

٢٥١. وَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): فَرَضَ اللَّهُ الْإِيمَانَ تَطْهِيراً مِنَ الشِّرْكِ وَالصَّلَاةَ تَنْزِيهاً عَنِ الْكِبَرِ وَالزَّكَاةَ تَسْبِيحاً لِلرِّزْقِ وَالصِّيَامَ ابْتِلَاءً لِإِخْلَاصِ الْخَلْقِ وَالْحَجَّ تَقَرُّباً لِلدِّينِ وَالْجِهَادَ عِزاً لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَالْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مَصْلَحَةً لِلْعَوَامِ وَالنَّهْيَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ رَدْعاً لِلْسُفْهَاءِ وَصِلَةَ الرَّحِمِ مَنَامَةً لِلْعَدَدِ وَالْقِصَاصَ حَقّاً لِلدِّمَاءِ وَإِقَامَةَ الْحُدُودِ إِعْظَاماً لِلْمَحَارِمِ وَتَرْكَ شَرْبِ الْخَمْرِ تَحْصِيناً لِلْعَقْلِ وَمُجَانِبَةَ السَّرِقَةِ إِجَاباً لِلْعَفَةِ وَتَرْكَ الزَّوْنِ تَحْصِيناً لِلنِّسَبِ وَتَرْكَ الدَّوَاطِ تَكْثِيراً لِلنَّسْلِ وَالشَّهَادَاتِ اسْتِظْهَاراً عَلَى الْمَجَاحِدَاتِ وَتَرْكَ الْكَذِبِ تَشْرِيفاً لِلصِّدْقِ وَالسَّلَامَ أَمَاناً مِنَ الْمَخَافِ وَالْأَمَانَةَ نِظَاماً لِلأُمَّةِ وَالطَّاعَةَ تَعْظِيماً لِلإِمَامَةِ.

252. Amīr al-mu'minīn, peace be upon him, said: Allāh has laid down īmān (belief) for purification from polytheism; ṣalāt (prayer) for purification from vanity; zakāt (levy) as a means of livelihood; ṣiyām (fasting) as a trial of the people; ḥajj (pilgrimage to the House of Allāh in Mecca) as a support for religion; jihād (fighting in the way of Allāh) for the honour of Islam; persuasion for good (al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf) for the good of the common people; dissuasion from evil (an-nahy 'ani'l-munkar) 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 (salām) for protection from danger; imāmah or Imāmate (Divine Leadership) for the orderliness of the community and obedience (to Imāms) as a mark of respect to the Imāmate. [1]

Footnote :

[1] Before describing some of the aims and good points of the commands of the sharī'ah (i.e., religious law), Amīr al-mu'minīn has begun with the aims and objects of Belief (īmān), because īmān serves as the basis of religious commands, and without it no need is felt for any religious code or jurisprudence. īmān is the name of acknowledging the existence of the Creator and admission of His Singularity. When this īmān takes root in the heart of a man then he does not agree to bow before any other being, nor is he over-awed or affected by any power or authority. Rather, getting mentally freed of all ties he regards himself a devotee of Allāh and the result of this adherence to the Unity is that he is saved from the pollution of polytheism. Prayer (ṣalāt) is the most important of all forms of worship. It consists of standing, sitting, bending and prostration, and these postures are a successful way of destroying the feeling of vanity and pride, erasing selfconceit and egotism and creating humility and submissiveness, because the actions and movements of a vain person produce pride and haughtiness while humble actions engender the quality of submissiveness and humbleness in the mind. With the exercise of these

acts a man, by and by, acquires a humble temperament. This is how the Arabs who were so vain that if their whip fell off during riding they would not bend down to pick it up or if the strap of the shoe gave way they thought it insulting to bend down to mend it, began to rub their faces on dust during prostration in prayers, and place their foreheads in the position of others' feet during the congregational prayer, and in this way acquired the true spirit of Islam after abandoning the pre-Islamic vanity and partisanship.

zakāt, namely that a person who is able to do so should pay annually out of his money or property a fixed share for those who are either destitute or do not have means of livelihood for a year, is an obligatory command of Islam, the purpose behind which is that no individual in the community should remain poor and they should remain safe from the evils that result from need and poverty. Besides, another objective is that wealth should keep rotating from one individual to another and should not be centred in a few persons.

Fasting (ṣiyām) is a form of worship in which there is not an iota of show, and no motive is active in it except that of pure intention. As a result, even in seclusion when hunger perturbs a man or thirst makes him uneasy he does not extend his hand for eating, nor does the longing for water make him lose his control although if something is eaten or drunk no one is to peep into his stomach, but the purity of conscience prevents his will from deflecting. This is the greatest good of fasting that it engenders purity of will in action.

The purpose of ḥajj (pilgrimage to the House of Allāh) is that Muslims from all corners of the globe should assemble at one place so that this world assembly should prove to be an occasion for the manifestation of Islam's greatness, the renewal of the passion for worship and the creation of bonds of mutual brotherhood. The purpose of jihād (fighting in the way of Allāh) is to fight with all possible might those forces which oppose Islam, so that Islam may achieve stability and progress. Although there are dangers for life in this course and difficulties crop up at every step, yet the tidings for eternal ease and everlasting life produce the courage to bear all these hardships.

The persuasion for good and dissuasion from evil are effective ways of showing others the correct path and preventing them from wrong; If a community has no persons to perform these duties nothing can save it from ruin and it falls to an extreme depth morally and socially. That is why Islam has laid great stress on it as compared to other matters, and held disregard to it as an unpardonable sin.

Doing good for kinship means that a man should do favours to his relatives and at least should not stop mutual accosting and speaking with them so that spirits may become clean and family ties may develop, and the scattered individuals may render strength to one another.

Seeking vengeance is a right given to the survivors of the person killed. They can demand a life for a life so that for fear of punishment no one would dare kill any person, and at the same time the survivor's passion for revenge should not result in the killing of more than one person. No doubt forgiveness or pardon does carry weight in its own place but where it means trampling of an individual's right or a danger to world peace it cannot be regarded as good. Rather, on such an occasion revenge is the sole way of stopping bloodshed and killing for the safety of human life. Thus, Allāh says: And for you there is (security of) Retaliation O' you men of understanding, so that you may guard yourself (against evil). (Qur'ān, 2:179)

The purpose behind the awarding of penalties is to make the offender appreciate the seriousness of violating the prohibitions of Allāh so that he may keep off the prohibitions for fear of punishments.

Wine causes diffusion of thinking, dispersion of senses and weakness of understanding. As a result, a man commits such actions which would not be expected of him in the state of being in his senses. Besides, it ruins health and renders the body liable to catch infectious diseases while, sleeplessness, nervous weakness and rheumatism are its chief effects. The sharī'ah has prohibited it in view of these ill-effects.

Theft, that is, taking over someone else's property is an evil habit which is produced by the sway of greed and evil passions and since bringing down evil passions from the position of excess to the bounds of moderation means chastity the abstinence from theft by curbing greed and evil passions would produce chastity.

Adultery and sodomy have been prohibited in order that lineage may be regulated and the human race may continue and prosper, because the issues by adultery are not regarded legitimate for the purposes of lineage and consequently they are not entitled to inheritance, while there is no question of issues in the case of unnatural practices. Besides, as a consequence of these evil practices one contracts such diseases which cause ruination of life in addition to discontinuity of progeny.

The law of evidence is needed because if one party denies the right of another party the latter may establish it through evidence and safeguard it thereby.

Abstention from lies and falsehood has been commanded so that the standing and importance of its contrary namely truth may become prominent and in observing the benefits and advantages of truth the moral weakness of falsehood may be avoided. salām means peace and peace-loving and it is obvious that peaceful attitude is a successful way of protection from dangers and prevention of war and fighting.

Generally, commentators have taken the word salām to mean mutual greetings and well-wishing but the context and the fact that it has been mentioned in the series of obligations does not support this interpretation. However, according to this

interpretation salām is a means of safety from dangers because it is regarded as a way of peace and peaceloving. When two Muslims meet each other they offer salām one to the other, it means that they announce the wishes of each for the welfare of the other whereafter each feels safe with the other.

Imāmate (imāmah): This word has appeared in the same form in the correct copies of Nahj al-balāghah as well as in its commentaries like Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd, vol. 19, p. 90; Ibn Maytham, vol. 5, pp. 367-368; Minhāj al-barā'ah, vol. 21, p. 318; and other sources besides Nahj al-balāghah such as Nihāyah al-irab by an-Nuwayrī ash-Shāfi'ī vol. 8, p. 183 and al-Biḥār by al-Majlisī, vol. 6, p. 111.

In fact, this word of “imāmah” has been distorted to “amāmah” (trust) or “amānat” (trusts) in some copies such as those printed in Egypt. It is very surprising to note that the word has appeared as amāmah in the text of Nahj al-balāghah printed with the commentary of Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd in Egypt in the, first edition vol. 4, p. 350 as well as in the second edition edited by Muḥammad Abu'l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, vol. 19, p. 86; while he himself (Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd) based his commentary on its correct reading namely imāmah as did other commentators.

However, in explanation of this sentence, “Imāmate for the orderliness of the community,” as the theological scholars say: Whoever has known dark experiences and has examined political principles knows, of necessity, that whenever men have among them a chief and a guide whom they obey, who restrains the oppressor from his oppression and the unjust man from his injustice and avenges the oppressed of his oppressor, and along with that leads them to rational principles and religious duties, and restrains them from the corruptions which cause the destruction of order in their worldly affairs, and from the evils which result in wretchedness in the world to come, so that every individual might fear that punishment, then because of this they will draw near to soundness and depart from corruption. (al-Bābu'l-ḥadī 'ashar, Engl. transl. p. 63)

The institution of Imāmate is intended to cater for the unification of the nation and to protect the commandments of Islam from alteration and change, because if there is no head of the nation and no protector of religion neither can the order of the nation be maintained nor can the commandments of Islam remain safe from interference by others. This object can be achieved only when obedience to him is obligatory on the people, because if he is not obeyed and followed as an obligation he will neither be able to maintain justice and equity, nor secure the rights of the oppressed from the oppressor, nor issue and enforce the laws of the sharī'ah and consequently the extinction of evil and mischief from the world cannot be expected.