



L · E · A · V · E · S

FROM A SUFI JOURNAL

جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ
اللَّهُ

ALLĀH JALLA JALĀLĀHŪ

With a foreword by

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri



Publisher: Zahra Publications

ISBN (Printed Version): 1-85230-057-4

ISBN (E-Book Version): 978-1-919826-64-6

<http://www.zahrapublications.com>

First Published in 1988

© Zahra Publications

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this eBook may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from Zahra Publications.

Copying and redistribution of this eBook is strictly prohibited.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Book Description	iii
About Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri.....	iv
Foreword.....	1
SECTION 1: MAN	1
The Nature of Man.....	2
SECTION 2: FAMILY AND SOCIETY.....	9
Marriage and Family in Islam.....	10
Man/Woman.....	16
Raising Children.....	21
Advice to a Son	31
SECTION 3: HEALTH.....	41
A Discourse on Health	42
Medical Practice and Institutions in Islam.....	48
Doctors of the Heart.....	54
Healer’s Elixir	60
Fasting and Health.....	61
SECTION 4: KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION.....	64
The Sanusi <i>Zawiyah</i> System	65
The Pursuit of Knowledge	72
SECTION 5: THE QUR’AN	74
Introduction.....	75
The Opening: <i>Surat al-Fatihah</i>	76
The Verse of Light: <i>Ayat al-Nur</i> (24:35)	81
The Folding Up: <i>Surat al-Takwir</i> (81).....	89
Three Surahs.....	111
The Decree – <i>Surat al-Qadr</i> (97).....	111
The Clear Proof – <i>Surat al-Bayyinah</i> (98).....	115
Mankind – <i>Surat an-Nas</i> (114).....	120
SECTION 6: PROPHETS AND IMAMS	124

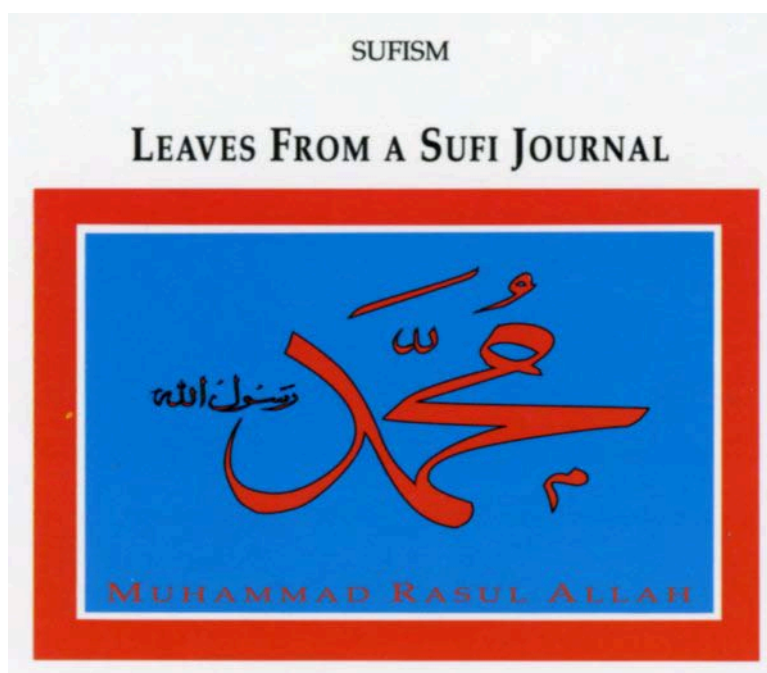
The Transmission of Original Islam	125
Character of the Prophet.....	129
The Nature of the Imamate	138
Eternal Karbala.....	147
SECTION 7: INNER REALITY / OUTER PRACTICES	161
The Inner Meaning of Faith	162
Tapping the Inner Springs of Faith	168
<i>Qalaba</i> – The Turning of the Heart.....	172
Discourse on <i>Du`a</i>	185
Ramadan 188	
The Virtues of Fasting.....	189
Hajj – A Personal Account.....	203
SECTION 8: ON THE PATH.....	217
The Path of the People	218
The Man in the Black Cloak Turns	228
<i>Urs</i> of Seyyid Bukhari	232
SECTION 9: ON THE LIGHT SIDE	235
<i>Bustan</i> of Sa`di.....	236
Two Parables.....	241
The Gift of Obedience.....	244
eBooks By Zahra Publications.....	246
General eBooks on Islam	246
The Qur'an & Its Teachings.....	246
Sufism & Islamic Psychology and Philosophy	247
Practices & Teachings of Islam.....	249
Talks & Courses.....	250
Poetry, Aphorisms & Inspirational	251
Autobiography.....	252
Health Sciences and Islamic History.....	252

Book Description

LEAVES FROM A SUFI JOURNAL is a unique collection of articles presenting an outstanding introduction to the areas of Sufism and original Islamic teachings.

This ageless wisdom is set against the backcloth of a changing world in which the application of this knowledge to one's own life could scarcely be more appropriate.

Written by both classical and contemporary writers, this compilation includes commentaries on the Qur'anic revelations; the mysteries of faith; inner and outer practices; the lives of prophets and saints; the individual, the family and society and the nature of unity and existence.



About Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years.

He is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

He is a prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment.

Foreword

Sufism is the art and the science of correct living which results in success. Mankind strives towards success, and although success is differently defined from time to time and from place to place, we all seek a way of existence that brings the minimum of trouble and the maximum of happiness and joy. The art of achieving this is the core of all spiritual endeavors and, therefore, Sufism can be considered the heart of Islam.

Since it is a comprehensive art of living, Sufism is concerned with integrity and the integration of all things and instills a full understanding of the meaning behind life. However, unless it is applied by those who have attained fulfillment and inner awakening, it is most likely to end up being of palliative use, or at best, distorted.

The Sufi is he who is constant in his equilibrium; he is analytically aware of the causal world in which he is living and is spontaneously aware of his awareness and his state of being. The Sufi is he who is in the right place at the right time doing the right thing. The Sufi is he who does not look back in time with regret and does not look forward with desires and expectations. The Sufi is he who is living the present fully – outwardly responsible and active and inwardly free and watchful. The heart of the Sufi in its purity reflects the truth behind creation and is constantly polished and purified as he journeys towards higher consciousness.

Because Sufism is concerned with life, the Sufi has to relate and connect with all aspects of life in a totally integrated fashion. Therefore the objective of Sufism is the identification and the tuning to the unific reality that underlies all known and unknown, visible and invisible creation. So it is such a wide web that there is nothing that does not come under its sovereignty or jurisdiction. Therefore the topics in this volume cover a broad spectrum, reflecting most aspects of life.

The present volume is a collection of numerous classical writings as well as contemporary discourses concerning the path of spiritual awakening which was compiled in a manner to benefit

those who desire to catch a glimpse of the meaning of Sufism. The articles have been arranged in a logical system to make it easier for the modern mind to assimilate them. They give a foretaste of that state which can be the outcome of following a true program of self-awakening. Articles covering various phases and aspects of such a program had appeared over the years in a journal called Nuradeen¹, a quarterly journal formerly published by the Zahra Trust.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed over the years in helping to bring about this book. Special acknowledgement is to be given to Abbas H. Bilgrami for his administrative services, Batal Havri Mazandarami for editorial compilation of this volume and to Dr. Abdul Wahhab Boase for editing the text.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

¹ See <http://www.nuradeen.com>

SECTION 1: MAN

Lift up your face to the [one true] faith, turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the natural disposition which Allah has instilled into man [at birth]: for, not to allow any change to corrupt what Allah has thus created – this is the purpose of the one [true] faith; but most people know it not. (30:30)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

‘Every child is born with a natural disposition to worship Allah; it is only his parents who later turn him into a Jew, a Christian or a Magian.’

The Nature of Man

By `Abd al-Haqq Sayf al-Ilm

Every baby born is an expression of absolute purity. Anyone who has been present at a birth must acknowledge this. Each new birth is a bursting out of life-itself. Every baby is a container for the re-emergence of raw life-energy – unadulterated, undifferentiated. However, each container has a definite form and each is contained in an environment. Each baby has genetic coding determining its physical shape and temperamental balance. Each is born into surroundings of a particular nature, both physical and emotional. These circumstances, together with the chain of events that make up its early life, bring about the individualization of the new child. They combine to make the child, in its own unique way, begin to feel itself separate from its surroundings. Some receive affirmation and satisfaction and so view the world as a friendly, warm, safe place. Others are negated and denied and experience the world as hostile, alien and fearful. Between these two are millions of possibilities and variations different for each child. On the other hand, the kinds of human situations confronted by the child are quite limited and predictable, just as its own specific temperament is of a given type. The end result is a being in every case unique, and at the same time falling within a clearly recognizable category, just as no two individuals are sick in the same way, and yet a particular illness can be diagnosed.

At a certain point after roughly two years, a picture built up of all the various elements mentioned above takes on a more or less definite shape, and the child says. ‘This is me!’ This ‘me’ is in fact by no means solid, changing from one minute to the next, but it is established enough as a shape to be claimed as an identity. It is vitally important to realize that this ‘identity’ has no real existence. What has happened is that the pure life energy and undifferentiated consciousness of the new born baby have, over a period of time and through exposure to a particular environment, become identified in a particular way with their body-container so that they are limited and individualized in it. Through the process of existing the child has acquired a more or less fixed image of itself which it calls ‘me’, completely losing sight of the unconstrained, undefined, pure life-energy which was its birthright. This assumed identity is

accidental, made up of contingent circumstances and passing time. Given a different environment, a child would adopt a different self-form. The reality of the child lies in the pure life energy and undifferentiated consciousness it starts with, not the limited and constricted self-picture it later develops.

This circumstantially constructed, and quite arbitrarily imposed first self-image now becomes for us the basis of all our future dealings with ourselves and with the world which surrounds us. It dictates to us the pattern of our life which is, from now on, spent preserving and perpetuating the existence of this assumed identity with which we have inextricably associated ourselves. As far as we are concerned, it is what we are. However, just look at any two year old and you will find a very unbridled raw-edged being; willful, autocratic, demanding, easily angered, often destructive, attention seeking, extremely selfish – in a word, monstrous! In its naked form this ‘self’ is obviously not acceptable. Gradually we learn, by experience, to negotiate with existence. We find out how much we can get away with, what needs to be honed down, what we can express, what we must hold back, what brings about desired reactions and so on. In other words, we try to find a balance between the raw material of our acquired self-picture to which we have given absolute reality, and the hampering social environment in which we find ourselves where total ‘self’ expression is not permissible or possible. In this way, the original self-picture becomes covered over, layer upon layer, according to the demands of different situations.

Our lives continue to be the playing-out of the first patterning, more and more refined and in an ever larger arena. In cases where a completely free rein is given to the inclinations of the primary self-image, the individual will return to his infantile form as in the recent case of the fabulously rich man who reverted absolutely to a tyrannical infant, concerned only with the gratification of his capricious whims and unbounded appetites. It also occurs to some extent in senility when the old person loses grip on the cover-up which has been so successfully maintained for so many years. This is the inevitable description of one who has given absolute reality to his acquired self-picture. If this was all there was, we would have no other option than to be slaves to our own assumed identities, our lives spent hopelessly trying to assuage the appetites and gratify the desires of a two-year old child. And this is in fact the lot of a large proportion of the human race.

If you look about you at the phenomena of existence in the universe, or inside you at the workings of your own body, you will find clearly discernible laws at work, holding everything in harmony and balance – in the vastness of the galaxies and the overwhelming beauty of the stars with their patterns and movement; in the solar system and the wonderful way the planets keep to their orbits held by an unbelievably intricate system of forces; in the Earth's atmosphere and how it provides exactly the right conditions for the life on its surface; in the climates and how they preserve the animal and vegetable life in their different zones; in the forest and the desert and how each is a delicately balanced ecological system providing everything necessary for its continued existence; in the separate organisms, each with its own inexplicable breathtaking beauty and its own perfectly balanced cycle of growth and decay; in our own bodies with their perfect co-ordination. You will find that laws govern the senses, each with its own field of perception; the digestive system and its extraction of what is beneficial and rejection of what is superfluous; the brain and its ability to store information and release it in the right situation; the way the body naturally sets right any disruption of its equilibrium. The examples are endless, but the indications are quite clear. Whether you look at the whole universe or a particular system or a single organism or the smallest subatomic particle, it is abundantly apparent that there is a universal law at work tending to order and balance in every situation.

Apart from the case of man, it is quite apparent that everything submits involuntarily and unconsciously, just by being what it is, to the universal order manifest in existence, or we could say by extension, to the divine reality which it indicates. Each thing, in its own unique way, contributes to the upholding of the balance and is itself in itself an indication of its Creator/Source – in the same way that any artifact indicates the person who made it. It is this activity of submission and participation in the unfolding of existence, this acknowledgement, even if unconscious, of the source of existence that constitutes real worship. At this point you must jettison any concept you may previously have held of worship being connected to 'religion'. Worship is organic, inevitable. It is an integral part of all existence. By fulfilling its natural function for which it is perfectly adapted, every creature is at the same time performing an act of worship by playing its own part in manifesting and indicating the one reality. All

things, in spite of the diversity of their different forms and activities, have this one thing in common. This is the common denominator in existence. This is the common purpose.

Now we come back to the human species, to ourselves. By use of the intellect, we must arrive at the conclusion that what is true for everything else in the universe must also be true for us, since we are an inseparable part of the whole structure. Just as the basic function of everything in the universe is worship, so worship must also be the keynote of our own existence. However, whereas everything else does so outwardly by its natural unconscious submission to the way things are, we have the capacity of both outward submission to, and inner awareness of, the one reality. This then is our purpose, our reason for being here, and also what defines our outward form – that we both outwardly conform to the natural boundaries imposed on us by the form which we have been given and that we inwardly realize our capacity for decoding what we see around us and accept that existence is what it is, a generous and compassionate outpouring, the self-manifestation of the essence of the One God, the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything between them.

These boundaries delineating the natural form of man, showing what it is to be a human creature, have always been available to people, accepted by some, rejected by others, together with the knowledge of the true picture of existence. All creatures except man have their form indelibly stamped in them so that they have no need of external stimuli to bring it out of them. But in our case we have to choose to be human. We have to choose the form that is in reality our nature. It is very important to grasp this. Even though we have to learn what it is to be human, all we are doing is removing ignorance and uncovering what is in fact our organic natural pattern. Recognized morality is not something imposed on man out of social convenience, but something that is inherent in us and required by our form for the proper functioning of the human social nexus. It is a natural patterning coming from within them and appearing in a social context. Unlicensed behavior, the unrestricted giving way to the infantile appetites which is the present hallmark of the human situation is in fact unnatural. It constitutes a covering-up of the simple morality which is the true reality of human nature and leads inevitably to the total disruption of human social order.

We have noted that every creature knows its form and it is not in the evidently compassionate nature of existence that we, the human species, should alone be left with no way to know the form we should assume to truly fulfill our humanness and of course the simple fact is that we have not been neglected. At regular intervals, throughout the time that human beings have inhabited the earth, we have been reminded of the total knowledge we are capable of containing and have been shown the form which is naturally ours by men directly inspired by the Reality Itself to carry out this task. These teachings have in part survived to this day in the form of the so-called ‘religions’. And this explains the clear similarities that exist between them. But they are, for the most part, just archeological fragments of the original teaching which have been distorted, vitiated, pieced together and adapted to man’s lower nature. This has made them separate and antagonistic to each other, thus obscuring the fact that they are in reality successive manifestations of one continuously repeated teaching – men sent to men by their Creator to show them and tell them how to be human. Show and tell. The teaching has been both by example and by word. The two must go together for the necessary transformation to take place. In each case, a transmission took place from the Messengers to the human communities where they appeared, whereby communities, who had relapsed into ignorance and squalid sensual gratification, who had on a mass scale allowed their infantile self-form to take over and become the dominant influence in their society, were purified, lifted up, and transformed by the transmitted process into radiant examples of true humanity. They were communities where generosity, justice, compassion and humility were the rule rather than the exception and the people lived within clear moral limits.

It is these messengers from Reality and their followers who gave rise to what are now known as the ‘world religions’ which have in every case, in one way or another, been altered beyond recognition, so that the original purpose, to show humans how to be human, has been completely obscured. Two examples briefly illustrate how the original clear teachings have disappeared. They are what are now called Judaism and Christianity. In Judaism, the word of the Messenger has been exalted above the example so that the humanizing, transformative process brought and demonstrated by Moses to his people has become the rigidly structured hair-splitting laws of the rabbinical tradition which are inhuman and tyrannical rather than compassionate and liberating.

In Christianity, the example of Jesus was romanticized almost to the exclusion of what he said (it must be remembered that he was always a practicing Jew and nowhere renounced the Mosaic law, but came to breathe into it the humanity and compassion that had been squeezed out), but what has transpired is that his clear example was made into a mystery and the moral parameters blurred, allowing the amorphous moral chaos which now exists in the so-called ‘Christian’ countries. Examination of each one of the ‘religions’ will reveal the same thing – how an original pure teaching has been perverted and distorted leading, in most cases, to the very opposite of what was originally intended.

The final complete version of the pure human teaching was the one revealed to Muhammad in Arabia in the early seventh century of the Christian era. It was transmitted by him to some of those around him and practiced by them in Medina. It is known as Islam. This is where we must look if we desire to find the picture of the true human form and to know the knowledge that we are capable of containing since, of all the teachings, it is the only one that we know for certain to be completely intact.

The message is there, unchanged by a single word, in the form of the Qur’an, giving us directly from Reality Itself the picture of the whole of existence and telling us exactly our part in it. The example of the Messenger himself was minutely recorded showing us the perfection of the human form and how those around him took it on and therefore how we ourselves can do the same. This is not to say that the Muslims have not gone the way of previous communities and distorted and misapplied and misunderstood the original teaching. They clearly have. But the original teaching is still totally available and accessible for those who want it. The chain of transmission leading from the last of the Messengers, Muhammad, is unbroken and continues to this day.

Awareness of our predicament is an essential step but it is only the first step. To escape from the tyranny we have imposed on ourselves, the endless appeasement of our insatiable infantile self-forms, which is all that we have allowed ourselves to be, a basic transformation is necessary. What has to be transformed is the heart and there is no way to it except by embarking on action –

immediately. The action that is necessary is the taking on of the truly human form which was recorded for the last time in the revelation of the Qur'an and perfectly demonstrated in the life of the last of those sent for that purpose by the One God, the Messenger Muhammad. This will give us real inner awareness and acceptance of the true nature of the universe and what is beyond it and hidden within it. The two together, the practice and the acceptance, will lead to the liberation which we all desire; the overwhelmingly intoxicating experience of tasting the timeless spaceless presence of the One from Whom we have come and to Whom we inevitably must return. Set out and you will arrive.

SECTION 2: FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Marry those among you who are single and those who are fit . . . if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace. (24:32)

He it is Who created you from a single being, and of the same did He make his mate that he might find comfort and solace in her. (7:189)

Hadith: 'Marriage is my tradition and whoever seeks other than my tradition is not with me.'

Hadith: 'The widow shall not be married until she is consulted, and the virgin shall not be married until her consent is obtained.'

Hadith: 'Everyone of you is a ruler and everyone of you shall be questioned about those under his rule . . . the man is a ruler in his family and he shall be questioned about those under his care; and the woman is a ruler in the house of her husband, and she shall be questioned about those under her care; and the servant is a ruler so far as the property of his master is concerned, and he shall be questioned about that which is entrusted to him?'

Marriage and Family in Islam

By Abu al-Fadhl Ezzati

Islam has been introduced by the Qur'an to be the religion of balance, a balance in the widest sense of the term covering the entire area of human thought and life. It is a balance between reality and ideals. A Muslim's notion of Allah's Oneness is or should be reflected in his own striving towards a co-ordination and unification of the ideals and realities of spiritual and physical motives and tendencies, of body and mind, of nature and man, of the cosmos and man, and of various aspects of human life. Islam teaches man, first, that the permanent worship of Allah in all the manifold actions of human life is the very meaning of life; secondly, that the achievement of this purpose remains impossible so long as we divide our life into two parts, the spiritual and the material. They must be bound together, in our consciousness and action, into one harmonious entity. The unity of Allah in Islam has influenced all of its ideals and realities. Man has not been divided into two contradictory parts, spiritual and material. If the object of our life as a whole is the worship of Allah as is suggested by the *ayah*, *I have not created the jinn and men except that they should worship Me* (51:56), then we must necessarily regard this life in its totality as one complex of religious, moral and spiritual responsibilities.

Everything which truly helps the individual, society and mankind as a whole can be regarded as worship, and is rewarded if well performed or punished if not fulfilled. On the other hand, anything which is harmful to the divine nature of the individual, society and mankind is regarded as disobedience to God, is forbidden and must be punished. Thus all our actions, even sexual ones, must fulfill a divine purpose and must be performed as acts of worship, that is, performed consciously as constituting a part of God's universal plan. Worship of Allah in the widest sense constitutes, according to Islam, the meaning of life and vice versa. The dichotomy between body and mind, religion and politics, spirit and matter, between the spiritual and the material life is completely rejected by Islam. On the basis of balance, Islam establishes absolute harmony amongst all human spiritual and physical motives, tendencies, and potentials. The natural conclusion is that Islam rejects celibacy and monastic life, and looks upon marriage as a holy

contract, a divine institution, and even an act of worship. So much so that it is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: ‘He who marries has saved half of his faith’; and ‘Marriage is my institution, he who disregards it is not a follower of mine.’

The love of spouse and the love of members of a family for each other is required in Islam because the Prophet, peace be upon him, is reported to have said: ‘Is Islam anything other than love [love of Allah for the sake of Whom one loves others]?’ Islam is nothing but love; love of Allah for the sake of Allah, and love of spouse, parents, children, relatives, fellow human beings, love of other creatures and of the entire universe for the sake of Allah and as a means to earn the love of Allah. We can thus see that there is no contrast between the love of Allah and the love of His creatures.

The concept of the family (*ahl*) in Islam is broader and more inclusive than in western society, that is, the parents and children always remain as members of one’s family. It covers even distant relatives, so much so that the maintenance, welfare, respect and love of them is regarded as a religious responsibility. The term *ahl*, which also means people, semantically covers more than one’s immediate relatives or even near of kin. The term used in the Qur’an for near and distant relatives is *dhaw al-qurbah* and the general term used in Islamic literature for one’s duty towards them is *salat al-rahim*. There are many verses in the Qur’an making it the duty of every Muslim to provide maintenance (in the case of need), love and respect for all near and distant relatives (2:83,177; 4:36; 8:41; 16:90; 17:26; 30:38). For instance:

Surely Allah commands you to justice and good and to give to kindred [their due]. (16:90)

It is thus appropriate to conclude that the term family in western society covers only a small portion of the family suggested by Islam. Maintenance, love and respect of one’s distant relatives is as obligatory as to one’s own immediate family, though the obligation to one’s immediate family is the first in the line of priority. The Prophet, peace be upon him, is reported to have said: ‘On the Day of Judgment, one’s relatives stand at the gate of heaven to certify whether one has been good to them’ (Kulayni in *Al-Kafi*, chapter on faith and unbelief). He is also reported to have said: ‘The quickest reward is for the good done to one’s relatives (*salat al-rahim*).’

As far as love and respect of one's parents is concerned, the Qur'an states:

Your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship [any] but Him, and goodness to your parents [it comes next to serving Allah] . . . say not to them [so much as] ugh, nor chide them [and always] talk to them with respect. Make yourself submissively gentle [and humble] to them with compassion, and [pray for them] saying: 'Oh Lord, have compassion on them, as they brought me up [when I was] little . . . and give to the relatives their due'. (17:23-26)

The Prophet is reported to have said: 'The key to heaven is under the feet of the mother.' A person asked the Prophet: 'What is the best thing I can do?' He replied: 'Serve your mother,' He asked: 'And what is the second best?' He replied again: 'Serve your mother.' He asked again, and the reply was the same. He asked for the fourth time: 'Who comes next?' The Prophet replied: 'Your father, then your relatives in order of relationship.' Respecting and serving one's parents is frequently commanded by the Qur'an (46:15, 31:14). It is suggested that difference of religion (non-Muslim parents) does not release one from the religious obligation of maintenance. Even participation in *jihad* (war in the name of Allah)² is not allowed without the mother's permission. One of the cardinal sins in Islam is to be disrespectful and disobedient to one's parents.

Just as respect, obedience, and the maintenance of one's parents have been strongly commanded and enjoined upon children, so the parents also have duties towards their children which must be fulfilled. Both parents and children have rights and responsibilities over each other. Although parents' love for children is natural, the Qur'an and *Sunnah* (the traditions of the prophet) have still laid guidelines regarding children's rights (16:58-59, 43:17, 6:152, 2:233).

² eBook Editor's Note: The term Jihad in Islam has a wide spiritual significance and is not limited to warfare. Please see "The Spiritual Significance of *Jihad*" by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, at <http://www.al-islam.org/al-serat/jihad-nasr.htm>.

Islam regards marriage as a constitution in its own right, and thus rejects strongly anything challenging its constitution or the rights and responsibilities which it entails. The Qur'an suggests cornerstone of the society is two persons:

I exhort you only to one thing, that you stand and rise up for the cause of Allah in twos and singly. (34:46)

Thus, Islam recognizes the authority of the family as the constitutional genesis and fundamental basis of human society.

As far as the constitution of marriage is concerned, Islam regards it not as a sacrament but as a contract and thus subject to the conditions and stipulations concluded between the two sides of the marriage. But the marriage contract involves three parties, the first being Allah. The stipulations, therefore, should not contradict the divine law (*shari`ah*) of Allah and the holy nature of the marriage.

Men are responsible for women because Allah has given them more than the other and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient . . . (4:34)

It is suggested that man provide for the wife (maintenance) though the wife may have financial means. Thus, a married woman is a person in her own right with a financially independent status, even after marriage. (This explains the position of women in the Islamic law of inheritance). It is in regard to women's more delicate, sensitive and emotional nature that Islam allows this financially independent status. The nature and biology of men and women are not the same, consequently they have been treated independently and have been entrusted with particular roles, functions, rights and responsibilities in Islam. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, is reported to have said: 'Everybody is responsible. The ruler is responsible. The husband is responsible for his home and his family. The wife is responsible for her husband, his home, family and children. And thus, you are all responsible.'

The most important role of the Muslim woman is to be a good wife and a good mother. For this she is innately suited. Islam recognizes the immense value and position of women in educating and shaping future generations.

And we have enjoined upon man concerning his parents: his mother carries him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Therefore show gratitude to Me and to your parents. (31:34, 46:15)

The welfare and maintenance of the family is the religious responsibility of the husband and father – the education and moral training of the children has been made the obligation of both parents. Inside the family the principles of love, sincerity, discipline, security, respect, mutual understanding, mutual responsibility, and equality within the divine law should rule. The Prophet was an ideal and a paradigm in the matter of treatment towards family members. He used to stand up on the arrival of Fatimah and would make her sit by his side. He often carried Hasan and Husayn, his grandchildren, on his back and shoulders. The Prophet is reported to have said: ‘The best of you is he who is best to his family.’ It is also reported that he said: ‘Whoever dies while her husband is pleased with her will enter paradise.’

Love for the members of family should be looked upon as a means to the love of Allah, and they should not contradict each other. However, the main principle of marriage is mental security, solace, comfort, and relaxation:

One of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find solace and rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (30:21)

The duties of the spouses towards each other are very important in Islam. The Qur’an devotes a chapter entitled *Al-Nisa* (The Women) to the rights and responsibilities of the spouses. The Qur’an prescribes disciplinary measures in cases of violation of rights and responsibilities, namely, admonition and separation of bed (4:16).

As for safeguarding the state of marriage and solving marital difficulties, the Qur'an asks the believers to seek reconciliation amongst the spouses themselves, but if a breach is still feared, *then appoint an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire peace and agreement, Allah will establish harmony and peace between them. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware* (4:35). Thus, all necessary measures should be taken to re-establish peace and harmony between the two, both by themselves and by their relatives and people. This is because the Prophet, peace be upon him, is reported to have said: 'The most detestable thing for me and in my religion is divorce.' Thus divorce, as the last thing to do, is the most hated permissible measure to be taken. This is why, by and large, marriage in the Muslim community is more stable compared with western society. The other factors contributing to the stability of marriage in the Muslim community are: (a) the definition of the rights and responsibilities of the spouses in the *shari`ah* (the body of Islamic law); (b) the general Islamic moral and ethical values and measures which regulate differences of culture, race, color and nationality, thus putting marriage in its correct perspective; and (c) the Islamic concept of family, home, relationships of near and distant kin, as well as the Islamic relationship between human beings and marriage partners.

Man/Woman

By Umm Husayn

The purpose for which we are created is that we may come to know Allah. One much quoted Hadith or saying of the Prophet states that: ‘He who knows himself, knows his Lord.’

Seekers of self-knowledge must thus define their role in this existence and understand the boundaries within which they have to function if they are to behave correctly. If this is to happen it is crucial that men and women know the nature of the relationship that Allah has ordained between them. This is revealed in the following *ayat*:

And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (30:21)

O people! Be careful of [your duty to] your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same [kind] and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of [your duty to] Allah, by whom you demand one of another [your rights] and [to] the ties of relationship. (4:1)

From these *ayat* we come to know that woman is man’s pair, created like him from a single self and that their destiny is to live in harmony together. Elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an it is revealed that in his existence men are the custodians of women:

Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property: the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and [as to] those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish

them, leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them³; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great. (4:34)

Yet, while man has authority over woman in this world, her potential for reward in the next is identical:

And whoever does good deeds whether male or female and he [or she] is a believer – these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly. (4:124)

Whoever does good, whether male or female and is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did. (16:97)

Like man, woman is dependent on her correct transaction in this world if she is to enjoy the fruits of the next. So woman's fulfillment of her covenant with Allah is that she must obey and serve the man under whose care her Creator has entrusted her, be it husband, father, brother, son, or in the absence of any of these, a relative or righteous man in the community.

Allah's greatest gift to woman is the opportunity she has to be fulfilled spiritually through serving a man.⁴ By dedicating herself wholeheartedly to her husband, she can annihilate her lower tendencies in his service. This course of action ensures not only a correct life here and now, but also the rewards of the life to come.

The Blessed Prophet spoke of woman's station in relation to man as follows: 'Had it been permissible for a human being to prostrate in obeisance before another human being, I would have ordained that women should prostrate before their husbands.' On another occasion, he

³ eBook Editor's Note: For further elucidation of this, please see "On The Beating of Wives" by Dr. Khaled Abou El Fadl, at <http://www.scholarofthehouse.org/exbykhabelfa.html>, and <http://www.quran434.com/wife-beating-islam.html>.

⁴ eBook Editor's Note: Surely, the man has to possess certain higher spiritual qualities to qualify for such obedience and devotion. Furthermore, these injunctions will have to be interpreted and applied with proper contextualization.

described the ‘best women among you’ as being ‘those who bear children, have feelings of love, and are of pure character; in their own family they have a fair social standing, and before their husbands they are humble and submissive; they adorn themselves for their husbands and hide themselves from others; they lend careful ear to what their husbands say, obey their orders and while in privacy they comply with their wishes.’ And He considered a loving, giving wife as a man’s most valued treasure: ‘After the blessings of Islam, the most precious gift of God for a Muslim man is his having a Muslim partner, because whenever he sees her, her appearance provides a joy for him, and she obeys his orders and is the custodian of his wealth and honor.’

In return for this love and devotion man is enjoined both in the Qur’an and the Hadiths to treat women with tenderness and respect:

And treat them kindly. (4:19)

In his address at Mina, during the last year of his life, the Blessed Prophet said: ‘You should advise others to behave well towards women, because they have come to live in your houses; they are dependent on you; they are God’s trust whom you have voluntarily made your partners.’

Another Hadith states: ‘The best men among my followers are those who are not harsh upon their family but treat them with benevolence and kindness.’ `Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, in a letter written to one of his sons, recommended that, ‘Woman is like a sweet smell and is of tender nature, not hard-hearted like a tyrant, so always placate her and treat her gently, so that you may lead a peaceful life.’

While man is considered the head of the family, the running of the house and the upbringing of the children is considered the woman’s domain. Indeed her husband is as an honored guest in her home. A Hadith says: ‘Verily, man is the head of the family and woman is the head of the house.’

`Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, speaking about the importance of a woman’s contribution to her family, said: ‘An educated woman educates a family, a community, a nation.’

The Blessed Prophet divided the work between his daughter, Hazrat Fatimah Zahrah, and her husband `Ali in this way: the work of the household was assigned to her and the work outside the house to him. Hazrat Fatimah Zahrah is said to have been very satisfied with this division.

Marriage is only worthwhile if it helps the husband and wife, their earthly desires satisfied, to explore their full spiritual potential. If the relationship is not conducive to the spiritual development of both, the one helping the other, it will be a miserable affair. The most fortunate woman is she whose passion and devotion for her husband has expanded to such a point that she can use it as a springboard to dive into the eternal love of the Creator. So she can truly say to her beloved: ‘We are but one, for the love of you is the love of the One.’

Woman’s role must accordingly be seen as one of submission to whatever circumstances destiny has decreed for her. For some this involves a quiet life in the home, for others an arena of dynamic action. The important factor is her transaction with the man into whose care Allah has entrusted her. It is this thread of devotion that links the lives of the three great ladies of Islam, the wife, daughter and granddaughter of the Blessed Prophet – Hazrat Khadijah, Hazrat Fatimah Zahrah, and Hazrat Zaynab. Their lives were very different, but all three dedicated themselves selflessly and with unquestioning devotion to the men who were their custodians.

Hazrat Khadijah recognized her husband’s shining star and willingly gave him not only her constant support, in the face of much opposition, but also all her worldly wealth. When confronted by his opponents, she replied that her wealth came from Allah, how better could it be spent than in the service of the Prophet of Allah. She was the foremost business woman of her time, having employed the service of the Blessed Prophet before their marriage. Her modesty and the correct behavior for which she was famed gives Muslim women a model of how they can transact correctly in the world of affairs.

Hazrat Fatimah Zahrah’s short life was spent serving her father, husband and children quietly in the home. Her consideration for her husband was such that once when she was sick, and `Ali asked her what he might bring her, her reply was nothing. When he pressed her for a reply, she said that the Blessed Prophet had told her not to request anything from her husband in case he

could not provide it and would feel ashamed. Imam `Ali continued to beg her for an answer, and finally she asked for a pomegranate.

Hazrat Zaynab is the example of a woman forced by events into outer action, at a time when there were no men to protect her. Amid darkness and danger, she stepped forth as a tigress to protect the life of her sick nephew, Imam `Ali Zayn al-`Abidin, and the honor of her family. For Hazrat Zaynab, the strongest masculine influence in her life had been her brother, Imam Husayn. Her husband, knowing this, permitted her to accompany the Imam to Karbala, where she was to leave her mark on history.

All three were women of loyalty and passion; all three showed by their devotion and sacrifice that woman's greatest fulfillment comes from obedience and service to her man.

A Letter of Shaykh al-Darqawi

Women should leave what does not concern them and perform what Allah has made obligatory for them. They only perform what supererogatory things they are able to do. Then they will be happy, Allah willing, and not wretched or burdened because they grind flour, sieve, plait, knead, season, bandage, untie, sweep, give water, gather firewood, spin, milk, go into labor, bear their children, and raise them. These are all great deeds and well-known striving. With these deeds, they only need the prayer, fasting, and what Allah has made obligatory, like *zakat* for the one who has the minimum of property subject to *zakat*, or the *Hajj* for the one who is able to make it.

... I am only reminding you about what I have mentioned concerning women so that you can inform them. Most of them do not consider this to be action. By Allah, it is among the greatest of actions. Allah wipes out evil deeds by it and elevates degrees. Tell them about it so that they can leap up to it, and so they will not resent it. It is very great with Allah. That is absolutely definite.

From *The Darqawi Way* (The letters of Shaykh Mawlay al-`Arabi ad-Darqawi)

eBooks By Zahra Publications

General eBooks on Islam

Living Islam – East and West

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Ageless and universal wisdom set against the backdrop of a changing world: application of this knowledge to one's own life is most appropriate.

The Elements of Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

An introduction to Islam through an overview of the universality and light of the prophetic message.

The Qur'an & Its Teachings

Beams of Illumination from the Divine Revelations

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of teachings and talks with the objective of exploring deeper meanings of Qur'anic Revelations.

Commentary on Chapters One and Two of the Holy Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The first two chapters of the Qur'an give guidance regarding inner and outer struggle. Emphasis is on understanding key Qur'anic terms.

Commentary on Four Selected Chapters of the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Shaykh uncovers inner meanings, roots and subtleties of the Qur'anic Arabic terminology.

Journey of the Universe as Expounded in the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Qur'an traces the journey of all creation, seeing the physical, biological and geological voyage of life as paralleled by the inner spiritual evolution of woman/man.

The Essential Message of the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Teachings from the Qur'an such as purpose of creation, Attributes of the Creator, nature of human beings, decrees governing the laws of the universe, life and death.

The Family of `Imran

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This book is a commentary on the third chapter of the Qur'an, the family of `Imran which includes the story of Mary, mother of `Isa (Jesus).

The Heart of Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Commentary on chapter *Yasin*. This is traditionally read over the dead person: if we want to know the meaning of life, we have to learn about death.

The Qur'an in Islam: Its Impact & Influence on the Life of Muslims

`Allamah Sayyid M. H. Tabataba`i

`Allamah Sayyid M. H. Tabataba`i shows in this gem how the Qur'an contains the fundamental roots of Islam and the proof of prophethood as the Word of God.

The Qur'anic Prescription for Life

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Understanding of the Qur'an is made accessible with easy reference to key issues concerning life, and the path of Islam.

The Story of Creation in the Qur'an

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

An exposition of the Qur'anic verses relating to the nature of physical phenomena, including the origins of the universe, the nature of light, matter, space and time, and the evolution of biological and sentient beings.

Sufism & Islamic Psychology and Philosophy

Beginning's End

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a contemporary outlook on Sufi sciences of self knowledge, exposing the challenge of our modern lifestyle that is out of balance.

Cosmology of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Islamic teachings of *Tawheed* (Unity) with insights into the human self: understanding the inner landscape is essential foundation for progress on the path of knowledge.

Decree and Destiny (Original and a Revised Version)

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A lucid exposition of the extensive body of Islamic thought on the issue of free will and determinism.

Happiness in Life and After Death – An Islamic Sufi View

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This book offers revelations and spiritual teachings that map a basic path towards wholesome living without forgetting death: cultivating a constant awareness of one's dual nature.

Leaves from a Sufi Journal

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A unique collection of articles presenting an outstanding introduction to the areas of Sufism and original Islamic teachings.

The Elements of Sufism

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Sufism is the heart of Islam. This introduction describes its origins, practices, historical background and its spread throughout the world.

The Journey of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

After introducing the basic model of the self, there follows a simple yet complete outline of the self's emergence, development, sustenance, and growth toward its highest potential.

The Sufi Way to Self-Unfoldment

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Unfolding inner meanings of the Islamic ritual practices towards the intended ultimate purpose to live a life honorable and fearless, with no darkness, ignorance or abuse.

Witnessing Perfection

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Delves into the universal question of Deity and the purpose of life. Durable contentment is a result of 'perfected vision'.

Practices & Teachings of Islam

Calling Allah by His Most Beautiful Names

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Attributes or Qualities resonate from their Majestic and Beautiful Higher Realm into the heart of the active seeker, and through it back into the world.

Fasting in Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a comprehensive guide to fasting in all its aspects, with a description of fasting in different faith traditions, its spiritual benefits, rules and regulations.

Prophetic Traditions in Islam: On the Authority of the Family of the Prophet

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offers a comprehensive selection of Islamic teachings arranged according to topics dealing with belief and worship, moral, social and spiritual values.

The Wisdom (Hikam) of Ibn `Ata'allah: Translation and Commentary

Translation & Commentary by Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

These aphorisms of Ibn `Ata'Allah, a Shadili Shaykh, reveal the breadth and depth of an enlightened being who reflects divine unity and inner transformation through worship.

The Inner Meanings of Worship in Islam: A Personal Selection of Guidance for the Wayfarer

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Here is guidance for those who journey along this path, from the Qur'an, the Prophet's traditions, narrations from the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and seminal works from among the *Ahl al-Tasawwuf* of all schools of thought.

The Lantern of The Path

Imam Ja`far Al-Sadiq (Translated By Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri)

Each one of the ninety-nine chapter of this book is a threshold to the next, guiding the reader through the broad spectrum of ageless wisdom, like a lantern along the path of reality.

The Pilgrimage of Islam

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This is a specialized book on spiritual journeying, offering the sincere seeker keys to inner transformation.

The Sayings & Wisdom of Imam `Ali

Compiled By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Translated By: Asadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate

A selection of this great man's sayings gathered together from authentic and reliable sources. They have been carefully translated into modern English.

Transformative Worship in Islam: Experiencing Perfection

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri with Muna H. Bilgrami

This book uniquely bridges the traditional practices and beliefs, culture and language of Islam with the transformative spiritual states described by the Sufis and Gnostics.

Talks & Courses

Ask Course ONE: The Sufi Map of the Self

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This workbook explores the entire cosmology of the self through time, and maps the evolution of the self from before birth through life, death and beyond.

Ask Course TWO: The Prophetic Way of Life

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

This workbook explores how the code of ethics that govern religious practice and the Prophetic ways are in fact transformational tools to enlightened awakening.

Friday Discourses: Volume 1

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The Shaykh addresses many topics that influence Muslims at the core of what it means to be a Muslim in today's global village.

Songs of Iman on the Roads of Pakistan

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A series of talks given on the divergence between 'faith' and 'unbelief' during a tour of the country in 1982 which becomes a reflection of the condition occurring in the rest of the world today.

Poetry, Aphorisms & Inspirational

101 Helpful Illusions

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Everything in creation has a purpose relevant to ultimate spiritual Truth. This book highlights natural veils to be transcended by disciplined courage, wisdom and insight.

Beyond Windows

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offering moving and profound insights of compassion and spirituality through these anthologies of connections between slave self and Eternal Lord.

Bursts of Silence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms provide keys to doors of inner knowledge, as well as antidotes to distraction and confusion.

Pointers to Presence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms providing insights into consciousness and are pointers to spiritual awakening.

Ripples of Light

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms which become remedies for hearts that seek the truth.

Sound Waves

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms that help us reflect and discover the intricate connection between self and soul.

Sublime Gems: Selected Teachings of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani

A collection of extracted spiritual nourishment from Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's existing works.

Autobiography

Son of Karbala

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

The atmosphere of an Iraq in transition is brought to life and used as a backdrop for the Shaykh's own personal quest for self-discovery and spiritual truth.

Health Sciences and Islamic History

Health Sciences in Early Islam – Volumes 1 & 2

Collected Papers By: Sami K. Hamarneh

Edited By: Munawar A. Anees

Foreword By: Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Health Sciences in Early Islam is a pioneering study of Islamic medicine that opens up new chapters of knowledge in the history of the healing sciences. This two volume work covers the development of Islamic medicine between the 6th and 12th centuries A.D.