

Editorial

We are grateful to God and pleased to present yet another issue of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*. Publication of this issue has coincided with the last three months of the Islamic Lunar Calendar i.e. Shawwāl, Dhu'al-Qa'dah, and Dhu'l-Hijjah. One of the highlights of this season is hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). We discussed this in the Editorial of Issue 39. Other important occasions in this period include the anniversary of martyrdom of Imam Sadiq (A) on the 25th of Shawwāl, the birth of Imam Riḍā (A) on the 11th of Dhu'al-Qa'dah, the martyrdom of Imam Javad (A) on the 29th of Dhu'al-Qa'dah, the martyrdom of Imam Baqir (A) on the 7th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, the Day of 'Arafah on the 9th Dhu'l-Hijjah, the Eid of Sacrifice on the 10th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, the birth of Imam Naqī (A) on the 15th of Dhu'l-Hijjah, and Eid of Ghadir on the 18th of Dhu'l-Hijjah.

Similar to the previous issues, this issue also contains seven papers on various aspects of Islamic thought.

The first paper is entitled: "Outcomes of the Spiritual Journey." Continuing the discussion on spirituality in the last five issues, in this paper Dr. Mohammad Ali Shomali studies the approach of attaining nearness to God and reveals the spiritual advantages that are granted to those who embark on this journey. People who make an effort to live piously while maintaining a pure heart free of immorality are bound to reach proximity to God. Dr. Shomali derives the effects of living such a life from the holy Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Those who undertake this journey have the ability to achieve: 1) complete support from God, 2) perfect knowledge, 3)

devotion to God, 4) entrance into the realm of light, 5) immense love for God, 6) witnessing God in everything, and 7) internal peace. God-willing, this series of papers will continue in the forthcoming issues.

The second paper is entitled: “Duty of Acquiring Knowledge.” In this paper, Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari emphasizes on the importance of pursuing knowledge and its obligation upon all Muslim men and women. He presents four narrations by the Prophet Mohammad (S) on this topic which reveal that knowledge can be acquired by anyone, at any time and place. Though Islam historically made great contributions to science, Mutahhari attempts to provide answers as to why the Prophet’s commands have not been fully accomplished in the recent centuries. Nonetheless, he states that knowledge is dependent on the needs of a society to create an independent and unyielding Islamic civilization. This paper is based on a lecture delivered by Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari on the 29th Bahman, 1340 (18th of February, 1962) in Farsi, published in *Dah Goftār*. It has been translated into English for the *Message of Thaqaalayn* by Mohammad Reza Farajian. Where required changes have been made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*.

The third paper is entitled: “Determinism and Free Will in the Qur’an.” In this paper, Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Gorjian discusses the topic of determinism and free will (*al-jabr wa’l ikhtiyār*), a profound subject that continues to fascinate many scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. This resulted in one of the heated controversies that merged among the Muslims after the demise of the Prophet Muhammad (S). Some Muslims supported the idea of determinism (*al-jabr*) and some supported the idea of delegation of all power over the voluntary actions to man (*al-tafwid*). Each group tried to argue for their position from the Qur’an. The adherents of the school of *Ahl al-Bayt* (A) have avoided extreme points of views. Following the Imams (A), they have insisted on

what is referred to as ‘a status between the two’ (*amrun bayn al-amrayn*). This paper has been translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqaalayn* by Mohammad Rassafi. Where required changes have been made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*.

The fourth paper is entitled: “Khums: A Support for the Financial Independence, Part I.” In this paper, Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi examines the impact of khums on meeting the financial needs of the Muslim society. He tackles the arguments made by those who oppose khums as envisaged in Shi‘i jurisprudence. He studies the issue by 1) defining necessary terminology, 2) using Qur’anic verses, 3) quoting exegetes, and 4) referring to Sunni and Shi‘a narrations regarding *khums*. In doing so, *khums* is proven to refer to more than war booties in the Qur’an and that it has undeniably been collected by the Prophet (S), the Imams (A), and the Caliphs. The *Message of Thaqaalayn* has revised and summarised the English translation of this paper by Bahador Shirazian.

The fifth paper is entitled: “Shi‘ite Authorities in the Age of Minor Occultation.” In this paper, Huj. Ali Naghi Zabihzadeh studies the personality and role of one of the great Shi‘a jurists who led the community during the Age of Occultation (260 -329 A.H) i.e. Ali ibn Bābiwayh Qummī. This paper will be followed by another paper on Muhammad ibn Ya‘qūb Kulayni. This paper is based on the second chapter of *Marja‘iyyat wa Siyāsāt*, vol. 1, published in Qum in 2005 by the Imam Khomeini Education & Research Institute. This paper is translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqaalayn* by Hamideh Farajian. When needed, changes are made by the editing team of the *Message of Thaqaalayn*.

The sixth paper is entitled: “Challenges and Dilemmas in Making Values and Ideals.” In this paper, Huj. Dr Abbas Ali Shameli explores the term ‘values’, whether or not they are concrete or relative concepts, and the link between a values system and revelation. Shameli quotes the great Shi‘a thinker Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr’s use of Qur’anic verses in determining a standard value-making. He calls attention to the role of the prophets in educating people and exchanging their gods for One God. Since gods lose their efficiency and society eventually overlooks them, society loses its ideal and individuals will ultimately look after their own interests. And as written in the holy Qur’an, the gods that people internalize and replace with God, the Almighty are but an illusion. In evaluating human values, Sadr proposes three ways in making values: contextualism, absolutization, and transcendental values-making. He concludes that according to the Qu’ran, values can only be made when we develop a worldview that links us to our Creator. Only with prophetic education can we come to create social justice and self-development.

The seventh paper is entitled: “Religion and Freedom.” In this paper, Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali studies one of the important issues in contemporary thought. This paper studies different types of freedom and their relation with the religion of Islam. The Islamic position is presented with respect to philosophical freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of behaviour, social freedom, and spiritual freedom. This paper argues that Islam reveres those who think and reflect and that true freedom can be attained once a person defeats the inner and outer forces that confine his or her autonomy. It is only then that one can become closer to God. Thus, the paper ends with a brief discussion about piety (*taqwā*).

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

Mohammad Ali Shomali

October 2010