

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

From His Eminence

Sayed Ali Al-Sistani

**To the Fighters – Youth – Teachers – Doctors – And Believers
Around The Issues Of The Rituals Of Imam Hussain Peace be
upon him and the Ziyarat of Arba'een.**

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FORWARD

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, all praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and his pure progeny.

With the increasing need to review and revise the advice and guidance given by the High Religious Authority of his eminence Sayyid Ali Hussaini Al-Sistani, may his life be preserved, to the youth, fighters, doctors, teachers, and believers around the issues of the rituals of Imam Hussain Peace be upon him and the Ziyarat of Arba'een, the *Dawn of Ashura* committee in Najaf, Iraq, saw it necessary and worthwhile to collate these blessed recommendations in a single booklet to make it easier to refer to and to benefit from them, and so that it may inspire our youthful men and women in the process of building tomorrow with the light of faith, vision and guidance.

The Holy City of Najaf, Iraq.

Syed Hussain Al-Badry

11th November 2016

A NOTE

Dear Reader

This compilation of advice from the Office of Syed Sistani was compiled by our teacher Syed Al-Badry and indicates the importance and significance of advice that is often given but regularly lost.

The compilation targets the youth, the professionals, the fighters defending our religion and pilgrims of Imam Hussein, peace be upon him.

The main sources of the translation were from the websites www.sistani.org and alkafeel.net, however, where necessary, some amendments were made to the translation for clarity or to better represent the Arabic text.

We hope you enjoy this compilation, and may it be accepted by the Al-Mighty.

The Holy City of Qom, Iran.

Syed Samer L. Al-Hakim

23rd September 18

ADVICE 1 - TO THE BELIEVING YOUTH

THE REQUEST:

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

The best of greetings to the highest Religious Authority, His Eminence, Grand Ayatullah Al-Sayyid Ali Hussaini Al-Sistani.

We are a group of young college students and social activists. We would like to ask Your Eminence for advice that can be useful to us in this day and age, describing the role of the youth and what is required of them to play that role. Other advice that would be beneficial to the youth is also appreciated.

- A group of college students and social activists.

THE RESPONSE:

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and his pure progeny.

Peace be upon you, and the mercy of God, as well as His blessings. I would like to give to the dear youth –whom I care about as much as I care about myself and my family- eight recommendations that can provide them with happiness in this world and the Hereafter. They are the essence of the message of God, the Glorified, to His creation. They are also the advice of God’s wise and pious servants and what I have extracted from experience and knowledge:

First: It is necessary to truly believe in God, the Glorified, and in the Final Abode (Hereafter). Never neglect this belief after it has been proven to you by clear unequivocal evidence and decreed by the straight path. Every creature in this world –if one can explore its depths– is a novel production that attests to an omnipotent maker and a mighty creator. The messages of God have come incessantly through His Prophets to remind everyone of this fact and to indicate that this life –as He planned it- is in fact an arena in which He tests His servants to see who is best in conduct. A person who is blind to the existence of God and the Hereafter would not know the meaning of this life, its horizons, and its aftermath, and his path in this world will be darkened. Therefore, every one of you must and make your belief the most important and precious of your belongings. Not only that, but you must exert every effort to increase your certainty of it, so that it is ever present with you always and preserve it with strong foresight and penetrating vision.

And if you find yourself, in the vigour of your youth, weak in your faith, such as when feeling burdened by a religious obligation or fancying an impermissible pleasure, certainly do not sever your relationship with God, the Exalted, as this makes it harder for yourself to carve a path of return. And know that if one denies the command of God with the arrogance of his health and strength, he will be forced to go back to his Lord at times of weakness and disability.

So, contemplate that which is stalking you - of weakness, decay, ailment, and aging - which will inevitably reach you in a limited amount of time.

And woe upon those who question and create doubt upon the proven principles in order to justify wrong conduct and behaviour, follow doubts you do not have the patience to research nor disprove, give way to immature thoughts, be allured by life's pleasures and vanity, or resent the exploitation of religion by some for their personal interest, for rightfulness is not measured by individuals, but rather, individuals are measured by rightfulness.

Second: Have good morals, such as wisdom, consideration, kindness, modesty, frugality, prudence, patience, calmness, and the like. They are the main causes of happiness in this world and the Hereafter and are attributes of the closest of the people to God, the Glorified, and the one with deeds that weigh heavy on the scale of deeds on the day in which the scales of many will be light, they are the ones with the best morals. So, improve your conduct with your parents, family, children, friends, and all people in general. If you find deficiencies in yourself, do not overlook them. Hold yourself accountable and carry yourself with prudence toward good morals. If you find yourself unable to behave morally, then do not lose hope, but rather simulate those high morals. By simulating have high morals you will find yourself amongst those who have high morals, and you will be rewarded more than a person who is naturally good-mannered.

Third: Put effort towards the pursuit of mastering a trade and acquiring a specialty. There are many blessings in this; it occupies a portion of your time, you can support yourself and your family, benefit with it his society, do good deeds with it, sharpen your mind, broaden your experience, and your wealth becomes blessed. That is because when wealth is acquired with effort, it is more blessed and pleasant. As God, the Exalted and Immaculate, loves the hardworking person who exhausts himself with work and trade, and dislikes the idle person who is dependent on others and spends his time in play and diversion, then do not waste your youth without learning a trade or specialty. God, the Glorified, has put in youth bodily and spiritual energies so that a person can acquire skills he can use as the capital for the rest of his life. Do not waste it in play and negligence.

Everyone is to attend to their vocation and specialty until they become proficient in it. Do not speak without knowledge, and do not practice without experience. If you do not know or cannot do something, excuse yourself, or refer to someone with the required knowledge and experience. This increases your credibility in their eyes. Do your work with interest, attention, and enjoyment; do not make it your goal to just collect money even from impermissible sources. There is no blessing in forbidden wealth. And whomever who acquires wealth from impermissible sources cannot secure themselves from the doors of adversity being opened upon them by God, that will make him part with that money on top of his affliction and toil. Such wealth does not make one rich in this life and becomes a curse in the afterlife.

Make yourself the scale with which you measure your conduct with others. Do to others what you do to yourself and what you would have them do to you. Be kind to people as you would like God, the Glorified, to be kind to you. Maintain your profession's ethics and conventions, and do not use inferior ways that you would be ashamed to declare. Keep in mind that the worker and the specialist have a duty toward the customers and clients who put their trust in them. Be a counsellor to them, and never deceive them. That is because God, the Glorified, is watching over you and sees your deeds, and He will punish you sooner or later, for cheating and betrayal are certainly the most disgraceful of deeds in the eyes of God, the Exalted, and have the most dangerous of results and consequences.

Of the professions, let physicians in particular follow this advice more strictly and carefully because they deal with people's bodies and minds. Therefore, let them not disobey the above advice, or they will face severe consequences, and tomorrow is close indeed.

God, the Glorified and Exalted, says, **«Woe to the defrauders when they measure against the people, take full measure, but, when they measure for them or weigh for them, do skimp. Do those not think that they shall be raised up?» (83:1-4)**. Furthermore, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his Purified Household, said, "God likes that if one of you do a job, to do it excellently."

Also, let college students and lecturers seek to encompass whatever is related to their field of speciality that comes from institutes of science,

especially the science of medicine, in order for their knowledge and treatment to be on the cutting edge of contemporary science. Moreover, they should pay attention to advancing science themselves through useful scientific articles and pioneering discoveries, thereby rivalling other institutes of science as much as they can. They should disdain being mere students of others and mere consumers of the tools and equipment others make. Instead, they should actively contribute to advancing science, just as their ancestors were pioneers and leaders of science in previous times. No generation is worthier than another one. Therefore, you should nurture the young who have distinctive abilities, who possess genius, and who exhibit intelligence and excellence, even if they are from the lower classes. Support them as you support your children, so they may reach the high levels of beneficial knowledge. You will get rewarded for all they produce, and your society and offspring will benefit from them.

Fourth: Engage in good deeds and morals and abstain from bad ones. Prosperity and abundance arise from virtue, while misery and evil - except those sent by God to test His servants - arise from vice. And God, the Glorified, says the Truth when He says In the Holy Qur'an, **﴿Whatever affliction may visit you is for what you own hands have earned; and He pardons much.﴾ (42:30).**

Virtuous deeds include holding oneself responsible, chastity in appearance and eyesight and behaviour, sincerity, maintaining the bonds of kinship, returning the consignment, fulfilling commitments and

obligations, resolve in righteousness, and disdaining vile conduct and behaviour.

Vicious deeds include abhorred tribalism, being easily enraged, impermissible entertainment, showing off to people, extravagance at times of wealth, aggression at times of poverty, grumbling at times of adversity, doing evil to others particularly the weak, wasting of wealth, ingratitude to blessings, conceit in sin, assisting in injustice and enmity, and loving to be thanked for a deed one did not do.

I stress the issue of chastity with regard to young unmarried women, because women are more affected by the consequences of neglecting it due to their delicateness. Thus, let them not be deceived by superficial emotions, and not engage in passing relationships whose enjoyment ends quickly but what stays is their complications and consequences. So, it is important for young unmarried women to think about nothing less than a stable life that contains the elements of righteousness and happiness. There is no more dignified woman than one who maintains her composure and strength, who is reserved in her appearance and behaviour, and who busies her time with her life, work, and school.

Fifth: Importance to be given to the formation of a family by marrying and procreating without any delay, for this is a source of pleasure and affability, a motive for hard work, a source of dignity and feeling of responsibility, an investment of energy and insurance for future times of need, and a defence for the individual against forbidden and lowly

deeds, so much so that the narrations state that one who gets married has attained half of his religion. Foremost, marriage is a necessary course of life and a natural, intuitive human instinct. Those who abandon it fall into trouble and are inflicted with dullness and laziness. Definitely, you should never fear lack of wealth or being impoverished by marriage, because God, the Glorified, has made marriage one of the very causes of abundance and sustenance that one may not be aware of at first. Also, pay attention to the character of the woman you want to marry, and to her piety and discipline, and do not be occupied with evaluating her beauty, her appearance, and her job, because those traits are a veil that may be removed every so quickly when life reveals its hardships with trials and tribulations. There are warnings in the narrations against marrying a woman merely for her looks. Moreover, one who marries a woman for her piety and character will have be blessed in that marriage with her.

Let young unmarried women and their guardians not favour occupation over the formation of a family, because marriage is a necessary course of life, while an occupation is more of a complement to it. It is not wise to abandon the former for the sake of the latter. Those who neglect this principle in the prime of their youth will soon be in regret and remorse, when regret nor remorse will be of no use. Life's experiences attest to this.

Guardians are not permitted to prevent their daughters from getting married, nor are they permitted to put obstacles in their way using cultural traditions not required by God, the Glorified, such as

exorbitant dowers or waiting for cousins and sayyids, for certainly there are many great imperfections in these traditions that one may not be aware of. Know that God, the Glorified, did not appoint fathers as the custodians of their daughters but so they can counsel their daughters and care for their interests. One who confines a woman for other than her interest has committed a sin that endures as long as her suffering endures and has opened one of Hell's doors upon himself with such action.

Sixth: Work towards benevolence and to assist others and pay attention to the betterment of the general public, particularly what may concern orphans, widows, and the disadvantaged. Such practices enhance your faith, discipline your soul, and purify your wealth and abundance. They also entail proposing virtue, cooperation in piety and God-consciousness, silently enjoining good and forbidding evil, an assistance to the authorities in keeping order and protecting the public interest, and a cause for a better society. This is a blessing in this world, and a balance in the Afterlife. God, the Glorified, certainly loves a community that lives in solidarity and cooperation, in which one cares about the interests of his or her brothers and sisters and others, loving for them what one loves for their own selves.

God The Almighty says, **﴿Yet had the peoples of the cities believed and been godfearing, We would have opened upon them blessings from heaven and earth﴾ (7:96), and; ﴿God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves. ...﴾ (13:11)** The Prophet, may God's blessings be upon him and his progeny, said,

“One of you does not become a believer until you like for your brother what you like for yourself and dislike for your brother what you dislikes for yourself,” and also said, “One who establishes a good tradition gets rewarded for it, and gets rewarded for those who follow that tradition.”

Seventh: Attend to the responsibilities in the best fashion you have assumed for others, whether in family or in society. Let fathers attend to their children, and wives attend to their families in the best of fashions. Abstain from violence and cruelty even when there is a need for strictness and austerity in keeping wisdom and to preserve family and society. For certainly the means in which strictness can be utilised are not limited to bodily injury and distasteful remarks, but rather, there are a multitude of techniques for discipline that can be utilised that can be learned from experts and specialists. Indeed, cruel measures oftentimes are antagonistic, leading to the deepening of the roots which needed to have been uprooted and demoralising the individual they are supposed to uplift. There is no good in strictness that causes injustice, and no wrong can be made right with another wrong.

Let those who assume responsibilities in society attend to their responsibilities. Let them be counsellors to society and not betray it with their absence where their authority is needed, for God is the custodian of everybody and He will rapidly call them to account on the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, do not spend the people’s money where it is not intended to be spent, do not make decisions contrary to

advice given, and do not exploit your position to establish a class of people who cover up for each other, helping each other to achieving forbidden interests and dubious wealth, displacing others from positions they deserve, or deny them services they have a right to receive.

Rather, treat all people equally. Do not use your public job as a means to fulfil private obligations such as kinship, past favours, and other such behaviour, because fulfilling private obligations with public funds is injustice and corruption. If you ever have the option to choose one over an equally qualified other, then choose the weaker one who has no sponsor and no supporter except God, the Glorified. Let nobody take religion or sect into consideration when working, for the true religion and sect is based on the true principles of justice, doing good, security, and the like. God, The Glorified, says, **﴿Indeed, We sent Our Messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice﴾ (57:25)**. Also, the Imam, may peace be upon him, said, "I heard the Prophet of God, may God's blessings be upon him and his progeny, say on various occasions: A nation in which the weak cannot take back his property from the strong without stuttering will not be sanctified." Anyone who does not follow this principle would be deceiving himself with false wishes and false hopes. The true followers of just leaders such as the Prophet, may God's blessings be upon him and his progeny, Imam Ali, may peace be upon him, and the Martyr Imam al-Hussain, may peace be upon him, are those who follow their teachings and emulate their conduct. Let those who assume public responsibilities

read the letter of Imam Ali, may peace be upon him, to Malik al-Ashter upon sending him to Egypt. It is a letter that comprehensively describes the principles of justice and fidelity. It is beneficial to governors and even people with lesser responsibilities at all levels, each to their own level of responsibility. However, the more substantial one's responsibility is, the more useful reading this letter will be.

Eighth: Have a spirit of learning and an interest in increasing your knowledge and wisdom in all stages of your life and in all conditions. Reflect on your deeds and traits and their effects and ponder the incidents that happen around you and their results, so that you become more knowledgeable and experienced every day, for this life is a school wide ranging in scope and deep in content. There is a lesson and guidance in every act or incident, and there is a message and meaning. In every occurrence reveals courses and phenomena and represents examples and lessons to those who ponder over it. Therefore, never neglect supplying yourself with more science and knowledge and experience until the meeting with God, The Glorified. The more a person contemplates, the more trials and errors that person will avoid. God, the Glorified, says, **﴿and whoso is given the Wisdom, has been given much good﴾ (2:269)**, and He says to His Prophet, may God's blessings be upon him and his progeny, **﴿and say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge﴾ (20:114)**.

Moreover, one must acquaint themselves with three books, contemplating and reflecting upon reading them:

- **First and foremost is the *Holy Qur'an*.** It is the last Message of God to His creation. He sent this Message to sharpen the minds and make streams of wisdom spring forth from them, mellowing rigid hearts. He narrated stories in it as examples, and so one must not abandon reciting this book to themselves, thereby making the soul feel God, The Exalted, is talking to them. That is because God, the Exalted, sent down His book as a message to the world from Him.
- **The second is *Nahj al-Balaghah, Peak of Eloquence*.** This book explains the meanings of the Holy Qur'an in an eloquent style that provokes a spirit of reflection, contemplation, learning, and wisdom. Therefore, one should read it whenever a chance presents itself, and imagine that Imam Ali, may peace be upon him, is addressing them directly. Also, one should pay special attention to the letter of Imam Ali, may peace be upon him, to his son, Imam al-Hasan, may peace be upon him, for it is written with an aim such as the this one.
- **The third is *al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah*.** It contains eloquent supplications whose meanings are extracted from the Holy Qur'an. There are teachings in those supplications about how one's orientation, obsession, vision, and ambition should be. They also teach one how to call himself to account and how to scrutinize and criticize himself, particularly the supplication of Makarim al-Akhlaq (Noble Moral Traits).

These eight recommendations are the foundation for steadfastness in life. However, they are merely a reminder. They are obvious because one can see them in the light of righteousness, the brilliance of truth, the purity of innateness, the proof of reason, and the experience of life. Divine messages and the instructions of the visionaries have stressed them. Therefore, everyone should follow them and strive towards them, particularly the youth, who are in the peak of their energy and their bodily and spiritual abilities, which are the capital of humans in life. Even if some of the advice is missed or the higher levels are not attained, know that taking the lesser is better than abandoning the greater, and obtaining a part is better than losing the whole. God, the Glorified, says, **﴿and whoso has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoso has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it﴾ (99:7-8).**

I ask God to help you to achieve happiness and righteousness in this life and the Afterlife, as He is the Lord of Success.

Rabi' al-Awwal 28, 1437 AH,
9th January 2016

ADVICE 2 - TO THE LECTURERS, TEACHERS, AND GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS

The representative of the supreme religious authority; Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbalai, has spoken about a number of recommendations to lecturers, teachers and guardians of students, as well as to the concerned authorities about the education in the government on the occasion of the new academic year, which would raise the educational level of the students. These were the important points in the second sermon of Friday's prayer of the 21st of Dhu Al-Hijjah 1437 AH corresponding to the 23rd September 2016 held in the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) and led by him. Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbala'i stated in this sermon:

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to bring to your attention a few points, but before that, I would like to remind you the importance of the education in the life of the individual and society, as one who wants all of the blessings and happiness, the progress and advancement, pride and honour, they must oblige themselves to be educated and disciplined, but if that is abandoned, one can only have misery, humiliation and backwardness amongst other calamities resulting from ignorance. Education is the origin of all goodness while Ignorance is the origin of all evil. Therefore, with the approaching start of the new school year, I would like to mention the following points:

On the occasion of the approaching start of the new school year, we would like to remind the dear lecturers and teachers – and this is aimed at all university lecturers, teachers, men and women, guardians

of students, and the concerned authorities of the government- we mention to our dear professors, teachers and guardians of students certain points, and they are:

First: The lecturers and teachers in universities and schools should know that the profession of teaching and education represents in some of its aspects, the extension of the mission of the prophets and Imams (peace be upon them) in educating and disciplining people. So, make your motivation, oh teachers, oh lecturers..., make your motivation and intention to be one of sincerity towards Allah The Exalted, so you may get the reward for your work, and so that your teaching hours may be in the scales of your good deeds.

Second: It is hoped from the lecturers and teachers to be aware that these students are a responsibility upon you. The students that are our children, oh teachers, oh lecturers..., the fathers and the mothers of these students, the society itself in its entirety, have trusted you and given you the hearts and minds of their beloved children to mould them with your thoughts and teachings. So, return this trust rich with good morals, principles and high manners, as they were handed to you, protected from ignorance and deviation. And remember that your duty is not limited to the professional education in your specialties, but your duty is the education on morality and good citizenship together, for there are no fruits in learning without ethics and values. And the most

influential teacher is the one who has started by educating oneself on good morals, discipline and ethics and converted them to actual behaviours in front of their students, by bettering their behaviour towards the students, being modest and not showing arrogance over them, being patient and tolerant towards their efforts and occasional errors, while at the same time mentoring to correct their behaviours for the better, ensuring they pay attention to the importance of ethics and morals as much as they pay attention to achieving high scholarly marks. These words of advice are also for the guardians of students, for as much as you place emphasis on the importance of your children's high academic results and in progressing towards specialisation, struggle to emphasise the significance of their high moral and ethical values. Both education and morals are of significance in our lives.

It is incumbent upon the teacher to respect all students, without humiliating those who have lesser intellectual ability in capturing knowledge, but rather pursuing the means and methodologies available to the student in order to progress their abilities in their scientific path. It is also incumbent to point out to the students that, and this is an important point that I would please ask all guardians and students and teachers to pay close attention to, that success in studies is...!

Oh brothers and sisters, what is the measurement when identifying our success in life – is it the high marks attained in

mathematics, physics, chemistry, language and similar other studies? Or is it something else? Success in life has a broader and greater understanding and it is incumbent upon us to clarify this understanding to the students in schools and to clarify to everyone that it is important to succeed and attain happiness in this life and in the Afterlife... and it is incumbent upon the teachers to clarify to students that while success in studies is important but is a part of the larger success that is required in life, and is that anything other than to build the right relationship with God, The Exalted, and with the other individuals of society, and to obtain the feeling of responsibility in any position after graduation and abilities in succeeding in it, building a devoted family and serving society in a correct manner.

Here, I'd like to bring your attention to the fact that we are living this reality right now, we speak to the teachers and lecturers and speak to you oh brothers and sisters, that students come to us and ask for our prayers in passing their studies, and the fathers and mothers desire that their children succeed in their specialised exams, but it is upon us to advise the student that the greater success required in life, in addition to passing in specialised studies, is that we build a correct relationship with God, The Exalted, and that we learn how to build a devoted family unit.

It is not enough that a doctor is successful in their medicine, and not enough for the engineer to succeed in their engineering, or the physicist to succeed in their physics and other examples such as the like, but rather we need doctors who succeeds in building the devoted family unit and succeeds in serving their community and ill, and for an engineer and politicians and those responsible to succeed in serving their community and to manage those whom they are responsible for in a very successful manner. That is the greater success. Success in studies alone without this greater success is certainly a great failure. So we must be aware of these understandings and we must immerse them in our children's souls and that of our own generation.

Third: Remember, oh teacher oh lecturer, that you have children that other teachers and lecturers like you are teaching, so be good with your students and make your best to improve their knowledge and etiquettes, exert all your efforts to increase their scientific aperture, so that your own children have the same reciprocated. The rewards are to those who better their work. And remember, oh teacher, oh lecturer, that you are educating the future generation, who are the hope of your community. Make them feel this and entrench in their souls the spirit of resolve, ambition and drive to learn and to love their homeland, and awaken their pride and citizenship so that they are devoted children to this nation.

Pay attention oh brothers, as we said, we do not only need success in studies, a citizen that is devoted will feel the responsibility to serve the nation if given that role – this is the correct scientific upbringing – so that they become devoted to this nation, trustworthy leaders to this society, not corrupt leaders – this is the aim of teaching and etiquette – so that they become devoted to the nation and trustworthy leaders to society.

And remember that the hours of school are a right of the students, and it is incumbent on you to free yourself in these times to their teaching and upbringing and you must not forsake any part of their rights from them. You being late to work, even a little, or leaving the school before its end is a contradiction to the instructions, or your absence from some of the periods of study without excuse is considered a contractual breach of your employment, while the fulfillment of a contract is a jurisprudential obligation and good manners.

Fourth: It is hoped from the Ministry of Education to provide teaching and study materials to all those qualified in it, and to work on the development of teachers' and lecturers' capabilities and to take advantage of the research submitted by the specialist researchers to update the teaching methods, and studying the causes which may be leading to the decline

in the education level and the sharp low success rates in some schools.

And those responsible for the education system need to create an educational and upbringing body able to truly bring to fruition this great message, and that is in the way of providing the honest desire, the truth in the importance of their teaching role, trust in the message of science, abilities in delivering, and pure intent in delivering the obligation. The desire and motivation of the teacher and lecturer is certainly reflected upon the students who takes guidance from their etiquettes and teachings – making the students accept the lessons with full energy, desire, and seriousness.

Fifth: We address the following words to the parents: Providing an education for your children is from the necessities of life and not an accessory to life, it is not acceptable to take the limited abilities and income as an excuse to deprive the children from this opportunity, so trust in God The Exalted. Oh fathers and mothers, especially those who have restricted sources of income and struggle with the expenses of the necessities of life, we say: Have trust in Allah The Exalted, and seek from Him to give you the help and facilitation to afford these expenses and to be able to bear these burdens and make the way to affording them easy, for God The Exalted is certainly The Provider, the one who sees the best in His worshippers, He is the one who

sustains you and assists you in this. And if it is necessary that your children work to help you because of the loss of the breadwinner, or is unable to work or similar, then provide them the opportunity to divide their time to make some of it for work and another part for study, as has been the case for many in the past.

My brothers, perhaps many of us remember the days when we were at school half the day and at work half the day. And now many families have lost their breadwinner, or the breadwinner has become incapacitated and unable to work, so need their children to do the work. Yes, it is possible to solve to divide your day between work and study, do not deprive your children from the opportunity to learn, as these children live the pain and desire when the opportunity to learn is missed. This child sees another neighbouring child carrying the school bag and heading towards school – do you know, oh father, what pain this child is going through witnessing such a child who is like themselves in age going to school and learning while the child is deprived from this education? This opportunity can be resolved with the what was mentioned.

One of your important duties, oh fathers and mothers, is to be in constant communication with the schools' administration for it is a necessary part of your child's success. And progress, it is not correct to neglect this obligation with the

excuse of being pre-occupied with earning or life, but rather it is one of your more important obligations to follow up on your child's progress and to direct them in the correct manner with their relationships with others; what they read; what they watch; who they become? Oh fathers and mothers, these children are a responsibility bestowed upon you, follow up your children with as much effort and time as you do following up earning worldly issues, monitor your children and what they read; what they watch; who they become? This is an important point. Ask your sons who their friends are, who they accompany, who goes out with them at night? And your daughters who she becomes friends with, who she accompanies, who she goes out with at night? As much of the behaviours and etiquettes of these youth are learnt through their companions and friends. So therefore as much as it is important for you to provide them with the necessities of life, your duty is to also to provide for them the necessities of correct etiquettes and for a successful education for this world and in the hereafter. Just as they are a responsibility that we place upon the teachers they are also a responsibility upon you, and you are responsible for them.

We ask the God The Exalted to bless us to fruitful work and the good deeds, and to make it a way for the guidance and success in this world and in the Hereafter. Indeed He is Hearing and Responsive. And, praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and Allah's Prayers be upon Mohammad and upon his pure and virtuous Household.

ADVICE 3 - TO THE FIGHTERS ON THE BATTLEFIELDS

In the Name of God, Ever-Merciful, Ever-Compassionate

Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Cosmos, and ever-lasting peace be upon the best of His creation, Muhammad and his noble and pure progeny.

I call your attention to the following:

Let the dear fighters know, the ones who have been given the honour by God the Exalted to be present in the battlefield against the transgressors, that:

1. Just as God, exalted is He, has commissioned *Jihad* (against the transgressors) and made it one of the pillars of religion, and given privilege to the *Holy Warriors* over those who do not fight (in *Jihad*), He, noble is His name, has also placed certain boundaries and etiquettes (on the conduct of *Jihad*). Such conditions are necessitated by wisdom and mandated by the primordial nature of human beings. It is necessary, then, to learn these conditions and etiquettes thoroughly and to follow them sincerely, for one who learns these conditions and follows them sincerely will receive his deserved reward and blessings, and one who breaches them nullifies the reward and their wishes will not reach fruition.
2. With regards to *Jihad* there are general guidelines to which one must adhere even when dealing with non-Muslims. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, advised his Companions to follow these general guidelines before sending them off to battle. In an authentic tradition, it has

been reported that the Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, said:

“When the Messenger of God, peace be upon him and his progeny, would want to send a fighting contingent he would sit down with them and advise them to conduct themselves in the name of God, in God, and in the cause of God, and to follow the good example of the religion of the Messenger of God.

- *Do not indulge in acts of extremism,*
- *do not mutilate corpses,*
- *do not resort to deceit,*
- *do not kill an elder, nor a child, nor a woman,*
- *and do not cut down trees unless necessity dictates otherwise.”*

3. Similarly, the fighting against those Muslims who oppress (others) and who wage war (unjustly) and such likes, also has its guidelines and etiquettes. Indeed, such guidelines and etiquettes were narrated from Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him, who, when confronted with such situations, urged and advised his followers through his speeches and sayings. The Muslim world agreed in unanimity that the actions, guidelines, and etiquettes of Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him, are a worthy example to emulate and made it a testament between itself and its Sustainer. So pay heed to the example of Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him, and follow his path. He, peace be upon him, emphasizing on what the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, had conveyed in Hadith of Thaqalayn and Ghadir and others, said,

“Set your sights on the progeny of your Prophet. Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps. Verily, the Family of the Prophet will not lead you away from the path of guidance, nor will they make you return to the path of destruction. If they rise, so shall you; and if they stand, so shall you. Do not traverse the path ahead of them, for you shall lose your way; and do not lag behind of them, for you shall perish.”

4. By the majesty of God! By the majesty of God! Souls are sacred! Never should you do to them that which God The Exalted has not deemed permissible at any point in time. What great travesty it is to kill an innocent soul, and what great honour it is to safeguard an innocent soul, just as God The Exalted, mentioned in His book. It is certain that the killing of an innocent soul has dangerous consequences, both in this world and in the hereafter. History has taught us that the Commander of the Faithful (i.e. Imam 'Ali), peace be upon him, took much caution to protect the sanctity of the human soul in his wars. He, in his historical document, said to Malik al-Ashtar, whose friendship and proximity to 'Ali, Peace be upon him, is well known, "Be vigilant! Do not spill the blood of the innocent without any right to do so, for nothing is more inviting of wrath, greater in evil consequences and more effective in the decline of blessings and cutting life span more than the unlawful spilling of blood. On the Day of Reckoning, God The Exalted shall judge wisely between those servants of His who spilled blood. Do not strengthen your authority by the unlawful spilling of blood, for that will surely enfeeble and weaken the authority and even cause it to perish or shift it to others. There is no excuse for you in front of God The Exalted nor I, for killing unlawfully deliberately, because that shall cause you punishment."

If you (i.e. the fighters of the Popular Mobilisation Committees) find yourselves in an uncertain situation from which you fear the Divine Wrath, issue a vocal warning (to those fighting you), or issue a physical warning by directing your bullets in a manner which does not strike the target or cause its destruction, begging pardon from your Lord and in precaution for innocent souls.

5. By the majesty of God! By the majesty of God! The lives of those who do not fight you are sacred, especially the weak among the elderly, the children, and the women, even if they were the families of those who fight you. It is unlawful for you to violate the sacredness of those who fight you except for their belongings that is with them.

It was the noble habit of the Commander of the Faithful (i.e. Imam ‘Ali), peace be upon him, to prohibit (his fighters) from attacking the homes of the families, the women, and the children of those against the enemy, despite the efforts of some who were with him, especially the Kharijites, who insisted on it being legal. To refute them, Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him, would say, “The men have fought so we fight the men, but we do not have the right to inflict harm on their women and children, for they are submissive and within the Realm of *Hijra* (*abode of emigration*). Thus, you have no right over them. But whatever they procured and used against you in the course of fighting, and whatever their army possessed and acquired belongs to you. Whatever is around them is an inheritance for their offspring according to the ordinance of God, The Exalted. You have no right over the women or over their offspring.”

6. By the majesty of God! By the majesty of God! Casting allegations over the integrity of people’s faith is maliciousness and exploitation of people. Just as the Kharijites did in the early Islamic period and their contemporary followers in the modern era who are not learned in religion, following their own personal whims and desires, and have sought to justify their actions with narrations that they never understood. This has resulted in a great calamity for the Muslim of today.

Know that whosoever bears the two testimonies (that there is only one God and that Muhammad is His messenger, peace be upon him) is a Muslim. Their blood and property must be safeguarded even if that person falls into the trap of (theological) deviance and religious innovations, for not every misguidance leads to infidelity, nor does every innovation strip one of Islam as their faith. It may be that one is judged to the death penalty due to a grave sin or as retribution, yet they remain a Muslim.

In the Holy Qur’an, God has addressed the *Holy Warriors* in the following way:

﴿O believers, when you are journeying in the path of God, be discriminating, and do not say to him who offers you a greeting, 'Thou art not a believer,' seeking the chance goods of the present life.﴾ (4:94)

And it has been widely reported that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, did not declare the masses of those who fought him as unbelievers; which was the inclination (i.e. to declare the enemy as unbelievers) of the leaders of the Kharijites in his camp. But he (i.e. Imam Ali peace be upon him) used to say that they (i.e. his enemies) were a people who had fallen into error, though this does not justify their actions and could not be a legitimate excuse for their obnoxious deeds. In a sound report on the authority of (Imam) al-Sadiq, who narrates on the authority of his father, peace be upon them both, that:

“Ali, peace be upon him, did not label any of those who fought him as polytheists or hypocrites but rather he would say, ‘They are our brothers who have transgressed against us’”

and he would (also) say about those who fought him

“We fight them not because we think of them as unbelievers nor because they think we are unbelievers.”

7. Never inflict harm on non-Muslims, regardless of their religion and sect, for they are under the protection and security of the Muslims in those lands. Whosoever attacks non-Muslims is a betrayer and traitor. Such an act of betrayal and treachery is one of the most repugnant acts in accordance to innate nature and the religion of God, The Exalted.

Regarding those who are not Muslim, God, The Exalted, mentions them in His Book:

﴿God forbids you not, as regards those who have not fought you in religion's cause, nor expelled you from your habitations, that you should be kindly to them, and act justly towards them; surely God loves the just.﴾ (60:8)

The Muslim must not allow the violation of the sanctity of those who are not Muslim and who live under the protection of Muslims. Rather, the Muslim must honour and guard those who are not Muslim as he would with his own family. The way of life of the Commander of the Faithful teaches us that when *Mu'awiya* sent *Sufyan* son of *'Awf* from the tribe of *Ghamid* to carry out raids on the frontiers of Iraq – in order to frighten its people – he (*Sufyan*) killed the Muslims and those who were not Muslim from among the people of *Anbar*, the Commander of the Faithful was saddened greatly by this. In a sermon (which followed), he (i.e. Imam Ali peace be upon him) said;

“And this one from the tribe of *Ghamid* (i.e. *Sufyan*)... his horses have entered *Anbar* and killed *Hassaan* son of *Hassaan al-Bakri* and he pushed back your horsemen from the boarders. And I have been informed that a man from among them (i.e. the raiders) would enter the house of the Muslim and the non-Muslim women and would then forcefully remove her anklets, bangles, necklaces, and her earrings. And no woman could survive it except by reciting the verse from the Holy Qur'an “We are for God and to Him shall we return (2:156)” and seeking Mercy. Then the raider leave without loss of life nor spillage of blood from their own. Had a Muslim died as a result of this out of sorrow and regret then no one is to blame him. But in (in my eyes) he deserves (praiseworthy) mention.”

8. By the majesty of God! By the majesty of God! The people's property. Do not steal the property of people. The property of a Muslim is unlawful to another unless they agree to its procurement. Those who usurp from others, they have obtained a piece of fire from the fires of hell. God, Exalted is He, said:

﴿Those who devour the property of orphans unjustly, devour Fire in their bellies, and shall assuredly roast in a Blaze.﴾ (4:10)

And in a tradition reported on the authority of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, that he said,

“Whosoever usurps unrightfully the wealth of another believer, God will turn away from him and will not accept nor reward him for his good deeds until he repents and returns the wealth that was taken to its rightful owner.”

We also find in the way of life of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, that he forbade (his soldiers from) taking his enemy’s wealth except for that found on themselves and in their military encampment. And whenever someone (from the enemy’s camp) brought forth proof that his personal wealth was taken (unlawfully) he (Imam Ali, peace be upon him) would have it returned. In another report on the authority of Marwan son of alHakam, who said,

“After ‘Ali defeated us in Basra he returns to the people (i.e. soldiers) their wealth. Whomever brought proof was given the wealth and those who didn’t have proof had their property returned upon swearing an oath.”

9. By the majesty of God! By the majesty of God! Do not violate the sanctity of all things sacred. Do not violate or infringe on them with your tongue or hand. Be cautious and do not target a person due to the sin of another. God, Exalted is He, says:

﴿No soul laden bears the load of another.﴾ (17:15)

Do not act upon on mere suspicions and distort the truth on yourselves with sternness. Sternness requires caution and suspicion is a violation of the rights of others without proof. Your hatred of someone does not justify that you violate his sanctity, for God, The Exalted, says:

**﴿Let not detestation for a people move you not to be equitable; be equitable -- that is nearer to godfearing.﴾
(5:8)**

It has been reported that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, that he said in a sermon in the Battle of Siffin, in a sentence of advice:

"Do not mutilate the corpse of those killed, and if you defeat the men of your enemies do not unveil what is covered (violate the sanctity of their women) nor enter their houses, do not take anything from their wealth except what you find in their military encampments. Do not provoke their women by harming them even if they attack your honour and abuse your leaders and noble men."

And, it is reported that after the Battle of the Camel ended, he (i.e. Imam Ali, peace be upon him) came across a large gathering of wailing women crying over their lost ones, and he entered amongst them. When they saw him, they shouted in one voice 'Here comes the killer of our loved ones!', but he did not respond. After some time elapsed, he said to some of those near to him, pointing at a room which housed captives among them leaders of those who fought him like *Marwan son of Hakam* and *'Abdullah son of Zubayr*, 'Had I been the killer of their loved ones I would have killed whom was in this room.'

It has also been reported that when he (i.e. Imam Ali, peace be upon him) heard that some from among his companions such as *Hujr son of 'Adi* and *'Amr son of al-Hamiq* slandered the People of Sham (i.e. Greater Syria) during the Battle of Siffin, he said:

"I dislike for you to be of those who slander. It is better for you to describe their deeds and state of action; surely this is the more refine way of speaking (about others) and more justified in excuse and rather than slander them, it is better that you say 'O God protect our lives and their lives and bring harmony between us and them and deliver them from

error so that the ignorant can reach to the truth one inclined towards rebellion and revolt could turn away from it.' They (i.e. 'Ali's companions) said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we accept your counsel and we (will) strive to imitate your mannerism."

10. Do not deprive any people, who do not fight you, of their rights even if they anger you. It has been reported from the life of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, that he afforded those opposed him the same (respect) he afforded to the Muslims so long as they did not wage war against him. And he would never launch a military assault unless they attacked first. For instance, when he was in the middle of delivering a sermon in (the Mosque of) Kufa a group of Kharijites stood up and interrupted him and shouted on more than one occasion 'No judgement except and only to God!', to which he replied 'Truthful words indeed but couched with false intentions. You have three rights over us: we do not take away (your right) to pray in the mosques of God; we do not deprive you from your share of the spoils of war as long as you fight along us; and we do not wage war against you unless you launch the first attack.'
11. Know that most of those who fight you are victims who have been led astray by others. Do not allow your actions to reinforce the fallacies in the minds of people so that they become victors for them (who lead people astray). Let your righteous actions, your well-wishing nature, your just conduct, your forbearance, and your avoidance of oppression, sin and enmity serve as an example for them. Whosoever fends off misguidance from the minds of people is liking giving them life, and whomsoever misguides a person without excuse is as if having killed them.

We find in the stories about the lives of the Imams of the Progeny (i.e. Ahlul Bayt), peace be upon them, that they would go to great lengths to dispel whatever misconception those who fought them held, even if there was no hope of

acceptance, seeking excuse (for unwanted confrontation) from their Lord, educating the Muslim Nation, seeking the best conclusion, defending against grudges and especially so as to be setting an example for future generations. It has been reported in some traditions on the authority of Imam Al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, that Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, on the Day of Basra (i.e. the Battle of the Camel), said to his companions: "Do not be quick to judge the enemy until I make clear to them what is between God, I and them." He then approached them and said: "O People of Basra have you found in my rule any oppression? They said: "No." He (then) said: "(Have I) broken an oath?" They said: "No." He (then) said: "Have I shown desire for this (material) world so that I and my family took something and prevented you from having it, is this why you have breached the allegiance to me?" They said: "No." He (then) said: "Have I applied punishment unfairly?" They said: "No."

Imam Hussain, peace be upon him, followed a similar course of action in (the Battle of) Karbala. He took care to dispel doubt and clarify matters so that those who remain alive and those who will be killed will not do so except after clear proof has been brought forth before them. In fact, in Islam, it is not permissible to fight anyone without establishing first a clear proof upon them and without trying to dispel doubt and clarify misjudgement where possible, as has been emphasised in the Holy Qur'an and prophetic traditions.

12. Let no one (among you) think that there is a solution in tyranny which cannot be gained by justice. Such a thought ascends from those with a narrow observation of incidents without considering the mid and long-term consequences of such an attitude, and who have no knowledge of the tradition of life and the history of nations which alerts on losing innocent lives and spread of abhorrence in the society as a result of their atrocities.

It has been reported in the traditions that 'The one who finds

difficulty to implement justice will find greater difficulty to deal with injustice'. The contemporary history leaves a great lesson for those who ponder on it. In modern history there are examples of rulers, who for the sake of strengthening their power, oppress and prosecute hundreds of thousands of people. And God, exalted is He, came at them from whence they did not reckon. As if they had destroyed their sovereignty with their own hands.

13. It may be the case sometimes that when you adhere to good conduct and remain disciplined you suffer (military) losses; this, nevertheless, is more blessed, everlasting end and of greater benefit. The examples set by the Imams are many to this effect. They did not wage war unless they were attacked, even if such actions caused some of their companions to be struck. It is reported in the tradition that on the day of the Battle of the Camel, when the armies gather to fight, a person from the army of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, proclaimed, "Do not attack until I order you to." So some of his companions said, 'But they have fired (arrows) at us.' So we said: 'we have been fired upon', He (the Imam, peace be upon him) said, 'Wait.' When the enemy's fired arrows which killed some of us, we said: 'Oh Commander of the Faithful, they have killed us, he said, 'Fight away with God's blessing.' Imam Hussain, peace be upon him, followed a similar course of action on the day of Ashura.
14. Be the guardians and advisers of those who you are with you, so that they feel secured with you and support you against your enemies. Help the weak among them however you can. They are your brothers and your family. Show compassion towards them just as you show compassion towards your own. Know that you are within God's sight, and that He accounts your actions, knows your intentions, and examines your inner dispositions.
15. Do not let anything take precedence over your obligatory prayers. There is no better deed than prayers that a person

can take towards his Lord. Prayer is the means through which man humbles himself before his creator and is a greeting which one offers towards Him. It is the foundation of religion and the criterion through which deeds are accepted. In the occasions of fear and war, God has lightened the extent that proclamation of 'God is Great' is enough replacing the units of the regular prayer even if the person is not facing the *Qibla*, just as in the Holy Qur'an God said:

﴿Be you watchful over the prayers, and the middle prayer; and do you stand obedient to God. And if you are in fear, then afoot or mounted; but when you are secure, then remember God, as He taught you the things that you knew not.﴾ (2:238-239)

God has commanded the Believers to exercise caution and not to gather for prayer at once but to take turns (performing prayer). It has been reported in the life story of the Commander of the Faithful that he asked his companions to be mindful of the (importance of) prayer. In a sound report narrated on the authority of Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, that he said, with regards to the prayer of fear, in the midst of war and confrontation: 'Each person has to pray with indication wherever he is, even in the midst of sword fighting, wrestling and grappling. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, (even) prayed on the night before (the Battle of) Siffin (the night of Harir). Their prayers of noon, afternoon, dusk and night were nothing more than proclamations that 'God is great', 'there is no god but God,' invocations, praise and supplications. That was their prayer and the Commander of the Faithful did not ask them to repeat their prayers.'

16. Help yourselves by remembering God, The Exalted, frequently and reciting passages from His book. Remember your meeting with Him and return to him. It has been reported that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was so watchful of remembrance of God that when in the midst of

battle, on the eve of Siffin, a carpet was rolled out for him and he offered his recitation while arrows were being fired at him from all directions passing by his ears left and right, and he did not get scared and abandon his prayer until he completed his obligation.

17. Strive to act - may God help you - in the same righteous manner as the Prophet and his progeny, peace be upon them, acted in both the times of war and peace so you could adorn Islam and set an example as it deserves. This is the religion which is built on illumination of innate nature, reason, and good manners. Suffices to say that this is the religion that raised the banners of reason and good manners, for its foundations are built on calls to contemplate and ponder the dimensions and horizons of life and to take lesson from it and to act accordingly. God, The Exalted said,

﴿By the soul, and That which shaped it. and inspired it to lewdness and godfearing! Prosperous is he who purifies it and failed has he who seduces it.﴾ (91:7-10)

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said, "God has sent His messengers among them and series of His prophets to them to get them to fulfil the pledges the primordial covenant and to remind them of His blessings to them and to exhort them by preaching and to awaken the dormant intellects."

If only the Muslims learnt and followed the true teachings of Islam and abide by them they will surely find abundant blessings that will illuminate their path and expand their horizons. Be careful and do not hold on to the ambiguous readings of the scripture or narrations, and if it is directed towards the people of knowledge - as God has ordered - they true meaning of the matter would be revealed.

18. Do not be hasty in situations where caution is required or else you would cast yourself to destruction. Your enemies count on you to act in haste and improperly in precarious situations and

for you to rush without taking any safety measures nor professional advice. Take care to stand in straight lines and to coordinate between each line (i.e.. Organise yourselves and coordinate with one another). Do not hasten to take a step forward until you are sure about its maturity, strength, necessary means, implications, guarantee of steadiness and potential results. God, The Exalted, said,

﴿Believers, take your precautions; then move forward in companies, or move forward all together.﴾ (4:71)

And

﴿God loves those who fight in His way in ranks, as though they were a building well-compacted.﴾ (61:4)

Fight for your rights and be harder than you find your enemies in fighting, for what you are fighting for is rightfully yours. If you feel pain, they too feel pain just as you do, and you seek from God, The Exalted, what they do not seek, except if it were false hopes, false security and false illusions, like a mirage in a garden considered to be water by an onlooker, covering with deception with its darkness and blinding the eyes of the onlooker with its illusion.

19. Those (civilians) among you should be the well-wishers of the militants, acknowledging their sacrifice and protecting them from evils. They shouldn't be suspicious about them. God, The Exalted, has not assigned any right upon others unless he has assigned the same for them. Each of them enjoys equal rights.

You should be aware of the fact that there is no better well-wisher than amongst you for each other, if you clean your hearts from grudge and unite together to the extent that if anyone of you commits few mistakes or even if many outrageous mistakes you should forgive, forget and overlook them. Whosoever thinks that someone else is more well-wisher than their own family, tribe and fellow citizen, is

mistaken. Those who have experienced those things which have already been experienced before (by others), will regret. One should know that the person who begins the forgiving and overlooking the mistakes of others is worthy of the rewards of forgiveness, goodness and rectitude. God will not waste the reward of those noble deeds, but rather repay in the time of need in the darkness of *Barzakh* and the Day of Resurrection. Whosoever supports a *Holy Warrior* or his family and protects them achieves an equal reward as that *Holy Warrior*.

20. Everyone must let go of those sentiments which carry hatred and bigotry and instead embrace the noble manners. God, The Exalted, has made people into different tribes and races so that they may know each other, and exchange benefits with each other. Do not be overcome by narrow-minded views and personal egos. Do you not see how the majority of Muslims today are engaged in self-destruction where they spend their resources, energy, and wealth on killing and destruction of each other? They should instead spend their resources and wealth on the advancement of knowledge and multiplying their resources and improve the welfare of the people. And be aware of a punishment which shall not visit only the wrongdoers amongst you. Indeed, the trouble has arrived, and we must put an end to the trouble and avoid kindling it. Hold on to the rope of God, The Exalted, collectively and do not disunite. Know that if God finds any good in your hearts, He will give you (something which is) better than what has been taken away from you. Indeed, God has power over all things.

The Office of His Eminence Sayyid Ali al-Sistani, The Holy of City of Najaf, February 12, 2015.

ADVICE 4 - TO LECTURERS AND PREACHERS DURING MUHARRAM 1438 A.H. (2016 A.D.)

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

And may peace and benediction of Allah be upon of Muhammad and his pure progeny.

And whoever holds in honour the symbols of Allah, such (honour) comes truly from pious hearts.

We are on the eve of Muharram-ul-Haram which reminds us of the greatest movement led by the reformists for progression of human societies, a movement that motivates nations and make amends to their situations. That movement is the blessed Hussaini movement which places on the shoulders of the followers of Imam Hussain son of Ali (peace be upon them) the great responsibility of ensuring its continuity and seeding its effects and dimensions upon the hearts and minds of people. No one from the followers of Imam Hussain, peace be upon him, is relieved of this responsibility irrespective of position or status, be they a religious scholar, an educated individual, or a specialist in one of the various fields of sciences or humanities. Every one of us shoulders the responsibility of preserving this blessed Hussaini movement by reforming themselves and his dependents, his family, relatives and giving awareness to those around him about the importance of this great Hussaini project. However, public speakers shoulder a greater responsibility in that they represent the face of the publicity of the Ashura movement and the uprising led by the Chief of Martyrs, peace be upon him. We need, therefore, to pause for a while and ask: Is the Hussaini pulpit (*minbar*) fulfilling and furthering its

responsibility in accordance with the needs of the current day times and requirements in a way such that leaves a marked influence of the Hussaini movement on the hearts and minds of the people?

Based on this point we have a few pieces of advice and guidelines for those who mount the pulpit in a ceremony held to commemorate the martyrdom of the Chief of Martyrs, peace be upon him:

1. The speaker must address a wide range of issues proportionate to the spiritual, educational and historical needs of the society and this requires the lecturer to be well educated and prepared to discuss these various, covering the needs of the audience and other guidance-seekers.
2. The lecturer must be aware of the cultural issues of his time. That is to say the speaker should realize and be cognizant of the ideological doubts cast every year; and be able to read the developments and changing behaviours in every society and at all times which the believers go through because being abreast with the emerging thoughts, behaviours and cultural issues would cause the gathering of people round the Hussaini minbar (lit. pulpit) to be more lively, dynamic and effective.
3. The speaker must make sure to exercise great caution in selecting Qur'anic ayahs and relating authentic narratives from trusted sources and mentioning authentic historical events. Failing to verify the sources of the narratives or stories may cause the audience to lose their trust and confidence in the Hussaini *minbar*.

4. The speaker must avoid narrating dreams and untrue stories which only serve to defame the Hussaini *minbar* and make it look like a cheap media outlet incompatible with the audience's intellectual and cultural level.
5. The speaker must deliver a well-prepared speech in terms of topics presented as they must be coherent and well-organized. They must be explained in plain words using an appropriate style and with carefully chosen phrases in concordance with the level of the audience. If the orator makes the best effort in preparing, classifying and explicating the issue in an eloquent and attractive way, it would help the listeners to follow what is presented on the Hussaini pulpit.
6. The entire legacy of the Ahlul-bayt (Peace Be Upon Them) is precious and beautiful but this depends largely on the speaker's skills and creativeness as to how traditions and stories are chosen, being attractive for all nations regardless of religious beliefs, intellectual and social standpoints. As stated by the Imams (peace be upon them): "Verily, if people knew the beauty of our words, they would certainly follow us". The beauty of their words is their legacy that focuses on the human values which attract people from different religions and various backgrounds.
7. The speaker should talk about the common and rampant social problems as well as provide successful solutions to them. It is, therefore, not befitting for the speaker to be content in only pointing out problems such as the

disintegration of the family or the gap between the young and older generations or divorce issues or such issues, for this would only entice arguments without the Hussaini *minbar* playing an active and effective role in presenting the solution. Therefore, it is hoped that the speakers who mount the Hussaini *minbar* consult those who are experts in social and educational fields such as psychologist and sociologists so as to be able to give the right solutions to various social problems, because dealing with this issue in such a progressive, yet pragmatic, manner would transfer the Hussaini *minbar* from a state of stagnancy to a state of interaction, collaboration and leadership which aims to reform and correct societies.

8. The Hussaini *minbar* is too revered a place to indulge in differences in intellectual areas and religious rites between the Shiites', because intervening in such matters would cause the *minbar* to get inclined to a specific group or cause social chaos or even may cause division among the believers. Whereas, in fact, the *minbar* is a flagship of unity and the secret of Hussaini light that gathers the lovers of the Chief of Martyrs (peace be upon him) on a single path towards efficient cooperation.
9. The speaker must attach importance to common and relevant jurisprudential issues in the field of religious observances and the daily business transactions by expounding them and dealing with them in a charming and plain style that makes the listener feel that the Hussaini *minbar* takes care of his/

her real life and the various issues with which he/she is confronted.

10. The speaker must underscore the importance of the role of *marja'iyyah* (religious authority), the Islamic seminary and status of scholars because they constitute the secrets behind the greatness and dynamism of the structure of Imamiyah religion.

We ask Allah the Exalted, the Blessed, to grant us success in serving the cause of the Chief of Martyrs (peace be upon him) and to make us distinguished by Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) in this world and hereafter.

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and benedictions of Allah be upon Muhammad and his pure progeny.

Imam Ali (AS) Foundation – London

ADVICE 5 - TO THE ELITE OF THE MEDICAL FIELD AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS

The representative of the supreme religious authority; Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbala'i has spoken during the second sermon of the Friday congregational prayer on the 11th of the month of Ramadan 1437 AH, corresponding to the 17th June, 2016, held at the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him), a set of recommendations of the Supreme Religious Authority Sayed Ali Hussaini Al-Sistani, to a group of doctors from Najaf, who were honoured to visit His Eminence few days ago. He stated in this sermon:

Dear brothers and sisters, I will read upon your gracious ears some of the recommendations issued by the supreme religious authority, may he live long. During this week, His Eminence met with a group of doctors from honourable city of Najaf and gave them some recommendations, some of which will highlight and explained due to its importance:

The first recommendation is to provide good and equitable service to all patients at the same level without distinction between the rich, the poor, the strong or the weak.

This recommendation, while being addressed to the doctors at the meeting, is also addressed to all those who provide any kind of service to the citizens, especially the workers in the government services, and the teachers who must know that their behaviours and morals have great impacts on their students. Let the teacher not assume they are

simply teachers in the field of (for example) medicine, but rather must take into account religious and moral aspects of the words and actions spoken and taken, like being modest and humble with students. This is not addressed only to medical teachers but all teachers and lecturers in all schools and universities.

The second recommendation is to urge on the unity of Iraq, which is not realized but with the unity of Iraqis, and to achieve this, two important points must be considered:

1. Taking care of the displaced and those who have been exiled without discrimination - regardless of their religion, belief, or community segment.
2. It is mainly addressed to the fighters on the battlefields, to fight to rid their brothers and sisters from the gangs of Daesh, a group that is foreign to Iraqis in thought and practice, as their obscurantist ideas and the barbaric practices committed by them are alien to Iraqis and without precedent in the Iraq's history. The fighters in all their categories and denomination have the duty to rid Iraq of this great scourge, and to perform this task properly, they must have the highest degree of discipline in their actions and to respect the humanitarian and Islamic standards in their dealings with everyone in the combat zones, especially the civilians, elderly, women, and children and even those who surrender and leave the fight.

After reading these recommendations, we explain some of the above commandments by His Eminence to the doctors to provide the good service as follows:

1. Taking care of the patient through accurate medical diagnosis and thinking in the best professional way. Accurate and correct diagnosis should be made by allocating sufficient time and consulting with other practitioners of high medical skills and expertise.
2. Empathy with the patient by showing interest for their case and a desire to heal them, and their treatment should be as though they are a member of their own family, using appropriate language that gives the patient hope for recovery.
3. The main concern should not be the greatest possible financial profits by trading with the patients health, whether by raising the prices of the medical consultation, analysis, radiography or surgeries, but to make the goal of their work to heal as many patients as possible and to save their lives so that it may be written for them as a pious deed with Almighty Allah, the best of those who give rewards and the best of all hopes!

His Eminence then recommended to not differentiate between the patients (i.e. not to differentiate between the rich and poor and the strong and weak), and the clarification for this:

- The doctors have to behave with professionalism and ethics with their patients without discrimination due to the poor status of one or the high social status of another. Everyone

should be made to feel equal as every one of them is a human being suffering through their illness, suffering from an illness is the same regardless of their social status, wealth or prestige. What is required is their treatment and the reduction of their pain to all without discrimination.

- Therefore, a doctor must not prioritise the rich over the poor seeking financial gain nor the social elite and the powerful over the common citizen seeking worldly benefits.
- This commandment is not limited to doctors, although it was an address to doctors as they the ones present at the meeting, but rather it is directed to everyone, especially the government employees. They are required to fulfil their duties to all citizen and to process their work without delay, especially the families of martyrs, orphans, widows and the weak of the society, and to not differentiate between citizens for their wealth, power or authority over those who have no wealth nor power nor authority and have no victor other than Allah Almighty. And this commandment is emphasized more so for the staff in charge of essential services as water, electricity, health, education...

The second recommendation and its explanation is for the lecturers in the universities of medicine as well as other fields, whose duty is not limited to the professional education in the field of their speciality, but their mission is that of teaching and education the principles of ethics and good citizenship together. For there is no benefit in teaching without morals and education. And the teacher with most impact on

their students is the one who has educated themselves to the morals and ethics that are translated in actual behaviour in front of the students, through acting with the students with modesty and humbleness and without arrogance as if being the teacher is better than being the student and of more importance. Being open to them and forebear their mistakes by guiding them with wisdom and gentle persuasion to correct their behaviours and alert them of the need to focus on their morals and behaviours as much as they focus on achieving high grades. The teacher must respect all students without mocking those with less intelligence or skills but must try hard to teach them how to develop their knowledge and skills. And to clarify to the students that success in university is important and required but the greater success in life is to build a sound relationship with Allah Almighty and community members, through the sense of responsibility after graduation and the ability to succeed to build a good family and good cohabitation with members of the community.

The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has been narrated to have said:

"Teach good to people not by your tongues but call them by your deeds, and be committed to honesty and piety."

And:

"To whatever extent a person's knowledge increases, his attention will be turned more towards his soul and its education."

And then the recommendation to urge on the unity of Iraq and the care for the displaced without discrimination through the care of the competent authorities, the citizens, the humanitarian associations and civil society organizations, to exert all possible efforts to provide adequate shelter for the displaced and provide them with the food, drink and medications with treating them kindly, with sympathy and compassion. And this care should be done equally to all displaced Iraqis regardless of their religious, sectarian or national affiliation, because they are all Iraqi citizens and the mentioned differences should not affect their rights of citizenship and belonging to Iraq.

And this kind of behaviour and care will make others of all Iraqi components feel the unity of belonging to their country, which will have a positive impact in their souls, making them feel the strength of the relationship with the rest of the citizens of their country, which will not leave any opportunity to the gangs of ISIS that operate to sow division and hatred among Iraqi people by provoking sectarianism.

The final commandment was addressed mainly to the fighters on the battlefield: It is essential for our hero fighters, who are drawing the epics of heroism and sacrifice in the pages of the modern history of Iraq, to pay attention towards the goal of their struggle; which is saving the citizens in the areas now controlled by ISIS's gangs, and to consider those citizens as their brothers and sisters, and that they came to rid the country of these gangs that adopt deceptive ideology in permitting the killing of those who do not have the same ideology, which is showed by their brutal practices that does not have in any

way any relationship with Islam and humanity, a brutality that Iraq's history never witnessed. So be careful to not let the goal be revenge or assault or such like, but in order to achieve this task according to the legitimate, moral and humane criteria, there must be these two points:

1. Demonstrate the highest degree of mental discipline in their actions and in combat, to not be controlled by their sorrow for losing a dear one who was martyred in the fighting, or the suffering of the injured or base their action on emotion to commit a contravention of these regulations, such as the mutilation of the deceased or killing the wounded or bombing a suspect house or rob the money of the families of the fighters or seize funds of innocent citizens.
2. Taking into account the humanitarian and Islamic standards in their behaviours towards everyone, as it is a must to differentiate between the aggressor and the citizen who has nothing to do with the aggression. The goal of the fighting is to protect the national, humanitarian and cultural identity of the Iraqi people that these gangs tried to erase and eradicate. This commandment is emphasized further when dealing with the elderly, women and children.

Now if we turn our attention to the images showed many television channels, and what is not greater and more beautiful to see than some members of our armed forces and our fighters, carrying an old man on their backs carrying him

and his family to safety, or feeding a little one, or reassuring an frightened woman or treating a sick person or preparing shelter for them.

As it was stated in the *Twenty Recommendations of the Supreme Religious Authority* that stressed on:

First: "By Allah... by Allah... Be attentive to the sanctity of the lives of those who do not fight you, especially the weak among the elderly, the children, and women, even if they were the families of those who fight you. It is not allowed for you to take anything from the fighting enemies property except that which the fighter carried and nothing else. It was the noble habit of the Commander of the Faithful (i.e. Imam Ali), peace be upon him, to prohibit (his soldiers) from attacking the properties of the families, women, and children of those against whom he fought, despite the insistence by some of those who (claimed to) follow him, especially the Kharijites, who insisted on it being lawful."

Second: "By Allah... by Allah... Be aware of the wealth of others. It is forbidden to take from the wealth of another Muslim except with the kind permission of the owner. Those who steal from others will find themselves seated in the flames of the fires of hell."

Third: " By Allah... by Allah... Do not violate things sacred with your tongues or actions. And be careful not to prosecute one for the sins of another."

May Allah give a brilliant victory to our armed forces, supported by the volunteers and the tribes' members. And make the enemies' plot return upon them, and change our bad situation to Your good, indeed He is The All-Hearing and The Most-Responsive.

ADVICE 6 (1) - ADVICE TO THE BELIEVERS REGARDING THE RITUALS OF IMAM HUSSAIN PEACE BE UPON HIM

In the second sermon of Friday's congregational prayer on the 7th of Safar 1437 AH corresponding to the 20th November, 2015, held in the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) and led by Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbalai , points were raised with regards to advice to the believers regarding the Ziyarat Arba'een that are as follows:

With the approach of the Ziyarat Arba'een, performed by millions of the lovers of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) walking towards his holy shrine to express their loyalty and the strength of their association with Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) renewing the Covenant to continue the path of his noble principles and values, and we would like to the remind the faithful of some recommendations on this occasion:

Firstly: One of the most important purposes of this Hussaini Ziyarat is to maintain the principles and teachings of Islam for which Imam Hussain (peace be upon him), his family and companions were martyred for to protect, save from loss, and prevent them being altered. This requires from the believers to increase and enforce the teachings of their religion and to obey Allah Almighty, His Prophet, peace be upon him and his Purified Household, and the pure Imams (Peace Be Upon Them) by performing the religious duties and avoiding that which is forbidden. Noting that there will be a group of scholars and students of the Islamic Seminary, as have been in previous years, to answer jurisprudential questions and teach matters of etiquette and to lead the congregational

prayers along the road to the Holy city of Karbala. Visitors must take advantage of these days and to make their blessed journey an opportunity to learn more jurisprudential issues and eloquent etiquettes.

Ensure you maintain your prayers on time! Distractions such as giving priority to serving visitors of Imam Hussain peace be upon him, and supporting seminars regarding the martyrdom, must not stand in the way of your prayers being performed on time. Imam Hussain himself, peace be upon him, was so conscious of his prayers even the Day of Ashura itself, the day of battle and war, did not stop him or his companions from performing this divine worship. By Allah, by Allah maintain your prayers, for it is the pillar of your religion and the ascension of the believers to their Lord and the most loved of deeds by Allah Almighty.

Secondly: Among the most important purposes of this journey is to entrench the fundamental basis from which Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) started in journey from The Enlightened City of Medina to The Holy City of Karbala, and wanted his followers and lovers to be committed to it even in the darkest and difficult of circumstances: sacrificing oneself, wealth, and children to protect the Islamic values and principles without change or distortion, as well as the altruism, courage, patience, steadfastness, determination and solid will in this

path.

And there is no doubt that the fateful battle in these days against the gangs of ISIS reflects those finest values, particularly from our beloved ones the fighters stationed in the fronts, leaving behind them the worldly pleasures, away from their families and children to embody redemption, sacrifice and altruism in order to protect the country and its citizens.

And one of the manifestation of loyalty to Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) during these days is undoubtedly to sustain the momentum in the fight against ISIS, by promoting the spirit of steadfastness and will to fight and support the fighters. This comes in different forms but especially in the form of our heroic fighters however they come, who fight in the battlefields having left the world and everything in it and have separated themselves from their families and loved ones to realise the very meaning of sacrifice for the sake of protecting this country and its people.

For the sake of showing the love for and loyalty to Imam Hussain, peace be upon him, we come to visit him on these days, and the preliminary to attending the ziyara is the support for the fight against ISIS, and that is with giving life to resistance and the will to fight and supporting the fighters with material needs and brave men to cleanse all of this land and purify it from these gangs. For a people who were able

to defy terrorism, cars bombs, and explosives all these years and who have achieved victory in many battles, is able to perpetuate the momentum of victories in battle against ISIS gangs to reach the final victory, by the will of Allah Almighty.

Thirdly: It is hoped from the visitors and the owners of Hussaini resting places - May Allah Almighty reward them- to be keen so as to have all their efforts and etiquettes reflect that of the morals and etiquettes of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), to preserve the public and private properties, whether for government departments or of citizens, avoid being an obstacle to vehicles transporting visitors, maintaining the cleanliness of their locations, avoiding extravagance in food. This particular blessed act of feeding the visitors can turn to an unpraiseworthy deed if combined with extravagance and waste.

We also emphasize on good cohabitation between visitors without scrambling and shoving, but rather to cooperate with everyone for the success of this Ziyarat, especially with the security forces to enable them to perform their duties in the best way and not permit any breaches of security – May Allah Almighty prevent any such breach.

And we recommend our visiting sisters to pay a high level of attention and importance to observing modesty in their conduct and appearance and avoid mixing in an abominable way. In fact, we highly recommend the youth to pay special

attention to their appearances, ensuring appropriate clothing is worn considering the holiness of the occasion and to distance yourselves from any such thing that is not in line with the highest levels of modesty with their appearances and morals.

ADVICE 6 (2) - ADVICE TO THE BELIEVERS REGARDING THE
RITUALS OF IMAM HUSSAIN PEACE BE UPON HIM

The speech of the representative, Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbalai, of the supreme religious authority,, in the second sermon of Friday's prayer of the 5th of Muharram 1438 AH corresponding to the 7th October, 2016 held in the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him):

Dear brothers and sisters, we commemorate during these days the anniversary of the uprising of Imam Hussain peace be upon him, to ask for the reform in the nation of his grandfather the Messenger of Allah blessings be upon him and his Purified Household, and the tragedy that has befallen on Islam and Muslims with his martyrdom and the martyrdom of members of his family and faithful companions.

This great tragedy has many aspects discussed and investigated by scholars and researchers, but today we want to draw your attention to one of those aspects in these sad Ashura days, which is represented by grief and sorrow on the tragedy of the Master of the Youth of Heaven (peace be upon him), that have extreme importance in the school of Ahlul Al-Bayt (peace be upon them). The narrations and traditions of the Guiding Imams (peace be upon them) have stressed the significance of shedding tears upon Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) and showing visible grief over the tragedy, and that this in itself is an act of worship that enables the believer to be closer to Allah Almighty and His Messenger blessings be upon him and his Purified Household. and gives him great reward.

Imam Al-Baqir has been narrated to have cited his father Imam As-Sajjad peace be upon both of them, that he used to say: "Whenever

a believer sheds tears that roll upon their cheeks upon what calamity has befallen us from our enemy in this world, Allah shall accommodate him in the elevated status of Truth." And it is narrated that Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) would supplicate in his prostration: "Oh Lord, have mercy upon those cheeks that turn for Imam Hussein peace be upon him, and have mercy upon those eyes which shed tears in compassion for us; and upon those hearts, which have been restless and blistered for us; and upon those wailings, which have been for us."

The grief over the suffering of the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him) is a sincere manifestation of love and loyalty to the Prophet and his purified household Peace Be Upon Them, who have been chosen by Almighty Allah and who ordered us to love them and made this the reward of the message, when He said: ﴿I ask of you no wage for it, but love for my near relatives﴾ (42:23).

There are numerous elaborated narrations from the Holy Prophet (Allah's prayers be upon him and upon his holy Household) stating that the near relatives stated in this verse are Ali, Fatima, and their children Al-Hassan and Hussain (peace be upon them).

This love must reach deep in to the heart of the believer and must run within the blood of their arteries, and this love that is one of the branches of the love of the Almighty God, is the love of the friends of Allah whom He ordered us to love, as they have stood up along with the Holy Prophet (Allah's prayers be upon him and upon his Purified Household) and sacrificed all they have for the sake of the holy

message and so that it reaches the people and became entrenched in their blood and struggles. By them Allah Almighty begins the message and with them He will seal it, and by them it will remain high. No uprising of this message will rise without them, they are the bearers of this message from the beginning, middle and to the end, this is the will of Allah Almighty.

It is our duty as believers, as we have in our souls and hearts the love of those who have the virtue and whom Allah Almighty has ordered us to love who are good towards us, over and above what the Almighty has recommended for us and ordered us, to love the Purified Household more than our own fathers and mothers and offspring and all our family. Are they not the ones that blessed us with the best of gifts – the gift of guidance? This is the love that is from the love of Allah Almighty that is in the narrations as religion itself.

In addition, the grief over Hussain (peace be upon him) and cry on his tragedy shows our innocence to Allah Almighty from what the evils have done to the Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and to declare our support to them and to their Qa'im (peace be upon him and may his return be hastened), in hope that Allah Almighty will include us among the grateful about whom He said: ﴿Muhammad is naught but a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him. Why, if he should die or is slain, will you turn about on your heels? If any man should turn about on his heels, he will not harm God in any way; and God will recompense the thankful.﴾ (3:144).

The condolences' Majlis of the Master of martyrs (peace be upon him) and the rituals linked to him as inherited from our believing ancestors, are our greatest heritage that we should never forget or ignore, but we must preserve with all our power. We see how they them inspire our youth and also our elders, and hundreds of thousands of them went with courage and valour to defend the honour, the land and the sanctities, and they have drawn the most fascinating epics that make history, which is an important fruit of these Majlis. It gathers large crowds of believers, to be the best occasion to educate people in matters of religion and to enlighten them about the matters of the time and discuss suitable solutions for their intellectual problems. Thus, it is necessary to rely on reliable sources when giving speeches in these Majlis, to entrench the true beliefs in the hearts and souls of the believers.

It is important to ensure that the correct and strong references are used in providing such information, especially when it comes to the narrations regarding the events that occurred on the Purified Household, peace be upon them, and to leave any thing other than reliable sources lest they become the target of attack and blocks the most important benefits that they have which is to strengthen theological beliefs in the souls of the believers.

May Allah hasten the holy reappearance of the Hujjah Ibn Al-Hassan, make us among the people of obedience, realize our hopes in supporting him, and complete our happiness by being with him and achieve the martyrdom at his side. Indeed He is Hearing and

Responsive. And, praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and Allah's Prayers be upon Mohammad and upon his pure and virtuous Household.

ADVICE 7A - TO THE PILGRIMS OF ARBA'EEN

THE REQUEST: ADVICE WITH REGRADS TO THE ZIYARAH OF ARBAEEN OF IMAM HUSSAIN PEACE BE UPON HIM.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

To, Grand Ayatollah Sistani (may Allah grant him long life):
Salamun alaikum warahmatullah wa barakatuh, may Allahﷻ Almighty reward your deeds.

As we set out to Karbala to attend the Arbaeen and pay tribute to Imam Hussain, peace be upon him, we need your fatherly advice on how to best benefit from this spiritual journey and earn the reward of visiting the shrine of the Chief of Martyrs as well as to know what we do not know, which we hope to spread across all segments of the community. May Allah grant you long life. We earnestly call on you to furnish us with your advice and to pray for us.

A group of believers.

THE RESPONSE:

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

Praise belongs to Allah and peace and benedictions of Allah be upon our master, Muhammad and his pure progeny.

It is befitting for the believers whom Allah has granted success to perform pilgrimage, to note that Allah, the Exalted, selected prophets

and their noble successors from amongst His servants to be role models and to be divine proofs and authority over the people so that they be guided with their teachings and to take them as role models. Allah Almighty has encouraged people to visit the sacred sites so that those Divinely Guided leaders are remembered for eternity and held in reverence, and they be a constant reminder of Allah Almighty and His teachings and His laws as they are the best examples of servitude to Allah, the Glorified, and the struggle in His way and sacrifice for the cause of His everlasting religion.

Hence, of the essentials of this pilgrimage is that the pilgrim, in addition to remembering Imam Hussain's sacrifices and devotion, peace be upon him, in the way of Allah, the Exalted, observes the teachings of Islam including those relating to prayer, hijab, self-reform, selflessness, modesty, moral etiquette, and the way to travel on this path amongst other things, so that the pilgrimage may be a step towards developing and training the soul upon these teachings and consolidating the effects of these teachings until the next pilgrimage and the ones after. By doing so attending these pilgrimages will be rewarded the same status as that of attending the lessons and teachings of the Imam, peace be upon him.

Although we are not living in the time of the Ahlul-Bayt (Peace Be Upon Them) to learn from them directly and be educated and raised by them, but Allah, the Exalted, has preserved their conducts for us and has encouraged us to visit them as our role models. As the contemporaries of the Ahlul-Bayt (Peace Be Upon Them) lived with

them and were put to the test, Allah also wants to test us as to how far we are sincere in our desire to live with them and follow their teachings. Hence, we must be careful lest we should not falsely desire to see them. We must know that if we are who they advise us to be, it is hoped that we shall be resurrected along with who witnessed them. It has been reported that Imam Ali, peace be upon him, said in the Battle of Jamal:

"We are accompanied by a people who are still in the loins of their fathers and uteruses of their mothers."

Therefore, whoever is true to themselves in their desire to be guided by them, it will not be hard to act on their teachings and obey them. So, cleanse yourself as they have cleansed themselves and behave yourselves as they have behaved.

By Allah, by Allah, pay attention to your prayers, for it has been narrated that the prayer is the pillar of your religion and the ascension of the believer, if it is accepted, all other deeds will be accepted and if it is rejected, all other deeds will be rejected.

The believers must maintain their prayers and offer it at the beginning of its time as Allah's most beloved are those who rush to His call as soon as they hear the call for it. It is not appropriate for a believer to be engaged in any other activities of worship in the prime prayer time because prayer is the best form of obedience to Allah.

It has been narrated the Ahlul-Bayt, peace be upon them, have said:

"Our intercession will not be attained by those who take the prayers lightly".

Imam Hussain's special attention to prayer was emphasised on the Day of Ashura, where it has been reported that he told the companion who remembered it at the prime time:

"You remembered the prayer, may Allah include you amongst the those who remember prayers." The Imam, peace be upon him, then established the prayer under heavy attack.

By Allah, by Allah, be sincere. The value and blessing of one's deeds depends on how far the sincerity is in performing them for Allah's sake. Because Allah will not accept any deeds which are not purely for Him and no one else. It has been narrated from the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his Purified Household, that he said during the Muslims' emigration to Medina:

"Whoever migrates for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, he has migrated to Him and whoever migrates to make worldly gains, he has migrated to it. Allah will reward sincere deeds to the extent that it will increase to seven hundred folds and He multiplies the rewards for whomsoever He wants."

Hence, it is necessary on the pilgrims to remember Allah and recite remembrance of Allah in abundance and be mindful of every step and every deed to be for Allah's sake. They should know that Allah has

not bestowed anyone with a blessing so precious as sincerity in belief, speech and conduct. An act which is devoid of sincerity ends with the end of life in this world whereas a sincere act for Allahﷻ will be lasting and blessed in this world and the hereafter.

By Allah, by Allah, observe modesty in clothing and hijab which is amongst the most important thing that the Ahlul-Bayt, peace be upon them, heeded to even in the most difficult circumstances on the day of Karbala and they were the best role models in terms of observing modest clothing. They, peace be upon them, were not hurt as much as they were hurt by the enemy who violated the dignity and respect of the women amongst the people. It is, therefore, necessary for all pilgrims, and especially ladies, to observe modesty in their conducts, clothing and appearance and to avoid whatever is deemed a violation of this in terms of tight-fitting clothes, mixing in an abominable way and the use of beautifications that are not. In fact, it is befitting for believers that they observe the highest levels of modesty in order for them to keep the sacred ceremony untainted.

We pray to Almighty Allah to elevate the position of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his Purified Household, in this world and in the hereafter, for their sacrifices in His way and their efforts to guide His creatures. May He multiple his blessings on them as He has sent blessings to previous prophets especially Ibrahim and his family, peace be upon them.

We also pray to Allah to bestow blessings upon the pilgrimage of the pilgrims of Imam Hussain, peace be upon him and accept it in the best way as He accepts the deeds of His noble servants so that they may, through their lifestyle and deeds in this pilgrimage, be a role model for others for the rest of their lives and be rewarded for their love of and obedience to the household of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and for preaching their mission, in the hope that on the Day of Judgment when everyone of the people are called with their Imam, they (pilgrims) are called with the Ahlul-Bayt (peace be upon them) and that those who are martyred in this way, they are, due to their sacrifices and the sufferings of oppression which they have gone through, resurrected with Hussain, peace be upon him and his companions. Verily, He is all Hearing, Ever Responsive.

ADVICE 7B - TO THE PILGRIMS OF ARBA'EEN

There were some important points raised in the second sermon of Friday prayer of the 14th of Safar 1437 AH corresponding to the 27th of November, 2015, which was held in the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) and led by Sayed Ahmed Al-Safi, in which he stated two points, the first being for those fighting the battles against ISIS, and the second, which is translated below, is for the visitors of the Shrine of Imam Hussain peace be upon him during the Ziyarat of Arbaeen. The following was raised in the second point:

On these great days, with the participation of millions of lovers of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) from around the world in the Ziyarat Arba'een to his holy shrine, we would like to clarify the following:

- A- To those fighters who stand at the frontlines and are engaged in a fierce war against the terrorists, and who are stationed in the liberated lands and protecting the country, must not leave their posts to go for the Ziyarat, as by remaining in their positions they will have a larger reward; the reward for the defence of the land, its honour and sanctities, in addition to the tens of thousands of visitors, men and women who are willing to share with them the reward of the Ziyarat, so they gather the reward of the fight in the path of Allah and the reward of the Ziyarat of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him), and what a great portion of reward t is.

- B- To the dear visitors, brothers and sisters, give special importance to this religious occasion and try to invest it in the best ways to increase their faith and perfect themselves, as the reform project drawn by Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) and by which he has perpetuated the religion of his grandfather the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Purified Household) and on which have been emphasized by the Imams (peace be upon them), and which Allah Almighty has wanted its infinite continuity, aims primarily to reform the human being. It is a must for those walking on the road of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) to be interested in increasing their true and correct religious knowledge and increased moral virtues. And the presence of scholars and students of the Islamic Seminaries in specified locations along the roads to Karbala is a good opportunity to take advantage of in achieving this goal.
- C- Among the important points that the walkers on the road of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) have to pay attention to, is the need to avoid differences and schisms within the ranks of the faithful, and to not exploit this sad occasion to promote a point of view, be it religious, political or any other. And more importantly, is to stay away from some modern and recent practices that have appeared and are not consistent with the sanctity of this Hussaini occasion and limiting the commemoration to

those practices that have been inherited by the believing ancestors in the establishment of condolences of the Master of Youth of Paradise, from the sadness, dismay and to commemorate this occasion which is the order of the Imams (peace be upon them).

D- As terrorists consistently seek and try to target the largest possible number of innocent lives by targeting large gatherings, it is therefore required from those working on security and in charge of protecting the visitors to do their utmost to protect the visitors and to provide a safe environment for them to perform the Ziyarat rituals and to make easy their movement upon arrival and when leaving to their destinations.

ADVICE 7C - TO THE PILGRIMS OF ARBA'EEN

The complete second sermon given by the representative of the supreme religious authority; Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbala'i on the Friday's prayer of the 3rd of Safar 1438 AH corresponding to the 4th of November, 2016 held in the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) and led by Sheikh Abd Al-Mahdi Al-Karbala'i:

Dear believing brothers and believing sisters who are on their way to the path of the love for and loyalty to Imam Hussain peace be upon him, as we are approaching the days of the timeless march of Arba'een, we should all remember several points and strive to realising them:

First: The Holy Qur'an, the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his Purified Household) and the Imams (peace be upon them), and what our human intuition and intellect dictates, our approach should be purposeful and conscious, away from superficiality. Many of the texts of the Ziyarat of the Divinely Guided (peace be upon them) taught us the divine aims envisaged by this approach, such as:

- The importance of loyalty to Allah Almighty, His messenger and the Purified Imams (peace be upon them), their pious representatives, and disassociating from their enemies. As this principle is immortal as long as there are people walking on their path and act upon their teachings to raise their word, despite the attempts of their enemies to extinguish their light,

erase their tracks, oppress their followers and fight their teachings, as stated in the Ziyarat of Imam Hussain (peace be upon him) for the day of Ashura:

"I (first) seek greater intimacy with Allah and then with you by your association and patronage and those who associate with you, and cut off all links with your enemies, and with those who planted the seeds of hostility against you, and reject and discard their associates, their followers and their friends. I make peace with those who made their peace with you, I search out and confront those who waged war against you, I make friends with those who stood by you, and I strive against those who came in conflict with you."

The meaning of association has been clarified by the Imams, it has been narrated that Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said to Jaber Al-Ju'fi:

"Who ever is obedient to Allah they are our associates and who ever is disobedient to Allah is to us an enemy, and our association is only achieved through action and piety."

And he said in another narration:

"So By Allah, our Shi'as are none other than those who are careful of their duty to Allah and obey Him, and they are only known, O Jabir, through their humbleness, humility, trustworthiness, frequent remembrance of Allah, fasting and praying, goodness towards their parents, attending to their

poor neighbours, destitute, the indebted and the orphans, honest speech, recitation of the Qur'an, restraint of their tongue when in the company of others, except when it is for a good purpose, and their care and loyalty towards their kinsfolk.”

So the frame of reference in the realisation of an associate is not simply the display of love but rather the display of obedience to Allah Almighty and to His Prophet Peace be upon him and his Purified Household, and to the Divinely Guided peace be upon them, and to follow the path from their narrations in terms of the way of life from pursuing what is obligatory and leaving the forbidden and to follow them in their mannerisms and etiquettes.

In the ziyarah of the martyrs, it also states:

“Oh how I wish I was with you so that I may succeed a victorious success.”

Second: The will of the Almighty is that the people of loyalty and faith go through challenges and difficult crises, to show their altruism and giving, so that the march of Arba'een takes a global aspect attracting many from the different nations of the world. In this, Allahﷻ has prepared the grounds for a great opportunity to be used in order to introduce your principles and teach the great humanitarian values. Grab this opportunity and reap the fruits of this opportunity so you may promote your authentic Islam culture in the global arena, and earn the respect of the world to your sanctities. By Allahﷻ, by Allahﷻ,

fear Allah in regard with this sanctity and this honour and do not allow anyone to harm it by certain behaviours and improper conduct on this holy occasion. Work to make the people of the world love this march by showing its highness and holiness of its rituals and principles and highlighting the morals and values taught by the teachings of Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon him) and ensure that the event does not go outside the bounds of jurisprudential parameters.


Third: It must be emphasised to the believing sisters that are participating in this blessed march that the achievement of the women of Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and especially Seyda Zainab (peace be upon her) even in the most difficult circumstances of Karbala, could not have been achieved except with the observation of hijab and modesty, and the guarding of the tongue and eyes from what is forbidden, so by Allahﷻ by Allahﷻ, observe hijab and modesty. The believing woman that is truly a follower is the one that observes this modesty in her clothing, actions and behaviour and avoids unnecessary mingling and forbidden adornments.

Fourth: On the path in this pilgrimage there are honourable brothers and scholars of the Islamic seminaries in the Holy city of Najaf for advising on jurisprudential laws and provide recommendations to the pilgrims for what is beneficial good to them, including the upholding of the congregational prayers on time. So we ask the pilgrims, brothers and sisters, to take this opportunity so that they may learn the rulings of their religion, and the way of their Imams, Peace Be Upon Them, and with taking the advice that is presented to them from the

brothers and sisters who are learned scholars. This is so, after fulfilling the pilgrimage of the Master of the Martyrs, peace be upon him, you return to your homes with more awareness and knowledge of the Purified Household Peace Be Upon Them, and to increase piety, so that you may benefit in this world and in the hereafter.

Fifth: We advise those who are holding the stalls who are holding the gatherings for the Husseini mourning that they make their motto the sacrifices and victories of the heroes fighting in the arena of the battlefields, those who today are the embodiment of the principles of Imam Hussein peace be upon him under the oppression of the oppressors, their sacrifice and selflessness in the path of bringing the Truth to the fore and to void the falsehood. And it is necessary to raise the pictures of the innocent martyrs and to call their names on the path that is traversed by the pilgrims to the holy city of Karbala so that the images and names of the martyrs remain in the forefronts of the minds of the pilgrims and the masses remember their sacrifices and blood to allow the pilgrims to take this journey in safety.

We ask the Almighty Allah to give victory to our dear fighters in the battlefields and to get rid of the dirt of the terrorists from all corners of our beloved country, and make all the areas of the homeland a peaceful and safe country, for He is certainly the Most Beneficent Most Merciful.



I would like to give to the dear youth –whom I care about as much as I care about myself and my family- recommendations that can provide them with happiness in this world and the hereafter. They are the essence of the message of God, the glorified, to his creation. They are also the advice of God's wise and pious servants and what I have extracted from experience and knowledge.

SAYED 'ALI AL-SISTANI

