from truth, for him good becomes evil and evil becomes good and he remains intoxicated with misguidance; and whoever makes a breach (with Allah and His Messenger), his path becomes difficult, his affairs become complicated and his way of escape becomes narrow.

Doubt has also four aspects: unreasonableness, fear, wavering and undue submission to every thing. So, he who adopts unreasonableness as his way, for him there is no dawn after the night; he who is afraid of what befalls him has to run on his heels; he who wavers in doubt Satan tramples him under their feet and he who submits to the destruction of this and tile next world succumbs to it.

as-Sayyid ar-Radi says: We have left out the remaining portion of this saying for fear of length and for being outside the purpose of this chapter.

32. The doer of good is better than the good itself, and the doer of evil is

worse than the evil itself.

33. Be generous but not extravagant; be thrifty but not miserly.
34. The best of riches is the abandonment of desires.
35. If someone is quick in saying about people what they dislike, they speak about him that about which they have no knowledge.
36. Whoever prolongs his desire ruins his actions.
37. *Once Imam, was proceeding towards Syria when countrymen of al-Anbar met him. Seeing him they began to walk on foot and ran in front of him. He enquired why they were doing so and they replied that this was the way they respected their chiefs. Then he said:*By Allah, this does not benefit your chiefs. You are belabouring yourself in this world and earning misery for the next world by it. How harmful is the labour in whose wake there is punishment and how profitable is the case with which there is deliverance from the Fire (of Hell).
38. *Ameerul Momineen (pbuh), said to his son al- Hasan:* O' my son, learn four things and (a further) four things from me. Nothing will harm you if you practise them. That the richest of riches is intelligence; the biggest destitution is foolishness; the wildest wildness is vanity and the best achievement is goodness of the moral character.

O my son, you should avoid making friends with a fool because he may intend to benefit you but may harm you; you should avoid making friends with a miser because he will run away from you when you need him most; you should avoid making friends with a sinful person because he will sell you for nought; and you should avoid making friends with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you feel far things near and near things far.
39. Supererogatory worship cannot bring about nearness to Allah if it hampers the obligatory.
40. The tongue of the wise man is behind his heart, and the heart of the fool is behind his tongue.
41. *This very sense has been related from Imam in the following version:* The heart of a fool is in his mouth while the tongue of the wise man is in his heart.
42. *Imam, peace be upon him, said to one of his companions during his sickness:* May Allah make your illness a means for writing off your sins, because there is no reward for sickness but that it erases sins and makes them fall like (dried) leaves. Reward lies in saying by the tongue and doing something with the hands and feet. Certainly, Allah, the Glorified, admits into Paradise by virtue of truthfulness of intention and chastity of heart to whomsoever He wishes from among His creatures.
43. *Imam (a.s.), said about Khabbab ibn al-Aratt.* May Allah have mercy on Khabbab ibn al-Aratt since he accepted Islam willingly, immigrated

(from Mecca) obediently, remained content with what sufficed him, was pleased with Allah and lived the life of a mujahid (holy soldier).

44. Blessed is the person who kept in mind the next life, acted so as to be able to render account, remained content with what sufficed him and remained pleased with Allah.
45. Even if I strike the nose of a believer with this, my sword, for hating me he will not hate me, and even if I pile all the wealth of the world before a hypocrite (Muslim) for loving me he will not love me. This is because it is a verdict pronounced by the tongue of the revered Prophet, may Allah bless him and his descendants, as he said:
O Ali, a believer will never hate you and a hypocrite (Muslim) will never love you.
46. The sin that displeases you is better in the view of Allah than the virtue which makes you proud.
47. The worth of a man is according to his courage, his truthfulness is according to his balance of temper, his valour is according to his self-respect and his chasteness is according to his sense of shame.
48. Victory is by determination; determination is by the turning over of thoughts. and thoughts are formed by guarding secrets.
49. Fear the attack of a noble person when he is hungry, and that of an ignoble person when he is satiated.
50. The hearts of the people are like wild beasts. Whoever tames them, they would pounce upon him
51. So long as your position is good, your defects will remain covered.
52. The most capable of pardoning is he who is most powerful to punish.
53. Generosity is that which is by one's own initiative, because giving on being asked is either out of self-respect or to avoid rebuke.
54. There is no wealth like wisdom, no destitution like ignorance, no inheritance like refinement and no support like consultation.
55. Patience is of two kinds, patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.
56. With wealth a strange land is a homeland, while with destitution even a homeland is a strange land.
57. Contentment is wealth that does not diminish.
58. Wealth is the fountain head of passions.
59. Whoever warns you is like one who gives you good tidings.
60. The tongue is a beast; if it is let loose, it devours.

61. Woman is a scorpion whose grip is sweet.
62. If you are met with a greeting, give better greetings in return. If a hand of help is extended to you, do a better favour in return, although the credit would remain with the one who was first.
63. The interceder is the wing of the seeker.
64. The people of the world are like travellers who are being carried while they are asleep.
65. A lack of friends means strangeness.
66. To miss what one needs is easier than to beg from an inappropriate person.
67. Do not feel ashamed for giving little. because refusal is smaller than that.
68. Charity is the adornment of destitution . while gratefulness (to Allah) is the adornment of riches.
69. If what you aim at does not come about then do not worry as to what you were.
70. You will not find an ignorant person but at one extreme or the other (i.e. a person who neglects or a person who exaggerates).
71. As intelligence increases, speech decreases.
72. Time wears our bodies, renews desires, brings death nearer and takes away aspirations. Whoever is successful with it encounters grief and whoever misses its favours also undergoes hardships.
73. Whoever places himself as a leader of the people should commence with educating his own self before educating others; and his teaching should be by his own conduct before teaching by the tongue. The person who teaches and instructs his own self is more entitled to esteem than he who teaches and instructs others.
74. The breath of a man is a step towards his death.
75. Every countable thing is to pass away and every expected thing must come about.
76. If matters get mixed up then the last ones should be appreciated according to the previous One.
77. *It is related when Dirar ibn Hamzah ad-Dibabi went to Muawiya. and Muawiya enquired from him about Imam, he said: I stand witness I have seen him on several occasions when night had spread and he was standing in the niche holding his head, groaning like a man bitten by a snake and weeping as a grieved man, saying:*

O world, O world! Get away from me. Why do you present yourself to me? Or are you eager for me? You may not get that opportunity to

impress me. Deceive some other person. I have no concern with you. I have divorced you thrice whereafter there is no restitution. Your life is short, your importance is little and your liking is humble. Alas! The provision is little, the way is long, the journey is far and the goal is hard to reach.

78. *A man enquired from Imam: Was our going to fight against the Syrians destined by Allah? Imam (a.s.) , gave a detailed reply, a selection from which is hereunder:*

Woe to you. You take it as a final and unavoidable destiny (according to which we are bound to act). If it were so, there would have been no question of reward or chastisement and there would have been no sense in Allah's promises or warnings. (Allah, the Glorified, has ordered ill people to act by free will and has cautioned them and refrained them (from evil). He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much (reward) in return for little (action). He is disobeyed, not because He is overpowered. He is obeyed but not under force. He did not send prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth and all that is in between them in vain. *That is the imagination of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve - because of the fire. (Quran, 38:27)*

79. Take wise points 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.
80. A wise saying is a lost article of the believer. Therefore, get wise sayings even though from people of hypocrisy.
81. The worth of every man is in his, attainments.
82. I impart to you five things which, if you ride your camels fast in search of them, you will find them worth it. No one of you should repose hope save in his Lord; no one of you should fear anything save his sin; no one should feel ashamed of saying "I do not know" when he is asked a matter which he does not know; no one should feel ashamed of learning a thing that he does not know; and you should practise endurance, because endurance is for belief what the head is for the body, so that just as there is no good in a body without the head there is no good in belief without endurance.
83. I am below what you express and above what you feel in your heart.
84. The survivors of the sword are large in number and have a large progeny.
85. Whoever abandons saying, "I do not know" meets his destruction.
86. I love the opinion of an old man more than the determination of a young man; *(another version)* more than the martyrdom of a young man.

87. I wonder about the man who loses hope despite the possibility of seeking forgiveness.
88. There were two sources of deliverance from Allah's punishment, one of which has been raised up, while the other is before you. You should therefore adhere to it. The source of deliverance, which has been raised up is the Messenger of Allah (S.A.) while source of deliverance that remains is seeking of forgiveness. Allah, the Glorified, said: *And Allah is not to chastise them while you are among them, nor is Allah to chastise them while yet they seek forgiveness. (Quran, 8:33)*
89. If a man behaves properly in matters between himself and Allah, then Allah keeps proper the matters between him and other people; and if a man keeps proper tile affairs of his next life then Allah keeps proper for him the affairs of this world. Whoever is a preacher for himself is protected by Allah.
90. The perfect jurist of Islam is he who does not let people lose hope from the mercy of Allah, does not make him despondent of Allah's kindness and does not make him feel safe from Allah's punishment.
91. The hearts get disgusted as bodies get disgusted; so look for beautiful wise saying for them.
92. The most humble knowledge is that which remains on the tongue and the most honourable one is that which manifests itself through (the action of) the limbs and the organs of the body.
93. None of you should say, "O Allah, I seek Your protection from trouble" because there is no one who is not involved in trouble, but whoever seeks Allah's protection he should seek it from misguiding troubles, because Allah, the Glorified, says: *And know you! That your wealth and your children are a temptation. (Quran, 8:28)* and its meaning is that He tries people with wealth and progeny in order to distinguish one who is displeased with his livelihood from the one who is happy with what he has been given. Even though Allah, the Glorified, knows them more than they know themselves yet He does so to let them perform actions with which they earn reward or punishment because some of them like to have male and dislike to have female (children), and some like to amass wealth, and dislike adversity
94. *Imam Ali was asked the meaning of being well-off or well-provided for. Imam Ali replied, "Your welfare does not lie in your having enormous wealth and numerous children but it rests in your being highly educated and forbearing and in your being proud of your obedience to Allah. If you do a good deed then thank Allah for it and if you commit a sin then repent and atone for it. In this world there is a real welfare for two kinds of people, one is the person who, when commits a sin, atones for it and the other is anxious to do good as much as possible.*

95. Action accompanied by fear for Allah does not fail, and how can a thing fail that has been accepted.
96. The persons most attached to the prophets are those who know most what the prophets have brought. *Then Imam recited the verse: Verily, of men the nearest to Abraham are surely those who followed him and this Prophet (Muhammad) and those who believe (Quran, 3:68). Then he said:* The friend of Muhammad is he who obeys Allah, even though he may have no blood relationship, and the enemy of Muhammad is he who disobeys Allah even though he may have near kinship.
97. *Imam (S.A.) , heard about a Kharijite who said the mid-night prayers and recited the Quran, then he said:* Sleeping in a state of firm belief is better than praying in a state of doubtfulness.
98. When you hear a tradition test it according to the criterion of intelligence not that of mere hearing, because relaters of knowledge are numerous but those who guard it are few.
99. *Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) heard a man recite: Verily we are Allah's and verily to Him shall we return (Quran, 2:156). Then he said:* Our saying inna li'llah" is an admission of His Majesty over us and our saying "wa inna ilayhi raji 'un" is an admission of our being mortal.
100. *Some people praised Imam to his face, he said:* O my Allah! You know me better than myself, and I know myself more than they know. O my Allah, make us better than what they think and forgive us what they do not know.
101. Fulfilment of (others') needs becomes a lasting virtue in three ways:-- regarding it small so that it attains bigness, concealing it so that it may manifest itself, and doing it quickly so that it becomes pleasant.
102. Shortly a time will come for people when high positions will be given only to those who defame others, when vicious people will be regarded as witty and just will be regarded as weak. People will regard charity as a loss, consideration for kinship as an obligation, and worship grounds for claiming greatness among others. At this time, authority will be exercised through counsel of women, posting of young boys in high positions and running of the administration by eunuchs.
103. *Imam was seen in worn-out clothes with patches and when it was pointed out to him he said:* With it the heart fears, the mind feels humble and the believers emulate it. Certainly, this world and the next are two enemies against each other and two paths in different directions. Whoever likes this world and loves it hates the next arid is its enemy. These two are like East and West. If the walker between them gets near to one, he gets farther from the other. After all, they are like two fellow wives.
104. *It is related by Nawf al-Bikali that: I saw that one night Imam came out from his bed and looked at the stars, then he said to me: "O' Nawf, are you awake or sleeping?" I said: "I am awake, O, Ameerul Momineen." Then he said:*

O' Nawf! blessed be those who abstain from this world and are eager for the next world. They are the people who regard this earth as a floor; its dust as their bed-cloth; and its water as their perfume; they recite the Quran in low tones and supplicate in high tones and then they are cut off from the world like 'Isa (Jesus). O' Nawf! The prophet Dawud (David), peace be upon him, rose up at a similar hour one night and said, "This is the hour when whatever a person prays for is granted to him unless he is a tax-collector, an intelligence man, a police officer, a lute player or a drummer.

105. Allah has placed on you some obligations which you should not ignore, has laid down for you limits which you should not transgress, has prohibited you from certain things which you should not violate, and has kept quiet about certain things, but He has not left them out by mistake so that you should not find them.
106. If people give up something relating to religion to set right their worldly affairs, Allah will inflict upon them something more harmful than that.
107. Often the ignorance of a learned man ruins him while the knowledge he has does not avail him.
108. In man there is a piece of flesh attached to him with a vein and it is the strangest thing in him. It is the heart. It has a store of wisdom and things contrary to wisdom. If it sees a ray of hope, eagerness humiliates it and when eagerness increases, greed ruins it. If disappointment overtakes it, grief kills it. If anger rises in it, a serious rage develops. If it is blessed with pleasure, it forgets to be cautious. If it becomes fearing, it becomes heedless. If peace extends all round, it becomes neglectful. If it earns wealth, freedom from care puts it in the wrong. If trouble befalls it, impatience makes it humble. If it faces starvation, distress overtakes it. If hunger attacks it, weakness makes it sit down. If its eating increases, heaviness of stomach pains it. Thus, every shortness is harmful to it and every excess is injurious to it.
109. We (the members of the Prophet's family) are like the pillow in the middle. He who lags behind has to come forward to meet it while he who has exceeded the bounds has to return to it.
110. 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.
111. *Sahl ibn Hunayf al-Ansari died at Kufah after his return from the battle of Siffin and was very much loved by Imam. On this occasion Ameerul Momineen said: Even if a mountain had loved me, it would have crumbled down.*
112. Whoever loves us, members of the Household (of the Prophet), should be prepared to face destitution.

113. No wealth is more profitable than wisdom, no loneliness is more estranging than vanity, no wisdom is as good as tact, no honour is like fear from Allah, no companion is like the goodness of moral character, no inheritance is like civility, no guide is like promptitude, no trade is like virtuous acts, no profit is like Divine reward, no self-control is like inaction in time of doubt, no abstention is like that from prohibitions, no knowledge is like thinking, no worship is like the discharge of obligation, no belief is like modesty and endurance, no attainment is like humility, no honour is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation.
114. At a time when virtue is in vogue in the world and among people, if a person entertains an evil suspicion about another from whom nothing evil has ever been seen, then he has been unjust. And at a time when vice is in vogue in the world and among people, if a man entertains a good idea about another person he has flung himself in peril.
115. *It was said to Imam: How are you, O' Imam? and he replied:* How can he be whom life is driving towards death, whose state of healthiness can change into sickness any moment and who is to be caught (by death) from his place of safety.
116. There are many people who are given time (by Allah) through good treatment towards them, and many who are deceived because their sinful activities are veiled (by Allah), and many who are enamoured by good talk about themselves. And Allah does not try anyone as seriously as He tries him whom He allows time (to remain sinful).
117. Two categories of persons will face ruin on account of me: he who loves me with exaggeration, and he who hates me intensely.
118. To miss an opportunity brings about grief.
119. The example of the world is like a serpent. It is soft to the touch but its inside is full of venom. An ignorant person who has fallen into deceit is attracted towards it but a wise and intelligent man keeps on his guard against it.
120. *Imam was asked about Quraysh, when he replied:* As for Banu Makhzum they are the blossoms of Quraysh. It is delightful to talk to their men and marry their women. As for Banu 'Abd Shams, they are farsighted and cautious about all that is hidden from them. As for ourselves (Banu Hashim) we spend whatever we get and are very generous in offering ourselves in death. Consequently, those people are more numerous, more contriving and more ugly while we are more eloquent, well-wishing and handsome.
121. What a difference there is between two kinds of actions: an act whose pleasure passes away but its (ill) consequence remains, and the act whose hardship passes away but its reward stays.

122. *Imam was accompanying funeral when he heard someone laugh. Then he said* : Is it that death has been ordained only for others? Is it that right is obligatory only on others? Is it that those whom we see departing on their journey of death will come back to us? We lay them down in their graves and then enjoy their estate (as if we will live for good after them). We have ignored every preacher, man or woman, and have exposed ourselves to every catastrophe.
123. Blessed be he who humbles himself, whose livelihood is pure, whose heart is chaste, whose habits are virtuous, who spends his savings (in the name of Allah), who prevents his tongue from speaking nonsense, who keeps people safe from evil, who is pleased with the (Prophet's) sunnah, and who is unconnected with innovation (in religion).
124. The jealousy of a woman (with co-wives) is heresy, while the jealousy of a man is a part of belief.
125. I am defining Islam as no one has defined before me: Islam is submission, submission is conviction, conviction is affirmation, affirmation is acknowledgement, acknowledgement is discharge (of obligations), and discharge of obligations is action.
126. I wonder at the miser who speeds towards the very destitution from which he wants to run away and misses the very ease of life which he covets. Consequently, he passes his life in this world like the destitute, but will have to render an account in the next world like the rich. I wonder at the proud man who was just a drop of semen the other day and will turn into a corpse tomorrow. I wonder at the man who doubts Allah although he sees His creations. I wonder at him who has forgotten death although he sees people dying. I wonder at him who denies the second life although he has seen the first life. I wonder at him who inhabits this transient abode but ignores the everlasting abode.
127. Whoever falls short of actions falls into grief, and Allah has nothing to do with him who spares nothing from his wealth in name of Allah.
128. Guard against cold in its beginning and welcome it towards its end because it effects bodies in the same way as it effects plants. In the beginning, it destroys them but in the end it gives them fresh leaves.
129. Greatness of the Creator appreciated by you would belittle the creatures in your view.
130. *When Imam returned from Siffin and noticed graves outside Kufa, he said*: O residents of houses which give a sense of loneliness, of depopulated areas and gloomy graves. O people of the dust, O victims of strangeness, O people of loneliness and O people of desolateness! You have gone ahead and preceded us while we are following you and will meet you. The houses (you left) have been inhabited by others; the wives (you left) have been married by others; the properties have been distributed

(among heirs). This is the news about those around us; what is the news about things around you?

Then Imam, turned to his companions and said: Beware If they were allowed to speak they would inform you that: *Verily, the best provision is fear of Allah. (Quran, 2:197)*

131. ***Imam heard a man abusing the world and said:*** O you who abuse the world, O you who have been deceived by its deceit and cheated by its wrongs. Do you covet the world and then abuse it? Do you accuse it or it should accuse you? When did it bewilder you or deceive you whether by the decay and fall of your forefathers, or by the sleeping places of your mothers under the ground? How much you looked after them in their illness and nursed them during sickness, desiring them to be cured and consulting physicians for them in the morning when your medicine did not avail them and your wailing for them did not benefit them. Your mourning over them did not prove useful to them and you could not achieve your aims. You could not ward off (death) from them with all your power. In fact, through the dying man the world presented an illustration for you and showed you by the example of his falling down how you would (also) fall.

Certainly, this world is a house of truth for him who appreciates it; a place of safety for him who understands it ; a house of riches for him who collects provision from it (for the next world); and a house of instructions for him who draws instruction from it. It is the place of worship for the lovers of Allah; the place of praying for the angels of Allah; the place where the revelation of Allah descends; and the marketing place for those devoted to Allah. Herein they earned mercy and herein they acquired Paradise by way of profit.

Therefore, who can abuse it when it has announced its departure and called out that it would leave! It had given news of its own destruction and the death of its people. By its hardship it set an example of their hardships. By its pleasures it created eagerness for the pleasures (of hereafter. It brings ease in evening and grief in morning by way of persuasion, dissuasion, alarm and warning. People abuse it on morning of their repentance but there are others who will praise it on Judgment Day. The world recalled to them the next life and they bore it in mind. It related to them (the things of hereafter) and they acknowledged them. It preached to them and they took lesson there from.

132. There is an angel of Allah who calls out every day, "Beget children for death, collect wealth for destruction, and raise construction for ruin."
133. This world is a place for transit, not a place for stay. The people herein are of two categories. One is the man who sold away his self (to his passions) and thus ruined it, and the other is the man who purchased his self (by control against his passions) and freed it.

134. A friend is not a friend unless he affords protection to his comrade on three occasions: in his adversity, in his absence and at his death.
135. He who is bestowed four things is not disallowed four things: he who is allowed to pray is not deprived of response to it; he who is allowed to offer repentance is not deprived of its acceptance; he who is allowed to seek forgiveness is not deprived of forgiveness; and he who is allowed to be grateful is not deprived of furtherance of favours.
136. For the God-fearing prayers is a means of seeking nearness to Allah; and for the weak the hajj is as good as jihad. For every thing there is a levy; and the levy of the body is fasting. The jihad of a woman is to afford pleasant company to her husband.
137. Seek livelihood by giving alms.
138. He who is sure of a good return is generous in giving.
139. Assistance is allowed according to need.
140. He who is moderate does not become destitute.
141. A small family is one of the ways of (securing) ease.
142. Loving one another is half of wisdom
143. Grief is half of old age.
144. Endurance comes according to the affliction. He who beats his hand on the thigh in his affliction ruins all his good actions.
145. There is many a person who fasts whose fast is nothing but just hunger and thirst, and many an offerer of prayers whose prayer is no better than wakefulness and hardship. The sleep as well as the eating and drinking of the intelligent (God-knowing) person is far better.
146. Protect your belief by charity; guard your wealth by paying Allah's share; and ward off the waves of calamity by praying.
147. *Kumayl ibn Ziyad has related: Imam caught hold of my hand and took me to the graveyard. When he had passed through the graveyard and left the city behind, he breathed a deep sigh and said:*

O' Kumayl these hearts are containers. The best of them is that which preserves (its contents). So, preserve what I say to you.

People are of three types: One is the scholar and divine. Then, the seeker of knowledge who is also on the way to deliverance. Then (lastly) the common rot who run after every caller and bend in the direction of every wind. They seek no light from the effulgence of knowledge and do not take protection of any reliable support.

O' Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you have to guard the wealth. Wealth decreases by spending,

while knowledge multiplies by spending, and the results of wealth die as wealth decays. O' Kumayl, knowledge is belief which is acted upon. With it man acquires obedience during his life and a good name after his death. Knowledge is the ruler while wealth is ruled upon.

O' Kumayl, those who amass wealth are dead even though they may be living while those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives. Their bodies are not available but their figures exist in the hearts. Look, here is a heap of knowledge (*and Ameerul Momineen r pointed to his bosom*). I wish I could get someone to bear it. Yes, I did find (such a one); but either he was one who could not be relied upon. He would exploit the religion for worldly gains, and by virtue of Allah's favours on him he would domineer over the people and through Allah's pleas he would lord over His devotees. Or he was one who was obedient to the hearers of truth but there was no intelligence in his bosom. At the first appearance of doubt he would entertain misgivings in his heart.

So, neither this nor that was good enough. Either the man is eager for pleasures, easily led away by passions, or is covetous for collecting and hoarding wealth. Neither of them has any regard for religion in any matter. The nearest example of these is the loose cattle. This is the way that knowledge dies away with the death of its bearers.

O my Allah! Yes; but the earth is never devoid of those who maintain Allah's plea either openly and reputedly or, being afraid, as hidden in order that Allah's pleas and proofs should not be rebutted. How many are they and where are they? By Allah, they are few in number, but they are great in esteem before Allah. Through them Allah guards His pleas and proofs till they entrust them to others like themselves and sow the seeds thereof in the hearts of those who are similar to them.

Knowledge has led them to real understanding and so they have associated themselves with the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easygoing regard as hard. They endear what the ignorant take as strange. They live in this world with their bodies here but their spirits resting in the high above. They are the vicegerents of Allah on His earth and callers to His religion. Oh, oh, how I yearn to see them! Go away now, O' Kumayl! wherever you wish.

148. Man is hidden under his tongue.
149. He who does not know his own worth is ruined.
150. *Imam said to a man who had requested him to preach:* Do not be like him who hopes for the next life without action, and delays repentance by lengthening desires, who utters words like ascetics in this world but acts like those who are eager for it; if he is allowed something from it he does not feel satisfied; if he is denied he is not content; he is not grateful for what he gets and covets for increase in whatever remains

with him; he refrains others but not himself; he commands others for what he himself does not do; he loves the virtuous but does not behave like them; he hates the vicious but himself is one of them; he dislikes death because of the excess of his sins but adheres to that for which he is afraid of death.

If he falls ill he feels ashamed; if he is healthy he feels secure and indulges in amusements; when he recovers from illness he feels vain about himself; when he is afflicted he loses hope; if distress befalls him he prays like a bewildered man; when he finds ease of life he falls into deceit and turns his face away; his heart overpowers him by means of imaginary things while he cannot control his heart by conviction; for others he is afraid of small sins, but for himself he expects more reward than his performance; if he becomes wealthy he becomes self-conscious and falls into vice; if he becomes poor he despairs and becomes weak; he is brief when he is doing a good thing but goes too far when he is begging; when passion overtakes him he is quick in committing sin but delays repentance; if hardship befalls him he goes beyond the cannons of the (Islamic) community; he describes instructive events but does not take instruction himself; he preaches at length but does not accept any preaching for himself; he is tall in speaking but short in action; he aspires for things that will perish and ignores things that will last for good; he regards profit as loss and loss as profit; he fears death but does nothing in its anticipation.

He regards the sins of others as big but considers the same things for himself as small; if he does something in obedience to Allah he considers it much but if others do the same he considers it small; he therefore rebukes others but flatters himself; entertainment in the company of the wealthy is dearer to him than remembrance (of Allah) with the poor; he passes verdicts against others for his own interests and does not do so against himself for others' interests; he guides others but misguides himself; he is obeyed by others but he himself disobeys (Allah); he seeks fulfilment (of obligations) but does not fulfil his obligations; he fears the people (and acts) for other than his Lord and does not fear his Lord in his dealings with the people.

151. Every human being has to meet the end, sweet or sour.
152. Every comer has to return and after returning it is as though he never existed.
153. The endurer does not miss success although it may take a long time.
154. He who agrees with the action of a group of persons is as though he joins them in that action. And every one who joins in wrong commits two sins; one sin for committing the wrong and the other for agreeing with it.
155. Adhere to contracts and entrust their fulfilment to steadfast persons.

156. On you lies (the obligation of) obedience to the person about whom you cannot plead the excuse of ignorance.
157. Surely, you have been made to see if (only) you care to see; surely, you have been guided if (only) you care to take guidance; and surely you have been made to hear if (only) you care to lend your ears.
158. Admonish your brother (comrade) by good behaviour towards him, and ward off his evil by favouring him.
159. He who puts himself in conditions of ill-repute should not blame those who entertain bad ideas about him.
160. Whoever obtains authority (usually) adopts partiality.
161. He who acts solely according to his own opinion gets ruined, and he who consults other people shares in their understanding.
162. He who guards his secrets retains control in his own hands.
163. Destitution is the greatest death.
164. He who fulfils the right of a man who does not fulfil his right, (is as though he) worships him.
165. There should be no obeying anyone against Allah's commands.
166. No person is to be blamed for delay in (securing) his own right but blame lies on him who takes what he is not entitled to.
167. Vanity prevents progress.
168. The Day of Judgement is near and our mutual company is short.
169. For the man who has eyes the dawn has already appeared.
170. Abstention from sin is easier than seeking help afterwards.
171. Many a single eating prevents several eatings.
172. People are enemies of what they do not know.
173. He who has several opinions understands the pitfalls.
174. He who sharpens the teeth of anger for the sake of Allah acquires the strength to kill the stalwarts of wrong .
175. When you are afraid of something drive straight into it, because the intensity of abstaining from it is greater (worse) than what you are afraid of.
176. The means to secure high authority is breadth of chest (generosity).
177. Rebuke the evil-doer by rewarding the good-doer.
178. Cut away evil from the chest of others by snatching (it) away from your own chest .

179. Stubbornness destroys (good) advice.
180. Greed is a lasting slavery.
181. The result of neglect is shame, while the result of far-sightedness is safety.
182. There is no advantage in keeping quiet about an issue of wisdom, just as there is no good in speaking out an unintelligent thing.
183. If there are two different calls then one must be towards misguidance.
184. I have never entertained doubt about right since I was shown it.
185. I have neither spoken a lie nor have I been told a lie. I have neither deviated nor have I been made to deviate (others).
186. He who takes the lead in oppression has to bite his hand (in repentance) tomorrow.
187. The departure (from this world) is imminent.
188. Whoever turned away from right was ruined.
189. If patience does not give relief to a man impatience kills him.
190. How strange? Could the caliphate be through the (Prophet's) companionship but not through (his) companionship and (his) kinship?
191. In this world man is the target towards which arrows of death fly, and is like that wealth whose destruction is quickened by hard ships. (In this world) with every drink there is suffocation and with every morsel there is choking. Here no one gets anything unless he loses something else, and not a day of his age advances fill a day passes out from his life. Thus, we are helpers of death and our lives are the targets of morality. How then can we expect everlasting life since the night and day do not raise anything high without quickly arranging for the destruction of whatever they have built and for the splitting asunder of whatever they have joined together.
192. O' son of Adam, whatever you earn beyond your basic needs you will only keep vigil over it for others.
193. Hearts are imbued with passion and the power of advancing and retreating. Therefore, approach them for action at the time of their passionateness and when they are in a mood for advancing, because if hearts are forced (to do a thing) they will be blinded.
194. If I am angry when shall I vent my anger - when I am unable to take revenge and it be said to me, "better you endure" or when I have power to take revenge and it be said to me, "better forgive"?
195. *Imam passed beside a dump of rubbish full of filth and remarked:* This is what the misers used to be niggardly about.

196. The wealth that teaches you lesson does not go waste.
197. The hearts become tired as the bodies become tired. You should therefore search for beautiful sayings for them (to enjoy by way of refreshment).
198. *When Imam heard the slogan of the Kharijites:* There is no verdict save of Allah-, he said: This sentence is true but it is interpreted wrongly.
199. *Imam said about the crowd of people:* These are the people who, when they assemble together, are overwhelming but when they disperse they cannot be recognized.
- It is related that instead of this Imam said:* These are the people who when they assemble together cause harm but when they disperse are beneficial. It was pointed out to him: We know their harm at the time of their assembling but what is their benefit at the time of their dispersal? *Then he replied:* The workers return to their work and people get benefit out of them, like the return of the mason to the building site, that of the weaver to his loom, and that of the baker to his bakery.
200. *An offender was brought before Imam and there was a crowd of people with man, so Imam remarked:* Woe to the faces who are seen only on foul occasions.
201. With every individual there are two angels who protect him; when destiny approaches they let it have its own way with him. Certainly, the appointed time is a protective shield.
202. *When Talha and Zubair said to him: We are prepared to swear allegiance to you on condition that we have a share with you in this matter (of caliphate), Imam said:* No, but you will have a share in strengthening (caliphate) and in affording assistance and you will both be helping me at the time of need and hardship.
203. O, people, fear Allah Who is such that when you speak He hears and when you conceal (a secret) He knows it. Prepare yourself to meet death which will overtake you even if you run away, catch you even if you stay and remember you even if you forget it.
204. If someone is not grateful to you, that should not prevent you from good actions, because (possibly) such a person will feel grateful about it who has not even drawn any benefit from it, and his gratefulness will be more than the ingratitude of the denier; *And Allah loves those who do good. (Quran, 3:134,148; 5:93)*
205. Every container gets narrower according to what is placed in it except knowledge which expands instead.
206. The first reward the exerciser of forbearance gets is that people become his helpers against the ignorant.
207. If you cannot forbear, feign to do so because it is seldom that a man

likens himself to a group and does not become as one of them.

208. Whoever takes account of his self is benefited, and whoever remains neglectful of it suffers. Whoever fears remains safe; whoever takes instruction gets light; and whoever gets light gets understanding, and whoever gets understanding secures knowledge.
209. The world will bend towards us after having been refractory as the biting she-camel bends towards its young. *Then Ameerul Momineen recited the verse; And intend We to bestow (Our) favour upon those who were considered weak in the land, and to make them the Imams (guides in faith), and to make them the heirs. (Quran, 28:5)*
210. Fear Allah like the one who prepares himself after extracting himself (from worldly affairs) and after getting ready in this way makes effort; then he acts quickly during the period of this life, hastens in view of dangers (falling into error) and has his eye on proceeding towards the goal, on the end of his journey and on the place of his return.
211. Generosity is the protector of honour; forbearance is the bridle of the fool forgiveness is the levy of success; disregard is punishment of him who betrays; and consultation is chief way of guidance. He who is content with his own opinion faces danger. Endurance braves calamities while impatience is a helper of hardships of the world. The best contentment is to give up desires. Many a slavish mind is subservient to overpowering longings. Capability helps preservation of experience. Love means well-utilized relationship. Do not trust one who is grieved.
212. A man's vanity for himself is one of the enemies of his intelligence.
213. Ignore pain otherwise you will never be happy.
214. The tree whose trunk is soft has thick branches.
215. Opposition destroys good counsel.
216. He who achieves position begins to make wrong use of it.
217. Through change of circumstances the mettle of men is known.
218. Jealousy by a friend means defect in his love.
219. Most of the deficiency of intelligence occurs due to the flash of greed.
220. There is no justice in passing a verdict by relying on probability.
221. The worst provision for the Day of Judgement is high-handedness over people.
222. The highest act of a noble person is to ignore what he knows.
223. Whomever modesty clothes with its dress people cannot see his defects.

224. Excess of silence produces awe; justice results in more close friends; generosity heightens position; with humility blessings abound in plenty; by facing hardships leadership is achieved; by just behaviour the adversary is overpowered; and with forbearance against a fool there is increase of one's supporters against him.
225. It is strange that the jealous do not feel jealous about bodily health.
226. The greedy is in the shackles of disgrace.
227. *Imam was asked about belief when he said:* Belief means appreciation with the heart, acknowledgement with the tongue, and action with limbs.
228. He who is sorrowful for this world is in fact displeased with the dispensation of Allah. He who complains of a calamity that befalls him complains of his Lord (Allah). He who approaches a rich man and bends before him on account of his riches then two-third of his religion is gone. If a man reads the Quran and on dying goes to Hell then it means that he was among those who treated Divine verses with mockery. If a man's heart gets attached to the world, then it catches three things, namely worry that never leaves him, greed that does not abandon him and desire which he never fulfils.
229. Contentment is as good as estate, and goodness of moral character is as good as a blessing. *Imam was asked about Allah's saying: (Whosoever did good, whether male or female, and he be a believer, then We will certainly make him live a life good and pure and certainly We will give them their return with the best of what they were doing). (Quran, 16:97) when he said:* That means contentment.
230. Be a sharer with him who has an abundant livelihood because he is more probable to get more riches and likely to secure an increase of the share therein.
231. *Imam said about Allah's saying: verily, Allah enjoins justice and benevolence . (Quran, 16:90).* Here adl means justice and ihsan means favour.
232. He who gives with his short hand is given by a long hand.
233. *Ameerul Momineen said to his son al-Hasan, peace be upon them both:* 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.
234. The best traits of women are those which are worst traits of men, namely: vanity, cowardice and miserliness. Thus, since woman is vain, she will not allow anyone access to herself; since she is miserly, she will preserve her own property and the property of her husband; and since she is weak-hearted, she will be frightened with everything that befalls her.
235. *It was said to Ameerul Momineen (pbuh): Describe the wise to us; and he said:* The wise is one who places things in their proper positions. *Then, he was asked: Describe the ignorant to us; and he said:* I have already done so.

236. By Allah, this world of yours is more lowly in my view than the (left over) bone of a pig in the hand of a leper.
237. A group of people worshipped Allah out of desire for reward surely, this is the worship of traders. Another group worshipped Allah out of fear, this is the worship of slaves. Still another group worshipped Allah out of gratefulness, this is the worship of free men.
238. Woman is evil, all in all; and the worst of it is that one cannot do without her.
239. He who is a sluggard loses his rights and he who believes in the back-biter loses his friend.
240. One ill-gotten piece of stone in a house is a guarantee for its ruin.
241. The day of the oppressed over the oppressor will be severer than the day of the oppressor over the oppressed.
242. Fear Allah to some degree (even) though it be little; and set a curtain between you and Allah (even) though it be thin
243. When replies are numerous the correct point remains obscure.
244. Surely in every blessing there is a right of Allah. If one discharges that right Allah increases the blessing, and if one falls short of doing so one stands in danger of losing the blessing.
245. When capability increases, desire decreases.
246. Keep on guard against the slipping away of blessings because not everything that runs away comes back.
247. Generosity is more prompting to good than regard for kinship.
248. If a person has a good idea about you make his idea be true.
249. The best act is that which you have to force yourself to do.
250. I came to know Allah, the Glorified, through the breaking of determinations, change of intentions and losing of courage.
251. The sourness of this world is the sweetness of the next world while the sweetness of this world is the sourness of the next one.
252. Allah has laid down *iman* for purification from polytheism; *salat* for purification from vanity; *zakat* as a means of livelihood; *siyam* (fasting) as a trial of the people; *hajj* as a support for religion; *jihad* for the honour of Islam; persuasion for good for the good of the common people; dissuasion from evil for the control of the mischievous; regard for kinship for increase of number; revenge for stoppage of bloodshed; the award of penalties for the realization of importance of the prohibitions; the abstinence from drinking wine for protection of the wit; the avoidance of theft for inculcating chastity; abstinence from adultery

for safeguarding descent; abstinence from sodomy for increase of progeny; tendering evidence for furnishing proof against contentions; abstinence from the lie for increasing esteem for truth; maintenance of peace (*salam*) for protection from danger; *Imamate* (Divine Leadership) for the orderliness of the community and obedience (to Imams) as a mark of respect to the *Imamate*.

253. If you want an oppressor to take an oath ask him to swear like this that he is out of Allah's might and His power, because if he swears falsely in this way he will be quickly punished, while if he swears by Allah Who is such that there is no god but He, he will not be quickly punished since he is expressing the Unity of Allah, the Sublime.
254. O' son of Adam, be your own representative in the matter of your property and do about it whatever you want to be done with it after your death.
255. Anger is a kind of madness because the victim to it repents afterwards. If he does not repent his madness is confirmed.
256. Health of body comes from paucity of envy.
257. *Imam (a.s.) said to Kumayl ibn Ziyad an-Nakha'i*: O Kumayl, direct your people to go out in the day to achieve noble traits and go out in the night to meet the needs of those who might be sleeping, for I swear by Him Whose hearing extends to all voices if ever someone pleases another's heart, Allah will create a special thing out of this pleasing so that whenever any hardship befalls him it will come running like flowing water and drive away the hardship as wild camels are driven away.
258. When you fall in destitution, trade with Allah through charity.
259. Faithfulness with faithless people is faithlessness with Allah, while faithlessness with faithless people is faithfulness with Allah.
260. There is many a man being gradually brought towards punishment by good treatment with him; many a man who remains in deceit because his evils are covered; and many a man who is in illusion because of good talk about him, while there is no greater ordeal by Allah, the Glorified, than the giving of time.

Section wherein we have included selections from wonderful saying of Ameerul Momineen, peace be upon him, which require explanation

1. When the situation is like this, then the head of religion will rise and people will gather around him as pieces of rainless cloud collect during autumn.
2. He is a versatile speaker.
3. Quarrels bring about ruin.
4. When girls reach the stage of (realizing) realities, relations on the fa-

ther's side are preferable.

5. Faith produces a "lumazah" in the heart. As faith develops, the "lumazah" also increases.
6. If a man has a "ad-daynu'z-zanun" (doubtful loan) it is his duty to pay zakat thereon for all the past years when he recovers it.
7. *A tradition of Imam relates that he arranged a force for advancing for jihad and said: i'dhibu (turn away) from women so far as you can.*
8. Like the successful shooter who looks forward to achieving success at his first shot.
9. When the crisis became red-hot we sought refuge with Messenger of Allah (pbuh), and none of us was closer to the enemy than he himself.

This section ends and we return to the original theme of the chapter

261. *When the news of the attack of Muawiyah's men on al-Anbar reached Imam he himself came out walking till he reached an-Nukhaylah, where people overtook him and said: "O' Ameerul Momineen we are enough for them," then he said: You cannot be enough for me against yourselves, so how can you be enough for me against others? 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; as though I am led by them and they are the leaders or that I am the subject and they are the rulers.*
262. *It is said that al-Harith ibn Hawt came to Imam and said: Do you believe I can ever imagine that the people of Jamal were in the wrong? Imam peace be upon him, said: O' al-Harith! You have seen below yourself but not above yourself, and so you have been confused. Certainly, you have not known right, so that you can recognize the righteous. And you have not known wrong, so that you can recognize the people of wrong! Then al-Harith said: In that case, I shall withdraw along with Sa'd ibn Malik and 'Abdullah: ibn 'Umar; whereupon Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) said: Verily, Sa'd and 'Umar have neither sided with Right nor forsaken Wrong.*
263. The holder of authority is like the rider on a lion - he is envied for his position but he well knows his position.
264. Do good with the bereaved ones of others so that good is done to your bereaved ones also.
265. When the utterance of the wise is to the point it serves as a cure, but if it is wrong it proves like an illness.
266. *Someone asked Ameerul Momineen (pbuh), to define religion for him, so he said: 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.*

267. O son of Adam, do not inflict the worry of the day that has not yet come on the day which has already come, because if that day be in your life Allah will bestow its livelihood also.
268. 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.
269. There are two kinds of workers in the world. One is a person who works in this world for this world and his work of this world keeps him unmindful of the next world. He is afraid of destitution for those he will leave behind but feels himself safe about it. So, he spends his life after the good of others. The other is one who works in this world for what is to come hereafter, and he secures his share of this world without effort. Thus, he gets both the benefits together and becomes the owner of both the houses together. In this way, he is prestigious before Allah. If he asks Allah anything He does not deny him.
270. *It is related during the days of (Caliph) 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the question of the excess of the ornaments of the Ka'bah was mentioned to him and some people suggested: If you prepare with it an army of Muslims that will be a matter of great reward; and what would the Ka'bah do with the ornaments? 'Umar thought of doing so but asked Imam when he said: When the Quran was descended on the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants, there were four kinds of property. One, the property of Muslim individuals which he distributed among the successors according to fixed shares. Second, the tax which he distributed to those for whom it was meant. Third, the One-fifth levy for: which Allah had fixed the ways of disposal. Fourth, amounts of charity whose disposal was also fixed by Allah. The ornaments of Ka'bah did exist in those days but Allah left them as they were, but did not leave them by omission, nor were they unknown to Him. Therefore, you retain them where Allah and His Prophet placed them. Thereupon, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said: If you had not been here we would have been humiliated; and he left the ornaments as they were.*
271. *It is related that two persons were brought to Imam They had committed theft of public property. One of them was a slave purchased from public money and the other had been purchased by someone among the people. Then Imam (a.s.) said: As for this one who is the property of public money, there is no punishment for him for it means one property of Allah having taken another property of Allah. As for the other, he should get the punishment. Consequently, his hand was cut.*
272. If my steps acquire firmness out of these slippery places, I will alter several things.
273. Know with full conviction that Allah has not fixed for any person more livelihood than what has been ordained in the Book of Destiny, even though his means may be great, his craving for it intense and his efforts for it acute; nor does the weakness of a person or the paucity of his means stand in the way between what is ordained in the Book of

Destiny and himself. He who realizes it and acts upon it is the best of them all in point of comfort and benefit; while he who disregards it and doubts it exceeds all men in disadvantages. Very often a favoured person is being slowly driven (towards punishment) through those favours; and very often an afflicted person is being done good through his affliction. Therefore, O' listener, increase your gratefulness, lessen your haste and stay within the bounds of your livelihood.

274. Do not turn your knowledge into ignorance or your conviction into doubt. When you gain knowledge act (upon it) and when you acquire conviction proceed (on its basis) .
275. Greed takes a person to the watering place but gets him back without letting him drink. It undertakes responsibility but does not fulfil it. Often the drinker gets choked before the quenching of his thirst. The greater the worth of a thing yearned for the greater is the grief for its loss. Desires blind the eyes of understanding. The destined share will reach him who does not approach it.
276. O' my Allah, I seek Your protection from this that I may appear to be good in the eyes of the people whilst my inward self may be sinful before You, and that I may guard myself (from sins) only for show before the people although You are aware of all about me. Thus, I appear before the people in good shape although my evil deeds are placed before You. This means achieving nearness to Your creatures but remoteness from Your pleasure.
277. I swear by Him Who let us pass the dark night after which there was a bright day that such and such did not happen.
278. A small action which is continued with regularity is more beneficial than a long one performed with disgust.
279. When optional issues stand in the way of obligations, abandon them.
280. Whoever keeps in view the distance of the journey remains prepared.
281. Perception by the eyes is not real observation because the eyes sometimes deceive people; but wisdom does not deceive whomsoever it counsels.
282. Between you and the preaching there is a curtain of deception.
283. The ignorant among you get too much while the learned are just put off.
284. Knowledge dispels the excuse of those who advance excuses.
285. He whom death overtakes early seeks time while he whose death is deferred puts forth excuses for postponement (of doing good actions).
286. For every thing to which people say "how good!" there is an evil hidden in this world.

287. *Imam, peace be upon him, was asked about Destiny, when he said:* It is a dark path -- do not tread upon it, it is a deep ocean - do not dive in it, and it is the secret of Allah -- do not take trouble about (knowing) it.
288. When Allah intends to humiliate a person He denies him knowledge.
289. In the past I had a brother-in-faith and he was prestigious in my view because the world was humble in his eyes, the needs of the stomach did not have sway over him, he did not long for what he did not get; if he got a thing he would not ask for more; most of his time he was silent, if he spoke he silenced the other speakers, he quenched the thirst of questioners, he was weak and feeble but at the time of fighting he was like the lion of the forest or the serpent of the valley, he would not put forth an argument unless it was decisive.
- He would not abuse anyone in an excusable matter unless he had heard the excuse, he would not speak of any trouble except after its disappearance, he would say what he would do, and would not say what he would not do, even if he could be exceeded in speaking, he could not be excelled in silence, he was more eager for keeping quiet than speaking and if two things confronted him he would see which was more akin to the longing of the heart and he would oppose it. These qualities are incumbent upon you. So, you should acquire them and excel each other in them. Even if you cannot acquire them you should know that acquiring a part is better than giving up the whole.
290. Even if Allah had not warned of chastisement on those disobedient to Him, it would be obligatory by way of gratefulness for His favours that He should not be disobeyed.
291. *Ameerul Momineen (peace be upon him) said in condoling Ash'ath ibn Qays about (the death of) his son:* O' Ash' ath, if you grieve over your son, certainly it is the consequence of the blood relationship; but if you endure, then Allah provides recompense for every affliction. O' Ash'ath, if you endure even then matters will move on as ordained by Allah but in that case you will deserve reward; while if you lose patience, matters will again move as ordained by Allah, but in this case you will be bearing the burden (of sins). O' Ash'ath, your son (when he lived) gave you happiness while, at the same time, he was a trial and hardship and (when he died) he grieved you while, at the same time, he has proved a source of reward and mercy for you.
292. *Imam (A.S.) said on the grave of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his descendants, at the time of burial:* Certainly, endurance is good except about you; fretting is bad except over you; and the affliction about you is great while every other affliction before or after it is small.
293. Do not associate with a fool because he will beautify his actions before you and long that you too be like him.

294. *Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) was asked about the distance between East and West when he replied:* One day's travelling for the sun.
295. Your friends are three and your enemies are (also) three. Your friends are: your friend, your friend's friend and your enemy 's enemy. And your enemies are: your enemy, your friend's enemy and your enemy's friend.
296. *Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) saw a man busy against his enemy with what was harmful to himself too, so he said:* You are like one who pierces a spear through himself in order to kill the person sitting behind him.
297. How many are the objects of lessons, but how few the taking of lessons.
298. He who goes too far in quarrelling is a sinner, but if one falls short in it, one is oppressed and it is difficult for a quarreller to fear Allah.
299. I am not worried by a fault after which I get time to offer prayer in two units (rak 'ah) and beg safety from Allah.
300. *Imam peace be upon him, was asked: How Allah would conduct the accounting of all persons despite their large number. He replied:* just as He provides them livelihood despite their large number. Then it was said to him: How will He conduct their accounting without their seeing Him. He replied: just as He provides them livelihood although they do not see Him.
301. Your messenger is the interpreter of your intelligence while your letter is more eloquent in expressing your true self.
302. The person who is afflicted with hardship is not in greater need of praying than one who has been spared affliction but is not immune from it.
303. People are the progeny of the world and no one can be blamed for loving the mother.
304. The destitute is the Messenger of Allah. Whoever denies him denies Allah and whoever gives him gives Allah.
305. A self- respecting man never commits adultery.
306. The fixed limit of life is enough to remain watchful.
307. A man can sleep on the death of his child, but cannot sleep at loss of property.
308. Mutual affection between fathers creates a relationship between the sons. Relationship is more in need of affection than affection is of relationship.
309. Be afraid of the ideas of believers, because Allah, the Sublime, has put truth on their tongues.

310. The belief of a person cannot be regarded as true unless his trust in what is with Allah is more than his trust in what he himself has.
311. *When Imam came to Basrah he sent Anas ibn Malik to Talha and Zubair to make them recall what he (Anas) himself had heard the Messenger of Allah, (pbuh), say concerning them both, but he avoided doing so and when he -came back to Imam, he said that he had forgotten that matter. Thereupon, Ameerul Momineen (pbuh) , said: If you are speaking a lie Allah may afflict you with white spots (leucoderma) which even the turban may not cover.*
312. Sometimes hearts move forward and sometimes they move backward. When they move forward get them to perform optionals (as well), but when they move backward keep them confined to obligatories only.
313. The Quran contains news about the past, foretellings about the future and commandments for the present.
314. Throw a stone in return from where one comes to you because evil can be met only with evil.
315. *Imam said to his secretary 'Ubaydullah ibn Abi Rafi': Put cotton flake in the inkpot,the nib of your pen long, leave space between lines and close up the letters because this is good for the beauty of the writing.*
316. I am the ya'sub (leader) of the believers, while wealth is the leader of the wicked.
317. *Some Jews said to Imam; You had not buried your Prophet when you picked up differences about him, when Imam replied: We did not differ about him but we differed after him (about his succession); whereas you had not dried up your feet after coming out of the river (Nile) when you began asking your Prophet: Make you for us a god as they have gods of their own. Said he; 'Verily you are a people behaving ignorantly. ' (Quran, 7:138)*
318. *Imam was asked: With what did you overpower your adversaries? He answered: Whenever I confronted a person he helped me against himself.*
319. *Imam (A.S.) aid to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah: O' my son, I fear lest destitution overtakes you. So, you should seek Allah's protection from it, because destitution is deficiency of religious belief, perplexity of intelligence, and it is conducive to hatred of obstinate people.*
320. *Imam (A.S.) replied to a man who had asked him a difficult question: Ask me for understanding but do not ask me for confusion, 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.*
321. *Abdullah bin Abbas once advised Imam (A.S.) against his views, so he said: You have only to advise me but then I have to see (what to do); and if I act against your advice you have to follow me.*
322. *When Imam (A.S.) returned to Kufa from Siffin he passed by the residences of Shi-*

bamites (who belonged to tribe of Shibam) and heard women weeping over those killed in Siffin. At that time a Shibamite, Harb ibn Shurahbil ash-Shibami, who was one of the nobles of those people, came to him, and Imam (A.S.) said to him: Do your women have control over you as regards the weeping that I hear? Do you not refrain them from this crying? Harb began to walk with him while Imam (A.S.) was on horseback, so Imam (A.S.) : Get back because the walking of a man like you with one like me is mischief for the ruler and disgrace for the believer.

323. *Imam (A.S.) passed by the dead bodies of the Kharijites on the day of the battle of Nahrawan and said : Woe unto you! You have been harmed by him who deceived you. He was asked: O' Ameerul Momineen , who deceived them? Then, he replied: Satan, the deceiver, and the inner spirit that leads one to evil deceived them through passions, made it easy for them to get into sins, promised them victory and eventually threw them into the Fire.*
324. Beware of disobeying Allah in solitude, because the witness (of that situation) is also the judge.
325. *When the news of killing of Muhammad bin Abi Bakr reached Imam (A.S.) he said: Our grief over him is as great as their (i.e. the enemy's) joy for it, except that they have lost an enemy and we have lost a friend.*
326. The age up to which Allah accepts any excuse for a human being is sixty years.
327. He whom sin overpowers is not victorious, and he who secures victory by evil is (in fact) vanquished.
328. 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.
329. Not to be in need of putting forth an excuse is better than putting forth a true excuse.
330. The least right of Allah on you is that you should not make use of His favours in committing His sins.
331. When the disabled fall short in performing acts of obedience to Allah, the Glorified, it is a good opportunity given by Allah for the intelligent to perform such acts.
332. The sovereign is the watchman of Allah on earth.
333. *Imam (A.S.) said describing a believer: A believer has a cheerful face, a sorrowful heart, a very broad chest (full of generosity), and a very humble heart. He hates high position and dislikes renown. His grief is long, his courage is far-reaching, his silence is much and, his time is occupied. He is grateful, enduring, buried in his thoughts, sparing in his friendship (with others), of bright demeanour and of soft tempera-*

ment. He is stronger than stone but humbler than a slave.

334. If a man happens to see the end of (his) life and his final fate, he will begin hating desires and their deception.
335. There are two sharers in the property of every person - successors and accidents.
336. The person who is approached with a request is free until he promises.
337. He who prays but does not exert effort is like the one who shoots without a bow-string.
338. Knowledge is of two kinds - that which is absorbed and that which is just heard. The one that is heard does not give benefit unless it is absorbed.
339. Correctness of decision goes together with power. The one emerges with the other's emergence and disappears when the other disappears.
340. The beauty of destitution is chastity and the beauty of riches is gratefulness.
341. The day of justice will be severer on the oppressor than the day of oppression on the oppressed.
342. The biggest wealth is that one should not have an eye on what others possess.
343. Utterances are preserved and actions are to be tried. *Every soul, for what it earned, is held in pledge! (Quran, 74:38)*. People are to be made deficient (as regards their bodies) and meddled with (as regards their minds) except those whom Allah protects. The questioner among them aims at confusing and the answerer creates hardship. It is possible that the man who has the best views among them will be deviated from the soundness of his thinking by pleasure or displeasure, and it is possible that a single glance may affect even the man with the 'best wisdom among them or a single expression may transform him.
344. O groups of people, fear Allah, for there is many a man who aspires for what he does not get, many a builder of a house who does not live in it, and many a collector of that which he shall just leave behind. Possibly he may have collected it wrongfully or by denying a right. He acquired it unlawfully and had to bear the weight of sins on account of it. Consequently, he returned (from this world) with that weight and came before Allah with sorrow and grief. *Loses he both this world and (also) the hereafter; that is a loss (which is) manifest. (Quran, 22:11)*
345. Lack of access to sins is also a kind of chastity.
346. The dignity of your face is solid but begging dissolves it away: therefore, look carefully before whom you dissolve it.

347. To praise more than what is due is sycophancy; to do it less is either because of inability to speak or of envy.
348. The most serious sin is that which the doer considers light.
349. He who sees his own shortcomings abstains from looking into other's shortcomings. He who feels happy with livelihood with which Allah provides him does not grieve over what he misses. He who draws out the sword of revolt gets killed with it. He who strives without means perishes. He who enters depths gets drowned. He who visits places of ill-repute receives blame. He who speaks more commits more errors. He who commits more errors becomes shameless. He who is shameless will have less fear of Allah. He whose fear of Allah is less, his heart dies. He whose heart dies enters the Fire. He who observes the shortcomings of others and disapproves of them and then accepts them for himself is definitely a fool. Contentment is a capital that does not dwindle. He who remembers death much is satisfied with small favours in this world. He who knows that his speech is also a part of his action speaks less except where he has some purpose.
350. The oppressor among people has three signs: he oppresses his superior by disobeying him, and his junior by imposing his authority and he supports other oppressors.
351. At the extremity of hardship comes relief, and at the tightening of the chains of tribulation comes ease.
352. Do not devote much of your activity to your wife and your children, because if your wife and children are lovers of Allah then He will not leave His lovers uncared for, and if enemies of Allah then why should you worry and keep yourself busy about the enemies of Allah.
353. The greatest defect is to regard that defect (in others) which is present in yourself.
354. *Someone congratulated another person in the presence of Imam (A.S.) on the birth of a son saying: Congratulations for getting a rider of horses. Then Imam (A.S.) : Do not say so; but say: You have occasion to be grateful to Allah, the Giver, and be blessed with what you have been given. May he attain full life and may you be blessed with his devotion.*
355. *One of the officers of Imam (A.S.) built a stately house, about which Imam (A.S.) : This is silver coins showing forth their faces. Certainly, this house speaks of your riches.*
356. *It was said to Imam (A.S.) : If a man is left in his house and the door is closed, from where will his livelihood reach him. And he replied: From whatever way his death reaches him.*
357. *Condoling with people among whom one had died, Imam (A.S.) : This thing has not started with you nor does it end with you. This fellow of yours*

was used to journeying and therefore it is better to think him still to be journeying. Either he will rejoin you or else you will rejoin him.

358. O' people, let Allah see you fearing at the time of happiness just as you fear Him at the time of distress. Certainly, he who is given ease (of life) and does not consider it as a means of slow approach towards tribulation (wrongly), considers himself safe against what is to be feared while he who is afflicted with straitened circumstances but does not perceive them to be a trial loses the coveted reward.
359. O' slaves of desires, cut them short because he who leans on the world gets nothing out of it except the pain of hardships. O' people, take upon yourselves your own training and turn away from the dictates of your natural inclinations.
360. Do not regard an expression uttered by any person as evil if you can find it capable of bearing some good.
361. If you have a need from Allah, the Glorified, then begin by seeking Allah's blessing on His Messenger, (pbuh), then ask your need, because Allah is too generous to accept one (seeking His blessing on His Messenger) of the two requests made to Him and deny the other.
362. He who is jealous of his esteem should keep from quarrelling.
363. To make haste before the proper time or to delay after a proper opportunity, in either case is folly.
364. Do not ask about things which may not happen because you have enough to worry about with what happens.
365. Imagination is a clear mirror, and the taking of lessons (from things around) provides warning and counsel. It is enough for improving yourself that you should avoid what you consider bad in others.
366. Knowledge is associated with action. Therefore, he who knows should act, because knowledge calls for action; if there is a response well and good, otherwise it (knowledge) departs from him.
367. O people, wealth of this world is like straw that brings an epidemic; therefore keep off this grazing land, leaving it is a greater favour than peacefully staying in it, and its part enough for subsistence is more blissful than its riches. Destitution has been ordained for those who are rich here, while comfort has been destined for those who keep away from it. If a person is attracted by its dazzle, it blinds both his eyes; and if a person acquires eagerness towards it, it fills his heart with grief which keep alternating in the black part of his heart, some grief worrying him and another giving him pain. This goes on till the suffocation of death overtakes him. He is flung in the open while both the shrines of his heart are severed. It is easy for Allah to cause him to die and for his comrades to put him in the grave. The believer sees the

world with eyes that derive instruction, and takes from it food enough for his barest needs. He hears in it with ears of hatred and enmity. If it is said (about someone) that he has become rich, it is also said that he has turned destitute; and if pleasure is felt on one's living, grief is felt over his death. This is the position, although the day has not yet approached when they will be disheartened.

368. Allah, the Glorified, has laid down reward for obedience to Him and punishment for committing sins against Him in order to save men from His chastisement and to drive them towards Paradise.
369. A time will come when nothing will remain of the Quran except its writing, and nothing of Islam except its name. The mosques in those days will be busy with regards to construction but desolate with regard to guidance. Those staying in them and those visiting them will be the worst of all on earth. From them mischief will spring up and towards them all wrong will turn. If anyone isolates himself from it (mischief) they will fling him back to it and if anyone steps back from it they will push him towards it. Says Allah, the Glorified, (in hadith qudsi i.e., the tradition in which Allah- Himself speaks): I swear by Myself that I shall send upon them an evil wherein the endurer would be bewildered, and He would do so. We seek Allah's pardon from stumbling through neglect.
370. *It is related that it was seldom that Imam (A.S.) ascended the pulpit and did not utter the following before his sermon: O' people, fear Ahab for man has not been created for naught so that he may waste himself, nor has he been left uncared for so that he may commit nonsensical acts. This world which appears beautiful to him cannot be the replacement of the next world which appears bad in his eyes, nor is the vain person who is successful in this world through his high courage like him who is successful in the next world even to a small extent.*
371. There is no distinction higher than Islam; no honour more honourable than fear of Allah; no asylum better than self restraint; no intercessor more effective than repentance; no treasure more precious than contentment; and no wealth is a bigger remover of destitution than being satisfied with mere sustenance. He who confines himself to what is just enough for maintenance achieves comfort and prepares abode in ease. Desire is the key of grief and the conveyance of distress. Greed, vanity and jealousy are incentives to falling into sins and mischief-mongering is the collection of all bad habits.
372. *Imam (A.S.) said to Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari': O' Jabir, the mainstay of religion and the world are four persons: The scholar who acts on his knowledge; the ignorant who does not feel ashamed of learning; the generous who is not niggardly in his favours; and the destitute who does not sell his next life for his worldly benefits. Consequently, when the scholar wastes his knowledge, the ignorant feels shame in learn-*

ing; and when the generous is niggardly with his favours, the destitute sells his next life for the worldly benefits. O' Jabir, if favours of Allah abound on a person the people's needs towards him also abound. Therefore, he who fulfils for Allah all that is obligatory on him in this regard will preserve them (Allah's favours) in continuance and perpetuity, while he who does not fulfil those obligations will expose them to decay and destruction.

373. *Ibn Jarir at-Tabari has, in his history related from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Layla, al-faqih who was one of those who had risen with ('Abd' ar-Rahman ibn Muhammad) Ibn al-Ash'ath to fight al-Hajjaj that he (Ibn Abi Layla) was exhorting people to jihad by recalling: On the occasion of encounter with the people of Syria I heard Ameerul Momineen, may Allah exalt his degree of rank among the righteous and may He reward him the reward of martyrs and men of truth, saying: O' believers, whoever observes excesses being committed and people being called to towards evil and disapproves it with his heart is safe and free from responsibility for it, and whoever disapproves of it with his tongue would be rewarded and he is in a higher position than the former 'but whoever disapproves it with his sword in order that the word of Allah may remain superior and the word of the oppressors may remain inferior, catches hold of the path of guidance and stands on the right way, while his heart is lighted with conviction.*
374. *Another similar saying:* So, among them (the Muslim community) there is he who disapproves evil with his hand, tongue and heart. This man has perfectly attained the virtuous habits. And among them there is he who disapproves evil with his tongue and heart but not with his hand. This man has attained only two virtuous habits but lacks one. And among them there is the third one who disapproves evil with his heart but not with his tongue and hand. This is the one who lacks the two better qualities out of three and holds only one. Then, among them there is also he who does not disapprove evil either with his tongue, heart or hand. He is just a dead man among the living. All the virtuous deeds including war in the way of Allah as compared to the persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil are just like spitting in the deep ocean. The persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil do not bring death nearer nor do they lessen the livelihood. And better than all this is to utter a just expression before the tyrannical ruler.
375. *It is related from Abu Juhayfah who said: I heard Amir Imam (A.S.) saying:* The first fighting with which you will be overpowered is the fighting with hands, thereafter with your tongues and then with your hearts. Consequently, he who does not recognize virtue with his heart or does not disapprove evil will be turned upside down. Thus, his upside will be turned downwards and his lowside will be turned upwards.
376. Certainly, right is weighty and wholesome while wrong is light and epidemical.
377. Do not feel safe from the punishment of Allah even about the best

man in the whole community because Allah, the Sublime, says: *But no one feels secure against the plan of Allah save the people (who are) losers. (Quran, 7:99)*. Again, do not lose hope even for the worst man of the community because Allah-, the Sublime says: *Verily, despairs not of Allah's mercy but the disbelieving people. (Quran, 12:87)*.

378. Miserliness contains all other evil vices and is the rein with which one can be led to every evil.
379. O'son of Adam, livelihood is of two kinds: livelihood which you seek and livelihood which seeks you; if you do not reach it, it will come to you Therefore, do not turn your one day's worry into a year's worry. Whatever you get every day should be enough for you for the day. If you have a whole year of your life even then Allah, the Sublime, will give you every next day what He has destined as your share. If you do not have a year in your life then why should you worry for what is not for you. No seeker will reach your livelihood before you nor will anyone overpower you in the matter of livelihood. Similarly, whatever has been destined as your share will not be delayed for you.
380. Many a man faces a day after which he finds no day and many a man is in an enviable position in the earlier part of the night but is wept over by bewailing women in its later part.
381. Words are in your control until you have not uttered them; but when you have spoken them out you are under their control. Therefore, guard your tongue as you guard your gold and silver, for often one expression snatches away a blessing and invites punishment.
382. Do not say what you do not know; rather do not say all that you know, because Allah has laid down some obligations for all your limbs by means of which He will put forth arguments against you on the Day of Judgment.
383. Fear lest Allah sees you while committing His sins or misses you when it is time to obey Him and as a result thereof you become a loser. Therefore, when you are strong be strong in obeying Allah and when you are weak be weak in committing sins of Allah.
384. Leaning towards this world despite what you see of it, is folly, and lagging behind in good deeds when you are convinced of good reward for them is obvious loss, while trusting in every one before trying is weakness.
385. It is (the proof of the) humbleness of the world before Allah- that He is disobeyed only herein and His favours cannot be achieved except by abandoning it.
386. One who is in search of something will obtain it, at least a part of it.
387. That good is no good after which there is the Fire, and that hardship is

no hardship after which there is Paradise. Every bliss other than Paradise is inferior and every calamity other than the Fire is comfort.

388. Beware that destitution is a calamity, but worse than destitution is ailment of the body, while worse than bodily ailment is the disease of the heart. Beware that plenty of wealth is a blessing, but better than plenty of wealth is the health of the body, while still better than the health of the body is the chastity of heart.
389. Whomever action detains behind, his lineage cannot put him forward. *In another version it is thus:* Whoever misses personal attainment cannot be benefited by his forefathers' attainments.
390. The believer's time has three periods: 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.
391. Abstain from the world so that Allah may show you its real evils and do not be neglectful because (in any case) you will not be neglected.
392. Speak so that you may be known, since man is hidden under his tongue.
393. Take off the favours of the world whatever comes to you and keep away from what keeps away from you. If you cannot do so be moderate in your seeking.
394. Many an expression is more effective than an attack.
395. Every small thing that is contented upon, suffices.
396. Let it be death but not humiliation. Let it be little but not through others. He who does not get while sitting will not get by standing either. The world has two days one for you and the other against you. When the day is for you, do not feel proud but when it is against you endure it.
397. The best scent is musk; its weight is light while its smell is scented.
398. Put off boasting, give up self-conceit and remember your grave.
399. The child has a right on the father while the father too has a right on the child. The right of a father on a child is that the latter should obey the former in every matter save in committing sins of Allah, the Glorified, while the right of the child on the father is that he should give him a beautiful name, give him good training and teach him the Quran.
400. Evil effect of sight is right; charm is right; sorcery is right, and fa'l (auguring good) is right, while tiyarah (auguring evil) is not right, and

spreading of a disease from one to the other is not right. Scent gives pleasure, honey gives pleasure, riding gives pleasure and looking at greenery gives pleasure.

401. Nearness with people in their manners brings about safety from their evil.
402. *Someone uttered an expression above his position, then Amir Imam (A.S.) , said to him:* You have started flying soon after growing feathers (shakir) and commenced grumbling before attaining youth (saqb).
403. Whoever hankers after contraries gets no means of success.
404. *On being asked the meaning of the expression: "la hawla wala quwwata illa bi'llah "* (there is no strength nor power but by means of Allah) . *Imam (A.S.) said :* We are not master of anything along with Allah, and we are not master of anything save what He makes us master of. So, when lie makes us master of anything of which lie is a superior Master over us He also assigns some duties to us; and when lie takes it away He will take away those duties as well.
405. *Imam (A.S.) heard Ammar ibn Yasir (may Allah have mercy on him) conversing with al- Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and said:* Let him alone O' Ammar, for he has entered religion only to the extent of his deriving advantage of the world, and he has wilfully involved himself in misgivings in order to adopt them as cover for his shortcomings.
406. It is good for the rich to show humility before the poor to seek reward from Allah, but better than that is the haughtiness of the poor towards the rich with trust in Allah.
407. Allah does not grant wisdom to a person except that some day He will save him from ruin with its help.
408. Whoever clashes with Truth would be knocked down by it.
409. The heart is the book of the eye.
410. Fear of Allah is the chief trait of human character.
411. Do not try the sharpness of your tongue against Him Who gave you the power to speak, nor the eloquence of your speaking against Him Who set you on the right path.
412. It is enough for your own discipline that you abstain from what you dislike from others.
413. One should endure like free people, otherwise one should keep quiet like the ignorant.
414. *In another tradition it is related that Imam (A.S.) said to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays by way of condolence on the death of his son:* Either endure like great people or else you will forget like animals.

415. *Imam (A.S.) said about the world:* It deceives, it harms and it passes away. Allah, the Sublime, did not approve it as a reward for His lovers nor as a punishment for His enemies. In fact, the people of this world are like those riders that as soon as they alighted the driver called out to them and they marched off.
416. *Imam (A.S.) said to his son al-Hasan (peace be upon him):* O' my son, do not leave anything of this world behind you, because you will be leaving it for either of two sorts of persons: Either a person who uses it in obeying Allah, in this case he will acquire virtue through what was evil for you, or it will be a person who uses it in disobeying Allah and in that case he will be earning evil with what you collected for him, and so you will be assisting him in his sinfulness; and neither of these two deserves to be preferred by you over yourself
417. *Someone said Imam (A.S.) : "astaghfiru 'llah" I ask Allah's forgiveness), then Imam (A.S.) said:* Your mother may lose you! Do you know what "istighfar" (asking Allah's forgiveness) is? "istighfar" is meant for people of a high position. It is a word that stands on six supports. The first is to repent over the past; the second is to make a firm determination never to revert to it; the third is to discharge all the rights of people so that you may meet Allah- quite clean with nothing to account for; the fourth is to fulfil every obligation which you ignored (in the past) so that you may now do justice with it; the fifth is to aim at the flesh grown as a result of unlawful earning, so that you may melt it by grief (of repentance) till the skin touches the bone and a new flesh grows between them; and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you (previously) made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. On such an occasion you may say "astaghfiru 'llah".
418. Clemency is (like) a kinsfolk.
419. How wretched the son of Adam is! His death is hidden, his ailments are concealed, his actions are preserved, the bite of a mosquito pains him, choking causes his death and sweat gives him a bad smell.
420. *It is related that Imam (A.S.) was sitting with his companions when a beautiful woman passed by them and they began to look at her whereupon Imam (A.S.) said:* The eyes of these men are covetous and this glancing is the cause of their becoming covetous. Whenever anyone of you sees a woman who attracts him, he should meet his wife because she is a woman like his wife.
421. It is enough if your wisdom distinguishes for you the ways of going astray from those of guidance.
422. Do good and do not regard any part of it small because its small is big and its little is much. No one of you should say that another person is more deserving than I in doing good. Otherwise, by Allah, it would really be so. There are people of good and evil. When you would

leave either of the two, others will perform them.

423. Whoever set right his inward self, Allah sets right his outward self. Whoever performs acts for his religion, Allah accomplishes his acts of this world. Whoever's dealings between himself and Allah are good, Allah turns the dealings between him and other people good.
424. Forbearance is a curtain for covering, and wisdom is a sharp sword. Therefore, conceal the weaknesses in your conduct with forbearance and kill your desires with your wisdom.
425. There are some creatures of Allah whom Allah particularizes with favours for the benefit of the people, therefore He stays them in their hands so long as they give them to others; but when they deny them to others He takes away the favours from them and sends them to others.
426. It does not behove a man to have trust in two positions, health and riches, because there is many a man whom you see healthy but he soon falls sick and many a man whom you see rich but soon turns destitute.
427. Whoever complains about a need to a believer, it is as though he has complained about it to Allah; but whoever complains about it to an unbeliever it is as though he complained about Allah.
428. *Imam (A.S.) said on the occasion of an 'id (Muslim feast day):* It is an 'Id for him whose fasting Allah accepts and for whose prayers He is grateful; and (in fact) every day wherein no sin of Allah is committed is an 'id.
429. On Judgement Day the greatest regret will be felt by man who earned wealth through sinful ways, although inherited by a person who spends it in obeying Allah, the Glorified, and will be awarded Paradise on that account while first one will go into Fire on account of it.
430. The worst in bargaining and the most unsuccessful in striving is the man who exerts himself in seeking riches although fate does not help him in his aims and consequently he goes from this world in a sorrowful state while in the next world too he will face its ill consequences.
431. Livelihood is of two kinds: the seeker and the sought. Therefore, he who hankers after this world death traces him till it turns him out of it; but he who hankers after the next world, worldly ease itself seeks him till he receives his livelihood from it.
432. Lovers of Allah are those who look at the inward side of the world while others look at its outward side, they busy themselves with remoter benefits while others busy themselves in immediate benefits. They kill those things which they feared would have killed them, and leave here in this world what they think would leave them. They took amassing of wealth by others as a small matter and regarded it like losing. They are enemies of things others love while love things which

others hate. Through them, Quran has been learnt and they have been given knowledge through Quran. With them Quran is staying while they stand by Quran. They do not see any object of hope above what they hope and no object of fear above what they fear.

433. Remember pleasures will pass away while the consequences will stay.
434. Try (a man) and you will hate him.
435. It is not that Allah-, to Whom belongs Might and Majesty, may keep the door of gratitude open for a person and close the door of plenty upon him, or to open the door of prayer to a person and close the door of acceptance upon him, or to open the door of repentance on a person and close the door of forgiveness upon him.
436. The most appropriate person for an honourable position is he who descends from the people of honour.
437. *Imam (A.S.) was asked: Which of the two is better; justice or generosity? Imam (A.S.) replied: 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.*
438. People are enemies of what they do not know.
439. The whole of asceticism is confined between two expressions of the Quran. Allah, the Glorified says: *Lest distress you yourselves for what escapes you, and be overjoyous for what He has granted you (Quran, 57:23)*. Whoever does not grieve over what he misses and does not revel over what comes to him acquires asceticism from both its sides.
440. What a breaker is sleep for resolutions of the day!
441. Governing power is the proving ground for people.
442. No town has greater right on you than the other. The best town for you is that which bears you.
443. *When the news of the death of (Malik) al-Ashtar (may Allah have mercy on him), reached Imam (A.S.) he said: Malik, what a man Malik was! By Allah, if he had been a mountain he would have been a big one (find), and if he had been a stone he would have been hard; no horseman could have reached it and no bird could have flown over it.*
444. A little that lasts is better than much that brings grief.
445. If a man possesses a revealing quality wait and see his other qualities.
446. *Imam said to Ghalib ibn Sasaah, father of Farazdaq (famous Arabic poet) during a conversation between them: What about the large number of your camels? The man replied: They have been swept away by obligations, O' Imam. Whereupon Imam said: That is the most praiseworthy way of (losing) them.*

447. Whoever trades without knowing the rules of religious law will be involved in usury.
448. Whoever regards small distresses as big, Allah involves him in big ones.
449. Whoever maintains his own respect in view, his desires appear light to him.
450. Whenever a man cuts a joke he separates away a bit from his wit.
451. 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.
452. Riches and destitution will follow presentation before Allah.
453. Zubair remained a man from our house till his wretched son Abdullah came forth.
454. What has a man to do with vanity. His origin is semen and his end is a carcass while he cannot feed himself nor ward off death.
455. *Imam (A.S.) was asked about the greatest poet and he said:* The whole group of them did not proceed on the same lines in such a way that we can know the height of their glory; but if it has to be done then it is the "al-Malik ad-dillil" (the mislead king).
456. Is there no free man who can leave this chewed morsel (of the world) to those who like it? Certainly, the only price for yourselves is Paradise. Therefore, do not sell yourself except for Paradise.
457. Two greedy persons never get satiated, the seeker of knowledge and the seeker of this world.
458. Belief means you should prefer truth when it harms you rather than falsehood when it benefits you; your words should not be more than your action and you should fear Allah when speaking about others.
459. Destiny holds sway over (our) predetermination till effort itself brings about ruin.
460. Forbearance and endurance are twins and they are the product of high courage.
461. Backbiting is the tool of the helpless.
462. Many a man gets into mischief because of being spoken well about.
463. This world has been created for other than itself and has not been created for itself.
464. The Banu Umayyah have a fixed period wherein they are having their way. But when differences arise among them then even if the hyena

attacks them it will overpower them.

465. *Imam (A.S.) said eulogizing ansar* : By Allah, they nurtured Islam with their generous hands and eloquent tongues as a year old calf is nurtured.
466. The eye is the strap of the rear.
467. *Imam said in one of his speeches*: A ruler came into position over them. He remained upright and made them upright till the entire religion put its bosom on the ground.
468. A severe time will come upon people wherein the rich will seize possessions with their teeth although not commanded to do so. Allah the Glorified, says: *Forget not generosity among yourselves (Quran, 2:237)*. During this time wicked will rise up while virtuous will remain low and purchases will be made from helpless although the Prophet (pbuh) has prohibited purchasing from the helpless.
469. Two types of persons will fall into ruin over me: The one who loves exaggerates and the other who lays false and baseless blames.
470. *Imam (A.S.) was asked on the Unity of Allah and His justice, when he replied*: Unity means that you do not subject Him to the limitations of your imagination and justice means that you do not lay any blame on Him.
471. There is no good in silence over matters involving wisdom just as there is no good in speaking with ignorance.
472. *Imam said in his prayer for seeking rain*: O' my Allah, send us rain by submissive clouds not by unruly ones.
473. *It was said to Imam (A.S.)* : *We wish you had changed your grey hair, O' Imam. Then he said*: Dye is a way of adornment while we are in a state of grief.
474. The fighter in the way of Allah who gets martyred would not get a greater reward than he who remains chaste despite means. It is possible that a chaste person may become one of the angels.
475. Contentment is a wealth that does not exhaust.
476. *When Imam (A.S.) put Ziyad ibn Abih in place of Abdullah ibn Abbas over Fars (in Persia) and its revenues, he had a long conversation with him in which he prohibited him from advance recovery of revenue. Therein he said*: 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.
477. The worst sin is that which the committer takes lightly.
478. Allah has not made it obligatory on the, ignorant to learn till He has made it obligatory on the learned to teach.
479. The worst comrade is he for whom formality has to be observed.
480. If a believer enrages his brother, it means that he leaves him.