

*In the Name of God, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, and to Him do we turn for help.*

His Excellency Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī's Message to the  
Qur'ān and Hadīth Olympiad

Perpetual praises are due to God all-eternal; salutations without end are in order upon God's holy prophets—particularly his Eminence, the Seal of Prophethood; boundless benedictions are owing upon the immaculate family of Revelation—especially his Eminence, the Seal of Sainthood, the extant and promised Mahdi. We wish to near ourselves in friendship to these sacred souls and distance ourselves from their nefarious foes.

We would like to honour the presence here of all noble guests, both foreign and local. We would like to thank the conveners and sponsors of this important Olympiad on the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Having done so, we would like to draw the attention of the participants of this symposium to the following points:

- I. Of the [many] matters that can be derived from the famous tradition of the Golden Chain (*silsilat al-dhahab*) some are as follows:
  - a. The principal and central role of doctrinal principles and in particular *tawhīdī* teachings
  - b. The composition of the chain of transmission by veritable and trustworthy transmitters
  - c. The termination of that [chain] with the words of God, whose authority is certain and definite

Hence, in exegetical discussions, reliance upon the definitive verses of the Qur'ān (*muhkamāt*) is especially important, just as is the recognition of the metaphorical verses (*mutashābihāt*) and the knowledge of how to “refer” (*irjā'*) them to the definitive ones. It is of utmost importance in cultural affairs that both the recognition of the metaphorical as well as the understanding of the modality of “referencing” to the definitive are safeguarded from any ambiguity (*tashābuh*).

The mandate of the scholars of religion is to support [and defend] the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Immaculates (upon them be peace), precisely because the cunning stratagem of the anti-Islamic enemies is to make inroads [against Islam] by way of the metaphorical—the latter existing both in the Qur'ān and the Traditions, just as the definitive exists in both of them. Hence the manner and methodology of tying the metaphorical to the definitive is applicable in both of the “two weighty things” (*thaqalayn*).

- II. Grounded and solid faith calls for firm fundamentals and lasting fundamentals, because any belief that is based on an uncertain proof is shaky and objectionable. Such a proof is transient and any faith associated with it cannot last. Religious scholars are the protectors of the beliefs of the Islamic Ummah and must strive to achieve impeccable intellectual arguments that are accompanied by transmitted proofs—whether consensual (*mutawātir*) or in the form of a singular report within context that is tantamount to certainty—so as to avoid fallacies that are imminent with the passage of time. In some discourses what is put forth is the uncertain singular report. This is because what is nowadays presented in say a thousand texts—whether books, magazines, newspapers, or the like—is actually taken from say only a hundred sources. These hundred sources in turn make use of say ten reference works. The ten reference works themselves take from the Four Books (*kutub al-arba'ah*). These Four Books were written by three people—Shaykhs Kulaynī, Saduq, and Tusī (r), some of whom succeeded or preceded others such that the succeeding narrator like Shaykh Tusī (r) narrates from a predecessor like Kulayni (r). At other times both Kulaynī and Saduq narrate from a single original source and narrator. Hence after historical and biographical research it is found that a thousand written texts all go back to a single source such as the singular report of say

Zurarah or some other similar person; such a singular report does not validate a belief with certainty even though it might corroborate a plausible ascription (*isnād zannī*).

- III. Islam, whose fundamental element is the Qur’ān and the Purified Family (upon whom be peace), has established the necessity of acquiring knowledge—meaning [intellectual] certainty in doctrinal principles and credibility or reliability in practical matters. Proclaiming the crucial elements of its desired sciences to be “the definitive sign”, “the balanced obligation”, and “the established tradition”, Islam has made knowledge (and not supposition) to be the required limit by which to affirm any matter and the demarcation by which to negate other matters. In this vein, Kulaynī (r) narrates from Imām Sādiq (upon whom be peace) that his Eminence said that God has warned the believers by two verses and has made two things particular to them:

قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَصَّ عِبَادَهُ بِأَيَّتَيْنِ مِنْ كِتَابِهِ أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا حَتَّى يَعْلَمُوا وَلَا يَرُدُّوا مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمُوا وَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ (أَلَمْ يَأْخُذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقَ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ لَا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ) وَقَالَ (بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعَلْمِهِ وَلَا يَأْتِيهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ)

He said, “Surely Allah has singled-out his servants by the way of two verses from His book so that they do not speak until they know, and that they do not deny that which they do not know; He, glorified and majestic be He, said, ‘Was not the covenant of the Book taken with them that they shall not attribute anything to Allah except the truth?’<sup>1</sup> And He said, ‘Rather, they deny that whose knowledge they do not comprehend, and whose explanation has not yet come to them.’<sup>2,3</sup>

What comes across from such glowing verses and traditions is the necessity of research into and the scholarly exposition of the Goodly Tree that the divine religion is—so as to keep it safe from the errors and fallacies of deviant thinkers and to protect it from the deceits and pretenses of those with ill intent. It is only then that this tree will flourish and be fruitful, and like the trees of paradise, its fruits will be perennial because the eternal spring is protected from the pursuit of autumn.

- IV. Religious olympiads (of the Hawza), in addition to their emphasis on the realizations of the metaphysical intellect, also give respect to the findings of empirical reason. Their distinctive quality is that while they honour the accepted rational principle that states “he who loses a [physical] sense, surely loses a [type of] knowledge”, they also give formal recognition to the intellectual and traditional principle that says, “he who loses piety, surely loses knowledge.” This is because the Noble Qur’ān gives the following counsels: *اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمَكُمُ اللَّهُ*: “Be wary of God and God shall teach you,”<sup>4</sup> and *إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا*: “If you are wary of God, He shall appoint a criterion for you.”<sup>5</sup>

It is to be hoped that all the devotees of the Qur’ān and the Family would be graced with the opportunity to acquire the sciences of Revelation and to achieve the lofty station of the sublime gnostic (*‘ālim rabbānī*). Once again we would like to express our gratitude to all.

May Allah forgive us and you.

Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah and His Graces

Jawādī Āmulī

Rabī’ al-Awwal 1430 / Esfand 1387

<sup>1</sup> Qur’ān 7:169

<sup>2</sup> Qur’ān 10:39

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 43, hadith 8, Chapter on the Eminence of Knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> Qur’ān 2:282

<sup>5</sup> Qur’ān 8:29